



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Fiscal Year 2025 Capacity Building Plan Based on the Foster Care Needs Assessment

**As Required by
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Introduction

Chapter 264.1261, of the Family Code, requires the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to use data collected on foster care capacity needs and regional availability of each type of foster care and kinship placement to develop a plan to address the substitute care capacity needs in regions where community-based care has not been implemented. The [Foster Care Needs Assessment](#) assists to inform the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, which specifically addresses the needs of non-community based care regions 7, 9, 10, and 11.

The following report required collaboration with stakeholders and partners in each region. While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the affected communities, the goals and strategies contained within belong to each respective community.

Region 7 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting for region 7A and 7B occurred on September 18, 2024, where Regional Director Natalie Taylor spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements and support for kinship caregivers.

DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the regional capacity strategic plan.

- Arrow Children’s Ministries
- New Horizons
- The Brotherhood Academy
- Nightlight Christian Adoptions
- DePelchin Children’s Center
- CK Family Services
- Starr Resiliency
- Renaissance Family Services of Texas
- Lifeworks of Austin
- Bluebonnet Haven

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase support for existing caregiver and placement capacity.

Fostering youth is hard and emotional work. Families find navigating the system difficult. As a result of increased youth needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources to assist in meeting the youth’s needs while maintaining a stable placement.

Objective 1.1: Education on STAR Health services.

STAR Health offers extensive services and complex case management services; however, case managers and families are not aware of all the services available.

- Child Protective Services (CPS) will arrange for STAR Health to provide

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training to all child placing agencies (CPAs) case managers at a regional provider meeting.

- CPS will continue to invite STAR Health representatives to all provider meetings.

Objective 1.2: Identification of LMHA resources.

It is important for families to understand the support and services the local mental health authorities (LMHAs) can provide for families and foster youth.

- CPS will have a Youth Empowerment Services waiver provider attend a regional provider meeting to explain their services to all CPA case managers.
- CPS will work with CPA case managers and LMHAs to create a county specific list of resources and contact phone numbers to provide families.

Goal 2: Increase capacity across all levels of foster care.

All levels of foster care support are needed to place children with a variety of needs. Treatment Foster Family Care will allow youth to remain in the community in a least restrictive placement, while receiving specialized care tailored to their needs. Youth also struggle to move to a lesser restrictive placement after receiving psychiatric care.

Objective 2.1: Targeted recruitment.

- CPS will partner with the Foster Care Coalition to focus on recruiting people who have a history of working with youth in different capacities.
- Collaborate with agency partners to support recruitment efforts.
- As part of its targeted recruitment efforts, CPS regional staff will host informational meetings on regional capacity needs for professional groups with a history of working in juvenile detention, hospitals, schools, and law enforcement.
- Community Liaisons will assist in the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive (FAD) parents from faith-based organizations.

Goal 3: Increase support for kinship caregivers in becoming licensed foster parents.

Throughout the region kinship caregivers continue to increase. These families often struggle with the licensure requirements. The Foster Care Needs Assessment forecasts a continued increase of kinship placements. The region will continue to support these families in navigating the different systems and provide tools to support youth with trauma.

Objective 3.1: Partner with CPAs to engage kinship families.

- Focus on families immediately to engage them with information on selecting a CPA and supporting them throughout the licensure process.
- Address barriers to licensure and engage community partners to assist in alleviating barriers.

Goal 4: Increase support and awareness for post adoption services.

After adoption, families find navigating the system difficult. As a result of increased youth and family needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources. By providing adoptive families with community resources, youth and caregivers can get the help they need at home to avoid further system involvement.

Objective 4.1: Partner education on post adoption services.

Contracted post adoptions service providers offer an array of services including complex case management services. However, case managers and families are often unaware of the services available.

- CPS will arrange for the regional post adoption services provider to provide training to all CPAs case managers at a regional provider meeting.
- CPS will continue to invite post adoption service provider representatives to all provider meetings.

Objective 4.2: Family education for post adoption resources.

