

A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Child Services began the process of analyzing service availability, delivery and perceived effectiveness in September 2009. This planning process culminates in the Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan (the Plan). The Plan encompasses the Early Intervention Plan, Child Protection Plan, and Regional Service Plan. The Early Intervention Plan was completed historically to list and summarize child abuse prevention efforts in a county. The Child Protection Plan outlined the policies and procedures surrounding services delivered by the Department of Child Services to assess families after an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made. The Regional Service Plan outlined the intervention services contracted by DCS. The Early Intervention Plan, Child Protection Plan and Regional Service Plan have been all combined into one plan, the Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan.

The planning process to develop the Plan involved a series of activities led by a guided workgroup composed of representatives from the community. The activities included a needs assessment survey, public testimony, and review of relevant data. While DCS has several other mediums with which to determine effectiveness of DCS provided services, such as practice indicator reports, Quality Service Reviews (QSRs) and Quality Assurance Reviews (QARs), this process took that information and looked at it through a contracted service lens. The workgroup considered results from the QSR and practice indicators in conjunction with the needs assessment, previous service utilization and public testimony to determine the appropriate utilization of available services and to identify gaps in service. As a result, the workgroup developed a regional action plan to address service needs and gaps. The workgroup completed budget projections by service for the next fiscal year as well as the next biennial budget. It was assumed budget amounts would remain flat lined so the workgroup focused on how funds might be shifted

Summary of Needs Assessment

Each region in the state conducted a needs assessment survey of local professionals who have experience with child welfare services. The intent of the survey was to evaluate local service needs. Results of the survey were to be used to assist in determining the Region 3 child welfare service needs and the appropriate service delivery mechanisms. Each Department of Child Services (DCS) Local Office Director (LOD) created an e-mail contact list of local child welfare professionals and other “key informants” within the county. (See Section F for a complete list of key informant categories.) An electronic version of the needs assessment survey was disseminated to all persons on the contact lists. The survey was comprised of 68 items, including both services funded through DCS as well as other community-based services that are not currently funded through DCS. Survey respondents were asked to rate each service in terms of availability of that service to children and families, and to rate the effectiveness of that service.

In Region 3, approximately 950 surveys were distributed by e-mail by the Local Office Directors (LOD). LOD’s were encouraged to send follow up e-mail or place a phone call one week later to induce strategic respondents to complete the survey. There were approximately 197 Surveys returned, this was an approximate 20% return rate for the region. 29% of the respondents were from DCS, 16% were from Service or Community Partners. Education made up 17% of respondents with all other respondents from other categories. 7% of the respondents were foster parents. 4% of the respondents came from Probation, Juvenile Judge/Court representative, Prosecutor or Law Enforcement. The remaining 29% were in other categories.

DCS staff ranked supervised visitation services as highly available while CASA/Gal staff ranked it much lower. This was also true for Home-based individual and family therapy. But, in general, DCS, Probation, Courts, Law Enforcement, CASA/Gal, Providers and Adoptive Parents had no significant differences in when ranking service availability within the Region. This could indicate good communication within the human service organizations of Region 3.

Services rating the highest availability in the region were:

- Alcohol and drug testing
- Supervised visitation services for parent/child
- Office based licensed counseling services
- Special education
- Early childhood intervention developmental delays

These services are available but Office Based Counseling and Early Childhood Intervention services, which are listed as high availability on the survey for all four counties in the Region, frequently have waiting lists according to the service barrier grids. This was consistent regionally and countywide. So, though a service may be available, it may not necessarily be readily accessible.

Services rating the lowest in availability in the region were:

- Support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual youth
- Dental care for low income adults/children/youth
- Adult child mentoring programs
- Gang prevention services
- Affordable child/day care

Though the list of service availability was low for services for lesbian, gay, bisexual youth, it was determined by the workgroup that there was no identified need for these services. Less than half of the survey respondents answered this item. Therefore, though it was identified as a need, the response rate was low. The work group also thought that transportation should have ranked lower in availability in Kosciusko and Marshall Counties as they have a more rural population and limited or no public transportation.

It was also noted that most of these services identified as not available were community prevention services rather than DCS services. So, the work group didn't find that the survey accurately measured service quality as it relates to DCS standards, but may be more of community perception as it wasn't just DCS reporting on the survey. And, ultimately, DCS found that the counties identified needs that were more important to DCS services than the lowest availability, which may not relate to DCS services as reported on the survey.

