

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 and Public Testimony

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 child welfare service needs. Results of the survey were to be used to assist in determining the Region 4 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 4, approximately 875 surveys were distributed by the LOD. There were 225 responses returned. 34% of the respondents were DCS staff, 25% of the respondents were contracted DCS service providers, 7% were school staff, and 5% were Probation staff. The remaining 29% fell into a variety of respondent categories including law enforcement, foster parents and court personnel. There were four juvenile judges within the region who responded to the survey.

In general, DCS staff and DCS contracted provider respondents ranked the availability of services in the region higher than did the probation respondents and the courts/law enforcement agencies/Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian ad Litem respondents. DCS staff ranked availability higher than probation for counseling, both office-based and home-based, and for alcohol and drug use testing. In terms of quality of services within the region, most services ranked higher in availability also received a higher ranking in the quality of service provided. On average, DCS staff, DCS provider respondents, probation and the courts/law enforcement agencies/CASAs/GALs respondent categories agreed on the degree of service quality that is provided.

Services rating the highest in availability in the region were:

- Early childhood education/preschool programs
- Early childhood intervention for developmental delays
- Alcohol and drug use testing services
- Food and nutrition resources (e.g., food pantry)
- Office-based Counseling

Services rating the lowest in availability in the region were:

- Family shelters for the homeless
- Support services for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth
- Inpatient substance abuse services for youth

- Shelter services for homeless or runaway youth
- Adult-child mentoring programs

After review of all the survey findings, the workgroup noted the low ratings concerning service availability (a large number of Disagree or Strongly Disagree responses regarding the availability of a service) for a considerable number of services listed on the survey. The workgroup felt this could be caused by a lack of awareness, by staff within DCS and many external community partners, of the array of DCS contracted services and/or the resources in the community.

Public Testimony

Two service providers and one child advocate spoke at the public hearing held in the region on October 5, 2009. Public testimony given at the public hearing focused on the need for additional services for youth that are aging out of foster care including housing, the need to continue placements until after graduation, and supports for educational services. Additional testimony spoke to the need to modify some elements of the Community Partner prevention services to increase resources for direct services and reduce overhead costs. More support for preservation services that are successful in deflecting children and families from the DCS and Probation systems was encouraged. Written testimony was also received that encouraged support of family based residential programs for substance abuse intervention with mothers and the continued funding of home based services.

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 the children and families they serve. Service needs vary greatly from region to region within the State. The present process is designed to more clearly identify areas of service availability and/or gaps that may require further attention from DCS. Service offerings detailed in Section H fall into one of two basic categories, *prevention* services and *intervention* services. Prevention services are utilized to prevent formal DCS involvement; Intervention services are characterized by a formal involvement of DCS in a case.

It is the goal of 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.

Services offered may be preventative or intervening and may include but are not limited to:

- education
- counseling
- visitation
- sexual abuse treatment
- parent aid
- 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.

Prevention services may include services suggested by DCS, but not funded by DCS. 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 Department of Child Services or Healthy Families. The CPSC 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 delinquency through a

variety of services, including child development, 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 expenditure/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
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$1,220,785.00	790
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$ 576,337.00	684
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy services	\$ 509,148.00	289
Chafee Independent Living services	\$ 503,276.00	296
Counseling – Individual / Family	\$ 171,417.00	167

* 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 4 workgroup reviewed all documents described in Section H. Data provided in these documents were analyzed and discussed. There were recurrent themes in the availability and accessibility of services for the region that were identified for those services that DCS has the capacity to purchase, and for services that are not purchased by DCS.

Region 4 concerns for DCS purchased services were identified as:

- Lack of awareness by DCS and Probation staff of the available service opportunities and understanding of the referral process
- There is a lack of sufficient options of service providers to meet all client needs, especially in rural counties
- The presence of language or cultural barriers between providers and clients
- The lack of transportation services to get clients to services and other resources

Region 4 concerns for services that are beyond the scope of the DCS purchased services were identified as:

- Lack of affordable child care for persons working second and third shifts
- Lack of family shelters for the homeless
- Lack of transportation services for families, especially in rural counties

The Region 4 Action Plan attempts to address the above concerns as resources will allow. The Region also plans to increase efforts to make other community agencies aware of unmet needs that go beyond the scope of DCS.