It is important for families to understand the support and services the post adoption service providers have available to adoptive families and youth.

- CPS will host a minimum of two information sessions with the post adoption services contractor and invite all families who have consummated an adoption within the year.
- CPS will work with the Heart Gallery of Texas and discuss longer term solutions such as mailing letters and flyers to families reminding them of supports available.
- CPS will encourage families to sign the consent form to release their information to their local post adoption provider prior or at the time of adoption consummation. This will enable the provider to make targeted calls to families.

Region 9 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting for region 9 was held on September 11, 2024, where FAD Program Director Tanya Berry, Capacity Building Specialist Jericho Fleming, Community Liaison Briana Moseley, and Research Specialist Eduardo Sanchez-Quintanilla spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth with complex needs.

DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the ongoing discussions and initial development of the regional capacity strategic plan:

- New Horizons
- Texas Baptist Home for Children
- Arrow Child & Family Ministries
- A World for Children
- Pathways
- High Sky Children's Ranch
- Buckner Children & Family Services
- One Accord for Kids

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase placement capacity for youth 12 and under.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identifies the need for additional homes and placement options for youth under the age of 12.

Objective 1.1: Providers will seek to increase capacity.

- Continue to identify and prepare families willing to accept placement of elementary age children without complex needs within already licensed homes and through recruitment efforts of newly licensed homes.
- Build connections with community resources such as local sports teams, colleges and universities, local business owners, and media outlets to spread foster care awareness and the need for FAD homes.

- Collaborate to create a region wide foster parent training and networking event. This event will also serve as a recruitment effort by requesting attendees bring a friend interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Objective 1.2: Recruitment efforts for respite care

- CPAs will encourage prospective FAD families to assist in respite care after they have all their background checks, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification, and training. This allows the family to get a true understanding of the age of youth they want placed in their home and the expectations of being a foster home.

Goal 2: Utilize strategies to reach people interested in fostering and adopting.

Objective 2.1: Increase in regional awareness.

- New Horizon and West Texas are working together to raise awareness of foster agencies in the region. Both are working together to have informational meetings to educate the community about fostering and adopting.
- Continue joint in-person outreach efforts, events, and question and answer sessions. Sessions continue to be scheduled near the start of foster parent pre-service orientations to keep recruitment momentum going.
- Expand informational meetings to rural counties.

Goal 3: Recruit foster placements for teenagers.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment continues to identify the need for additional homes and placements for teens.

Objective 3.1: Utilize strategies in place to reach people interested in fostering and adopting teenagers.

- In conjunction with the stakeholders and CPAs, use region wide recruitment events and marketing strategies focused on the recruitment of homes specific to teenagers.
- CPS will work with local CPAs to match legally free teenagers to adoptive homes.

Objective 3.2: Using past adoptive family's success stories to address misconceptions and fears about fostering and adopting.

- Ask families who have successfully adopted teenagers to join outreach event, so they can show potential adoptive families how rewarding and positive adopting teenagers can be.

Goal 4: Increase support and awareness for post adoption services.

After adoption, families find navigating the system difficult. As a result of increased youth and family needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources to assist in meeting their needs. By providing adoptive families with community resources, youth and caregivers can get the help they need at home to avoid further system involvement.

Objective 4.1: Partner education on post adoption services.

Contracted post adoptions service providers offer extensive services and complex case management services. However, case managers and families are often unaware of the services available.

- CPS will arrange for the regional post adoption services provider to provide training to all CPAs case managers at a regional provider meeting.
- CPS will continue to invite post adoption service provider representatives to all provider meetings.

Objective 4.2: Family education for post adoption resources.

It is important for families to understand the support and services the post adoption service providers have available to adoptive families and youth.

- CPS will host a minimum of two information sessions with the post adoption services contractor and invite all families who have consummated an adoption within the year.
- CPS will work with the Heart Gallery of Texas and discuss longer term solutions such as mailing letters and flyers to families reminding them of supports available.
- CPS will encourage families to sign the consent form to release their information to their local post adoption provider prior or at the time of adoption consummation. This will enable the provider to make targeted calls to families.