As for service availability, St. Joseph County reports that they have a variety of service providers. Elkhart, Kosciusko & Marshall Counties find it hard to retain good quality services by providers who are responsive to needs and can provide a short turn around from referral to service. Service quality as it relates to standards is lacking, especially in the requirements for prompt responsiveness to referrals and reporting back to DCS seems to be unacceptable.

Some of the top barriers listed in the Barrier grid for DCS services and Non DCS standards seem to be consistently:

- waiting list
- lack of local telephone number or contact person/staff
- lack of options of service providers

St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties also list language/cultural barriers as a significant deficit to service provision throughout both DCS and Non DCS services.

The region would like to see more service development in the area of substance abuse treatment, particularly Methamphetamine treatment that is successful, in Elkhart, Kosciusko & Marshall counties. St. Joseph County has existing treatment services, but due to the distance from the service provider, it is difficult for clients from the other counties to access this type of treatment. The workgroup would also like to see the development of domestic violence programs that focus on educating and helping a family understand the harmful effects of domestic violence rather than just anger management

for the perpetrator. The final service development area the workgroup identified is services that address the long-term support and direct services to the mentally ill.

Other areas that need to be addressed include DCS case managers becoming more skilled at assessing families and recognizing the appropriateness of referrals in order to get the right treatment to the family, quickly. Along with appropriateness of referral by DCS, service providers need to recognize that the referral process will have more quality assurance requirements. This would include the appropriateness of the referral, turnaround time to contacting the client, timely reports and identifying specific case management services.

As for prevention services, waiting lists seem to be the greatest barrier to the following identified services, as identified by Community Partners and DCS on the Barrier grids:

- affordable housing
- child care
- affordable counseling

These areas were the primary needs identified as needing on-going attention by DCS and Community Partners.

Summary of Available Services

The Department of Child Services (DCS) makes every effort to offer an efficient and comprehensive array of services to meet the needs of children and families they serve. Service needs vary greatly from region to region and even from county to county. Region 3 has one primarily urban county (St. Joseph) and three counties that have larger areas of rural population.

Service offerings detailed in Section H fall into one of two basic categories, prevention services or intervention services. Intervention services are characterized by formal involvement of the DCS in a case and are available:

- Through informal adjustments, which are agreements made by involved parties when a family admits to a problem and the child is at minimal risk in the home;
- To children in need of services (CHINS), which are children made wards of the court; and
- As reunification services, which are services provided to families when a child has been removed from the family has a goal to return to the family.

It is the goal of the both the Department of Child Services and Juvenile Probation to prevent unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting families in resolving them and returning children who have been removed from their homes to their families. Juvenile Probation offers services through informal and formal probation. In all cases, the best interest of the child and family are of prime importance.

Services offerings fall into one of two basic categories may be preventative or intervening and may include but are not limited to:

- Education
- Counseling
- Visitation
- Sexual abuse treatment
- Parent aides
- Homemaker services
- Home based family services

Additionally the DCS offers other ancillary and support services including adoption services, foster parent training and support services, and independent living services for children aging out of the system.

Preventative Services are utilized to prevent formal DCS involvement and may include services accessed by DCS referral, but not funded by the DCS or provided by a DCS contracted provider. Preventative services also include the Community Partners for Child Safety (CPCS) program and the Healthy Families Indiana program.

- Community Partners for Child Safety (CPCS) provides an array of child abuse and neglect prevention services. The program is available to families not actively involved with the DCS or Healthy Families. The CPCS program offers a service continuum that builds community support for families identified through self-referral or community agency referral by connecting these families to resources needed to strengthen the family and prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Healthy Families Indiana is a voluntary home visitation program designed to promote healthy families and children (0-5 years of age) by reducing child abuse and neglect, childhood health problems, and juvenile access to health care, and parent education. The program systematically identifies families that could benefit from education and support services either before or immediately after birth. Families identified to have a need are offered the opportunity to participate in a voluntary home visiting program tailored to their individual needs.
- Other prevention services available include First Steps, Indiana Youth service Bureaus, ARC agencies, and domestic violence intervention. A listing of all services available to families and children in the region can be found in sections H. b. and e.