Listed below are the top five services, based on funds spent, for each of the counties in the Region. This provides a summary of service availability/utilization for each county. (For additional information see Section I. b.)

Adams County (population – 33,985; county seat - Decatur)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$105,373.14
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy	\$ 24,242.50
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$ 12,559.02
Child Advocacy Center	\$ 4,230.52
Foster /Adoptive / Kinship Caregiver Training	\$ 4,156.76

Allen County (population – 350,523; county seat – Fort Wayne)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$713,744.95
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$339,486.00
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$183,460.28
Voluntary Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$165,212.06
Counseling – Individual / Family	\$127,957.75

DeKalb County (population – 41,884; county seat - Auburn)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$166,138.57
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$ 79,053.00
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy	\$ 21,978.00
Child Advocacy Center	\$ 18,735.16
Voluntary Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$ 11,985.07

Huntington County (population – 37,570; county seat - Huntington)

Service Type	Expenditure
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$ 45,922.50
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$ 35,394.63
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$ 17,616.87
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$ 9,830.00
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy	\$ 7,848.00

LaGrange County (population – 37,172; county seat - LaGrange)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$99,732.63
Home-Based Intensive Family Reunification Services	\$13,920.00
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$13,524.25
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$12,358.00
Foster Home Studies/Updates/Re-Licensing	\$ 6,580.29

Noble County (population – 47,601; county seat - Albion)

Service Type	Expenditure
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$51,465.00
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$38,246.38
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$36,522.60
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$10,713.00
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$ 8,712.00

Steuben County (population – 33,368; county seat - Angola)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$262,740.50
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$100,476.63
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$ 59,184.00
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$ 29,215.01
Substance Abuse Assessment, Treatment, & Monitoring	\$ 24,150.00

Wells County (population – 27,964; county seat - Bluffton)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$45,790.69
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$35,088.75
Voluntary Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	\$ 5,995.44
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$ 5,595.50
Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Caregiver Training	\$ 5,576.66

Whitley County (population – 32,667; county seat – Columbia City)

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$33,718.13
Counseling – Individual / Family	\$16,845.75
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$12,330.00
Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Caregiver Training	\$ 4,383.16
Parenting/Family Functioning Assessment	\$ 3,349.50

Summary of Spending

Region 4 has historically spent a significant amount of its allocated funds on Home-Based services. This has been the predominate service delivery mechanism in the region. Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services and Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services have both been used extensively in working with families and children. The region has also spent heavily on Visitation Facilitation and Chafee Foster Care Independence Services. The predominance of this spending was verified in the responses from the Needs Assessment Survey. A summary of the top five region-wide service expenditures from January 1 – August 31, 2009 is as follows:

Service Type	Expenditure*
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$1,220,785.00
Visitation Facilitation-Parent/Child/Sibling	\$ 576,337.00
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$ 509,148.00
Chafee Independent Living Services	\$ 503,276.00
Counseling – Individual/Family	\$ 171,417.00

* 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 a similar review of total service expenditures for the region, the following services were in the bottom five for the period January 1 – August 31, 2009, indicating little or no use of this service in the first 8 months of 2009.

Service Type	Expenditure
Adoption – Child Preparation	\$ 00.00
Day Treatment Services	\$ 00.00
Transition from Restrictive Placement (TRP)	\$ 00.00
Residential Detoxification	\$ 00.00
Functional Family Therapy	\$ 00.00

Increasing services/allocations for all the above services is one of the priorities identified by the workgroup for improvement and was developed as an action step for this Plan.

There has been a marked difference in spending on institutional care and preservation services by child welfare and by juvenile probation within the region. Child welfare spending on preservation services, as a percent of the total dollars spent, is higher than juvenile probation spending on preservation services.

Below is a brief summary of spending on institutional care and preservation services per county, taken from annualized amounts for 2008 and 2009. One of the goals of the Region is to increase the percentage of funds being spent for preservation services for both DCS and Probation clients.