Region 10 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting for region 10 on August 29, 2024, where FAD Program Supervisor Rebecca Sanchez, Capacity Building Specialist Jericho Fleming, and Community Liaison Briana Lane spoke with the team on potential new ways to assist in increasing capacity for youth needing treatment level placements.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase placement capacity for youth 12 and under.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identifies the need for additional homes and placement options for youth under the age of 12.

Objective 1.1: Providers will seek to increase capacity.

- Continue to identify and prepare families willing to accept placement of elementary age children without complex needs within already licensed homes and through recruitment efforts of newly licensed homes.
- Build connections with community resources such as local sports teams, colleges and universities, local business owners, and media outlets to spread foster care awareness and the need for FAD homes.
- Collaborate to create a region wide foster parent training and networking event. This event will also serve as a recruitment effort by requesting that attendees bring a friend interested in learning more about becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Objective 1.2: Recruitment efforts for respite care.

- CPAs will encourage prospective FAD families to assist in respite care after they have all their background checks, CPR certification, and training. This allows for the family to get a true understanding of the age of youth they want placed in their home and the expectations of being a foster home.

Goal 2: Utilize strategies to reach people interested in fostering and adopting.

Objective 2.1: Increase in regional awareness.

- Create a marketing campaign in partnership with the University of Texas at El Paso and the Heart Gallery of El Paso, to bring awareness to all foster agencies in the region by encouraging people to inquire about fostering and adopting. Clinical coordinators, the community liaison, and the media specialist will help with this.
- Continue joint in-person outreach efforts, events, and question and answer sessions. Sessions continue to be scheduled near the start of foster parent pre-service orientations to keep recruitment momentum going.
- Expand informational meetings to rural counties.

Goal 3: Recruit foster placements for teenagers.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment continues to identify the need for additional homes and placements for teens.

Objective 3.1: Utilizing strategies in place to reach people interested in fostering and adopting teenagers.

- In conjunction with the stakeholders and CPAs, use region wide recruitment events and marketing strategies focused on the recruitment of homes specific to teenagers.
- CPS will work with local CPAs to match teenagers eligible for adoption to adoptive homes.

Goal 4: Increase support and awareness for post adoption services.

After adoption, families find navigating the system difficult. As a result of increased youth and family needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources to assist in meeting their needs. By providing adoptive families with community resources, youth and caregivers can get the help they need at home to avoid further system involvement.

Objective 4.1: Partner education on post adoption services.

Contracted post adoptions service providers offer extensive services and complex case management services. However, case managers and families are often unaware of the services available.

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- CPS will arrange for the regional post adoption services provider to provide training to all CPAs case managers at a regional provider meeting.
- CPS will continue to invite post adoption service provider representatives to all provider meetings.

Objective 4.2: Family education for post adoption resources.

It is important for families to understand the support and services the post adoption service providers have available to adoptive families and youth.

- CPS will host a minimum of two information sessions with the post adoption services contractor and invite all families who have consummated an adoption within the year.
- CPS will work with the Heart Gallery of Texas and discuss longer term solutions such as mailing letters and flyers to families reminding them of supports available.
- CPS will encourage families to sign the consent form to release their information to their local post adoption provider prior or at the time of adoption consummation. This will enable the provider to make targeted calls to families.

Region 11 Plan to Increase Capacity

A stakeholder/provider meeting in Region 11A and 11B occurred on September 6, 2024. In the meeting, the Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed, and a regional data presentation shared that focused on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for fiscal year 2025.

DFPS would like to thank the following agencies who participated in the creation of this plan.

- Arrow Child and Family Ministries.
- The Bair Foundation Child and Family Ministries.
- Buckner Children and Family Services.
- Upbring.
- Families Especial Foster Care and Adoption Services.
- A World for Children.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

Goal 1: Increase the number of basic and specialized foster homes.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identifies the greatest need in both catchment areas as foster homes for children with complex needs.