The table below indicates the types of DCS service priority for the region as reflected through their expenditures/purchase of services, and the number of families served. The top five DCS service type expenditures for the region from January 1 – August 31, 2009 were:

Service Type:	Expenditure:*	# of families & clients served:
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$1,303,171.33	525
Home-based Family Centered Casework	\$ 789,815.36	440
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$ 776,715.00	1306
Sex Offender Treatment/Victims	\$ 652,317.00	728
Home-based Family Centered Therapy	\$ 614,537.56	251

*The expenditure/dollar amount next to the Service Type represents the funds reported by providers and billed to DCS during the period of 1/1/09 to 8/31/09. These figures do not include Medicaid billings or drug testing costs. This also holds true for the tables listed below.

The Region 3 workgroup reviewed the documents described in Section H. It was determined that county costs may vary based on what services that county deems accessible and accountable. It was determined in the future that greater significance will be taken in account of outcomes by service providers to determine if these are the best services for these families.

Region-wide common themes for DCS purchased services were identified as:

- Visitation Facilitation seems to be the most utilized and purchased service throughout the region
- Child Advocacy Center/Forensic Interviewing is used significantly by Elkhart & St. Joseph Counties, while Marshall mostly uses it for sex abuse interviewing

Region-wide common themes for Non DCS services were identified as:

- Transportation within Kosciusko and Marshall Counties as they are mostly rural
- Affordable counseling for non-DCS families
- The availability of safe, affordable and accessible housing continues to be a issue region wide

Presented below is a closer look at each county within the region, summarizing several common factors, factors that make it unique within the region; their challenges with the availability and accessibility to services; and their top five DCS service type expenditures/purchases from January 1 – August 31, 2009.

Elkhart County (population – approx 200,000; county seat Goshen)

- Large rural population
- Large Hispanic population
- Was devastated by job loss with the reliance on manufactured housing as largest employment base
- Goshen is home to Goshen College
- For a large part is rural outside of Goshen and Elkhart
- Because of rural nature, access to services is an issue
- Large number of families involved with DCS related to Methamphetamine abuse
- County has historically relied on one provider

Service Type:	Expenditure:	#of families & clients served:
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$442,067.45	190
Home-Based Family Centered Casework	\$372,736.74	247
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy	\$324,518.06	137
Sex Offender Treatment – Victims	\$285,352.00	256
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$206,294.75	360

Kosciusko County (population – approx 74,000; county seat: Warsaw)

- Large rural population
- Large number of families involved with DCS related to Methamphetamine abuse
- Lacks public transportation
- Limited providers with actual presence within the county
- Mental Health Center is slow to respond to DCS needs

Service Type:	Expenditure:	#of families & clients served:
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$59,238.00	13
Home-Based Family Centered Casework	\$40,469.25	23
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy	\$20,350.00	9
Counseling –Individual/Family	\$19,601.75	44
Homemaker/Parent Aide	\$15,570.00	13

Marshall County (population – approx 45,000: county seat: Plymouth)

- Large rural population
- Large number of families involved with DCS related to Methamphetamine abuse
- Lacks public transportation
- Very few service providers with presence within the county
- Mental Health Center is slow to respond to DCS needs

Service Type:	Expenditure:	#of families & clients served:
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$133,037.00	30
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy	\$80,253.00	12
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$28,166.25	39
Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Caregiver Training	\$19,100.78	135
Home-Based Intensive Family Preservation	\$19,026.00	6

St. Joseph (population – approx 266,000; county seat: South Bend)

- Most urban in Region 3
- Home to multiple Colleges and Universities
- Has a good variety of service provision

Service Type:	Expenditure:	#of families & clients served:
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$522,652.25	863
Sex Offender Treatment-Victims	\$366,965.00	472
Home-Based Family Centered Casework	\$364,931.37	164
Substance Abuse Assessment	\$270,294.50	341
Homemaker/Parent Aide	\$240,088.50	135

Summary of Spending

Region 3 has historically spent a significant amount of its allocated funds on supervised visitation, counseling and home-based services. Sex offender treatment and treatment of sex abuse victims, Diagnostic and Evaluation services and Homemaker/Parent Aide services are also heavily used in the Region. These services are all readily available, but there is some concern with the quality of service according to the provider evaluations, DCS Satisfaction surveys and Work group discussions. A summary of the top five region-wide service expenditures from January 1 – August 31, 2009 is as follows:

Service Type:	Expenditure:*
Visitation Facilitation- Parent/Child/Sibling	\$1,303,171.33
Home-based Family Centered Casework	\$ 789,815.36
Counseling-Individual/Family	\$ 776,715.00
Sex Offender Treatment – Victims	\$ 652,317.00
Home-based Family Centered Therapy	\$ 614,537.56

*The Expenditure/dollar amount next to the Service Type represents the funds reported by providers and billed to DCS during the period of 1/1/09 to 8/31/09. These figures do not include Medicaid billings or drug testing costs. This also holds true for the table listed below.