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

Total Expended: \$1,070,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$519,000	48%	\$381,000	36%
Preservation	\$109,000	10%	\$61,000	6%

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

Total Expended: \$1,257,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$623,000	50%	\$388,000	31%
Preservation	\$132,000	10%	\$114,000	9%

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

Total Expended: \$20,734,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$9,656,000	47%	\$8,330,000	40%
Preservation	\$2,714,000	13%	\$34,000	0%

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

Total Expended: \$14,540,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$5,942,000	41%	\$6,190,000	42%
Preservation	\$2,335,000	16%	\$73,000	1%

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

Total Expended: \$2,247,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$996,000	44%	\$674,000	30%
Preservation	\$404,000	18%	\$173,000	8%

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

Total Expended: \$2,684,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$1,250,000	47%	\$1,059,000	39%
Preservation	\$235,000	9%	\$140,000	5%

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

Total Expended: \$1,098,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$279,000	25%	\$627,000	57%
Preservation	\$116,000	11%	\$76,000	7%

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

Total Expended: \$970,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$313,000	32%	\$476,000	49%
Preservation	\$99,000	10%	\$82,000	9%

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

Total Expended: \$1,127,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$730,000	65%	\$91,000	8%
Preservation	\$306,000	27%	-	0%

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

Total Expended: \$1,064,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$910,000	86%	\$1,000	0%
Preservation	\$153,000	14%	-	0%

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

Total Expended: \$1,467,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$905,000	62%	\$160,000	11%
Preservation	\$401,000	27%	\$1,000	0%

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

Total Expended: \$1,351,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$892,000	66%	\$323,000	24%
Preservation	\$124,000	9%	\$12,000	1%

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

Total Expended: \$2,420,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$1,422,000	59%	\$350,000	14%
Preservation	\$604,000	25%	\$44,000	2%

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

Total Expended: \$1,582,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$1,001,000	63%	\$124,000	8%
Preservation	\$437,000	28%	\$20,000	1%

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

Total Expended: \$878,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$123,000	14%	\$560,000	64%
Preservation	\$156,000	18%	\$39,000	4%

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

Total Expended: \$360,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$51,000	14%	\$150,000	42%
Preservation	\$124,000	34%	\$35,000	10%

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

Total Expended: \$616,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$73,000	12%	\$460,000	75%
Preservation	\$44,000	7%	\$39,000	6%

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

Total Expended: \$710,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$81,000	11%	\$530,000	75%
Preservation	\$66,000	9%	\$33,000	5%

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

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 E)
- Service effectiveness (through the needs assessment survey, Section E)
- Public perception of regional child welfare services (through public hearings, Section F)
- Practice Indicators (13-month summaries from Aug. 09 - Section G)
- Regional workgroup determination of service available/accessibility (service array table with codes, Section H)
- Additional input provided by the workgroup.

These data sources were considered by regional workgroups to determine service needs that were to be prioritized by a region for the relevant biennium. To address these service needs, regional workgroups formulated action steps, which included distinct, measurable outcomes. Action steps also identified the relevant parties to carry out identified tasks, time frames for completion of tasks, and regular monitoring of progress towards task completion.

The Region 4 workgroup, through analysis of the above data, group discussion, and individual knowledge and experience, developed the following Action Plan objectives (see Section K for additional information).

1. Improve support services for foster parents especially for multi-problem and older youth

Beginning in January 2010, Region 4 will begin the process of developing FCMs to become foster care specialists

2. Increase FCM and PO awareness of current service opportunities

During the first quarter of 2010 there will be a regional provider fair for FCMs and Probation staff

3. Increase Interpreter services

Beginning in January, 2010 a process will be initiated to identify the languages for which interpreter services are needed and to locate the resources within the Region to provide such services

Summary of Unmet Needs

During the course of the planning process, there were a number of issues the workgroup identified that Region 4 lacked in adequately meeting the needs and challenges of many of their families and children. The Region selected the needs listed below for special emphasis as part of the Strategic Plan:

1. *Economical region-wide transportation.* Many of our clients do not have access to public transportation or a reliable vehicle to meet the needs of their family. In the past there was access to some transportation systems in the rural counties but that has diminished for lack of funding.
2. *Affordable childcare for second and third shift.* By nature of the job market in Region 4, employment opportunities for entry level positions are on second and third shifts. Often families without outside support must bypass these options because childcare is not available for those shifts.