Objective 1.1: Community liaisons will assist in the recruitment and retention of FAD parents from faith-based organizations.

- CPS regional staff will provide data and demographic information to the child welfare boards to provide prospective foster parents with information to start the fostering process. Staff will also collaborate with the community to build welfare boards in those counties that do not have an existing one.
- CPAs will tap into their local child welfare boards, local businesses, faith community, and community resource groups for foster family support, activities, and other ways they can assist in supporting permanency for children.
- Community liaisons and CPAs will support existing families through

functions, awareness events, respite care and continue to help build existing families' capacities.

- CPS regional staff will keep CPA information updated.
- CPS regional staff and regional CPAs will continue to have collaborative informational meetings to provide information to prospective families in face to face and virtual meetings. Collaborative meetings will allow prospective families the ability to choose the agency they would like to work with.

Objective 1.2: CPAs will continue working to increase the number of available beds.

- CPAs will continue working together to set up various ways to recruit new foster families.
- CPAs will continue to hold and attend recruitment awareness events throughout the region and will engage local media markets to raise awareness for recruitment opportunities.
- CPAs will make efforts to expand existing foster families' capacity and reach out to current respite care providers and inquire if they would consider taking placements of children with complex needs.
- Collaborating with general residential operations (GROs) for observational hours for current foster parents to observe the care of youth with higher needs.
- CPAs will work to recruit foster homes that can work with children who have medical needs.

Goal 2: Increase the likelihood a CPA or GRO will accept a child.

Objective 2.1: CPAs and GROs will continue working with CPS to provide information and identifying available beds.

- CPS in collaboration with CPAs and GROs will conduct and facilitate match meetings, preplacement visits, and virtual interviews for children without and at risk of being without placement to provide as much information about the child as possible to find a placement willing and able to meet their needs.
- Pathways to placement daily staffing will continue to be held and facilitated by DFPS staff. These meetings will include primary staff and subject matter

experts discussing the child's unmet mental health needs, referring to daily superior health update through STAR health and discussing next steps to support the child.

- Clinical coordinators will continue to hold Placement Support Staffings with CPAs and caregivers prior to discharge to assist in alleviating concerns and identifying resources and supports.

Objective 2.2: CPAs will work to improve comfort level while interacting with RCCR and HM representatives.

CPAs have expressed concern that interacting with Residential Child Care Regulation (RCCR) can be intimidating for foster parents and CPA employees.

- CPAs will continue to invite RCCR and Heightened Monitoring (HM) staff to training, meetings, and other events to help foster communication, relationships and understanding. CPAs will have direct conversations with RCCR and HM staff and supervisors to address any immediate concerns.
- RCCR will send out information about forums throughout the fiscal year to DFPS and CPAs which will include new and upcoming licensing regulations and changes. These forums will allow for comments and questions to ensure everyone fully understands the changes taking place.
- CPAs will continue to invite CPS leadership to foster parent events and agency meetings.

Objective 2.3: CPS staff will place special emphasis on strengthening kinship placements and offering maximum support.

- Upon learning of potential kinship placements, Child Protective Investigations and Family Based Safety Services staff will complete the preliminary kinship assessment to place children with appropriate relatives at the beginning of the legal case.
- Kinship and FAD staff will continue to recruit, hold, and participate in informational meetings, recruit homes, and provide information on CPAs families can choose from. They will explain Fostering Connections and its benefits.
- Kinship and FAD staff will be assigned within 48 hours of placement to provide any support needed to the caregivers.

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- Throughout the case, DFPS staff will continue to utilize the Collaborative Family Engagement model to identify kinship caregivers who may be considered for not only placement, but also to provide support and assistance to caregivers who are able to be the primary caregivers.
- Agape Ranch will continue to provide respite through the citywide respite program.
- Communication between CPS conservatorship and FAD staff will be strengthened by ensuring FAD staff is invited to legal staffing's and informed of court decisions. Any changes to the licensing process will be relayed to the CPA.
- Region 11 child safety specialists will conduct special reviews of any kinship home where placement was ordered although there was an unfavorable home study. This will provide an assessment of what additional services may be needed to ensure the children are in safe placements and overall needs are being met.