In similar review of total service expenditures for the region, the following services were in the bottom five of use for the period of January 1 – August 31, 2009.

Service Type:	Expenditure:
Foster Family Support Services	\$23,210.50
Home-based Intensive Family Reunification	\$20,319.00
Drug Testing and Supplies	\$17,328.00
Foster Home re-licensing	\$14,037.75
Adoption – Family Preparation	\$ 9,575.25

In looking at the total amount expended by Child Welfare and Probation, Institution vs. Preservation, Child Welfare consistently, across the region outspends Probation in Preservation. In comparing 2008 to 2009, there is very little difference between the counties spending on Institutions vs. Preservation.

In 2009, Elkhart County Probation spent a higher percentage on Preservation services than the other counties in the region. St. Joseph County spends over \$300,000 on Preservation. Though not shown on this report, St. Joseph County does significant Preservation with Non-DCS funds. Kosciusko spent \$10,000 and Marshall County shows no Probation spending on Preservation services.

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **Elkhart County** in 2008

Total Expended: \$14,206,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$5,177,000	37%	\$5,851,000	41%
Preservation	\$2,568,000	18%	\$610,000	4%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **Elkhart County** in 2009

Total Expended: \$13,725,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$5,636,000	41%	\$5,890,000	43%
Preservation	\$1,682,000	12%	\$517,000	4%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **Kosciusko County** in 2008

Total Expended: \$ 431,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$156,000	36%	\$167,000	39%
Preservation	\$108,000	25%	-	0%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **Kosciusko County** in 2009

Total Expended: \$714,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$402,000	56%	\$86,000	12%
Preservation	\$216,000	30%	\$10,000	2%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **Marshall County** in 2008

Total Expended: \$3,091,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$1,320,000	43%	\$1,279,000	41%
Preservation	\$491,000	16%	\$1,000	0%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **Marshall County** in 2009

Total Expended: \$1,819,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$773,000	43%	\$716,000	39%
Preservation	\$330,000	18%	-	0%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **St. Joseph County** in 2008

Total Expended: \$22,119,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$13,662,000	62%	\$5,357,000	24%
Preservation	\$2,793,000	13%	\$307,000	1%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in **St. Joseph County** in 2009

Total Expended: \$26,559,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$20,462,000	77%	\$2,743,000	10%
Preservation	\$3,245,000	12%	\$109,000	1%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation for Region 3 in 2008

Total Expended: \$39,847,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$20,315,000	51%	\$12,654,000	32%
Preservation	\$5,960,000	15%	\$918,000	2%

Total Amount Expended by Child Welfare and Probation
Institutions vs. Preservation in Region 3 in 2009

Total Expended: \$42,817,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$27,273,000	64%	\$9,435,000	22%
Preservation	\$5,473,000	13%	\$636,000	1%

*Dollar amounts taken from the Annualized amounts for 2008 and 2009 of the 2010 Budget by County document from the DCS Budget Section

Summary of Regional Plan

The Regional Action Plan presented in this section is based on all data collected that addressed regional service needs. These data sources assessed the following areas:

- Service availability (through the needs assessment survey, Section D.)
- Service effectiveness (through the needs assessment survey, Section D.)
- Public perception of regional child welfare services (through public hearings Section E)
- Practice Indicators (13 month summaries from August 2009 – Section F.)
- Regional workgroup determination of service availability/accessibility (service array table with codes, section G.)
- Additional input provided by the workgroup

It was determined by the workgroup that needs do exist within both DCS and non-DCS services in Region 3. The following is in the Regional Action Plan.

1. DCS and Probation will increase their knowledge of services available to children and families in Region 3.

The Management staff will establish a training schedule. This will be completed September of 2010.

2. Conduct a quality review of services used in Region 3 by DCS and Probation.

Beginning March 2010, Management staff will identify a team to conduct ongoing monthly reviews.

3. DCS and Probation will be trained on writing an appropriate referral.

DCS Central Office will conduct the training ongoing.

4. Expand Domestic Violence services beyond anger management.

The Regional Service Council will offer service providers the opportunity to develop domestic violence education for families who are involved in DCS services. January 2010.

5. Decrease time that children spend in non-relative placements.

Permanency supervisors and FCMs will conduct ongoing monitoring by staffing cases bi-weekly and will identify all relatives for all children within 30 days of removal.