Objective 2.4: CPAs will provide DFPS with their new agency goals to increase foster care capacity.

- Region 11 CPS staff will obtain CPAs' written plans to increase capacity in region 11 after the start of their new fiscal year on January 1, 2025.
- Each CPA will provide DFPS with their agency's plans geared toward increasing foster care capacity within the region, during quarterly in person CPA meetings.
- CPS will continue to have capacity building as an agenda item during quarterly provider meetings to present progress on goals.
- CPAs will make all efforts to have a representative present at all Informational and provider Meetings.

Goal 3: Increase sibling placements and build capacity for sibling groups.

Region 11 will explore all possibilities to keep siblings together. If siblings cannot be placed together, then every effort will be made to place siblings in homes within the same CPA and near each other to ensure visits and connections are maintained.

Objective 3.1: CPS and CPAs will work to ensure siblings are placed together.

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- CPAs will focus their attention on larger capacity homes and provide extra attention and support to help maintain sibling bonding and capacity.
- CPAs will remind foster parents of the importance of sibling connection, and the need for them to promote and facilitate sibling visits and interaction.
- CPAs will continue to work with CPS to explore options to reunite siblings in foster homes.
- CPAs will remind and train foster parents of the need to support the permanency goal for the youth they care for and their siblings.

Objective 3.2: When siblings are separated, CPS will continue working to place them together or within close proximity.

- CPS Centralized Placing Unit (CPU) staff will hold bi-monthly sibling separation meetings to discuss options, barriers, and concerns to placing siblings together.
- CPU will emphasize the placement requests where the siblings are placed.
- CPAs will send CPS information on siblings within their agency in separate foster homes to assist with efforts to reunify siblings who are separated.
- DFPS will utilize the General Placement Search (GPS) function to assist in placing siblings near one another.
- CPAs will ensure GPS information is updated and accurate to reflect the current census.

Goal 4: Increase RTC beds for teens.

The Foster Care Needs Assessment identified the need for 43 residential treatment center (RTC) beds to meet Region 11's need in fiscal year 2025.

Objective 4.1: Network with local providers to expand RTC regional capacity.

- DFPS will continue to voice the need for RTC placements at stakeholder meetings.
- DFPS will partner with local stakeholder to discuss the implementation of specialized programs to meet the needs of our youth.

Goal 5: Increase support and awareness for post adoption services.

After adoption, families find navigating the system difficult. As a result of increased youth and family needs, it is important to educate and empower caregivers to access resources to assist in meeting their needs. By providing adoptive families with community resources, youth and caregivers can get the help they need at home to avoid further system involvement.

Objective 5.1: Partner education on post adoption services.

Contracted post adoptions service providers offer extensive services and complex case management services. However, case managers and families are often unaware of the services available.

- CPS will arrange for the regional post adoption services provider to provide training to all CPAs case managers at a regional provider meeting.
- CPS will continue to invite post adoption service provider representatives to all provider meetings.

Objective 5.2: Family education for post adoption resources.

It is important for families to understand the support and services the post adoption service providers have available to adoptive families and youth.

- CPS will host a minimum of two information sessions with the post adoption services contractor and invite all families who have consummated an adoption within the year.
- CPS will work with the Heart Gallery of Texas and discuss longer term solutions such as mailing letters and flyers to reminding them of supports available.
- CPS will encourage families to sign the consent to release their information to their local post adoption provider prior or at the time of consummation. This will enable the provider to make targeted calls to families.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CPA	Child Placing Agency
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CPS	Child Protective Services
CPU	Centralized Placement Unit
DFPS	Department of Family and Protective Services
FAD	Foster and Adoptive
GPS	General Placement Search
GRO	General Residential Operations
HM	Heightened Monitoring
LMHA	Local Mental Health Authority
RCCL	Residential Child Care Licensing
RTC	Residential Treatment Center
TFFC	Treatment Family Foster Care