

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 individuals who have knowledge and 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 regional child welfare service needs and the appropriate service delivery mechanisms. The Department of Child Services (DCS) Local Office Directors (LOD) compiled a contact list of “key” respondents (refer to Section E for key informant categories). An electronic version of the survey was distributed to persons on the contact list. The survey consisted of 68 questions that included both DCS funded services, as well as other community-based services not currently funded through DCS. Survey respondents were asked to rate each service in terms of availability of the service to children and families, and to rate the effectiveness of the service.

In Region 6, approximately 343 surveys were distributed by e-mail by the LOD’s. The directors were encouraged to send a follow-up e-mail or place a phone call one week later to remind strategic respondents to return the survey. At this time it was learned that some respondents had technical difficulty submitting surveys electronically. In some instances, surveys were faxed to the Regional Coordinator or e-mailed by the LOD office on behalf of the survey respondent.

Surveys were returned by 111 respondents with the largest number of responses from DCS staff (26) percent. 25% of the respondents were DCS service providers; 14% Courts/Law Enforcement Agencies/Court Appointed Special Advocates/Guardian ad Litem; 6% were adoptive/foster parents; the remaining 29% of respondents fell into a variety of categories including schools, Division of Family Resources, pastoral groups, township trustees, and others. The survey respondents included four juvenile judges in the region. Generally, DCS service providers and adoptive/foster parents ranked the availability of services higher than did DCS staff and Courts/LEA/CASA/GAL respondents.

The survey results indicated a correlation between the availability and quality of services. In general, services rated as highest availability were also rated as higher quality; services rated as lowest availability were rated as lower quality.

Based on survey results, services rating the highest availability in the region were:

- Supervised Visitation services for parent/child
- Early childhood education/preschool programs
- Homemaker/Parent Aid
- Alcohol and Drug Use Testing Services
- Special education

The services above received high service quality ratings and positive respondent comments. In all the Region 6 counties, Supervised Visitation Services for parent/child and Early Childhood education/ preschool were consistently rated in the top five available services. Three out of the five services are DCS contracted services: Supervised Visitation, Homemaker/Parent Aid, and Alcohol and Drug Use Testing Services. The high availability rating for the remaining two services, early childhood education/preschool programs and special education were attributed to

being well-established, visible community-based services as well as having positive relationships with the educational systems and educators in their communities.

Based on survey results, services rated the lowest available in the region were:

- Support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual youth
- Family shelters for the homeless
- Inpatient substance abuse services for youth
- Adult-child mentoring programs
- Transitional/supervised apartments – older youth

The services above received the least number of survey responses and were also rated lowest in service quality overall for the region. Support services for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are limited and have not been identified as a priority in the region. Family shelters for the homeless, and shelter options in general are few. As a DCS service, Inpatient substance abuse services for youth are available, however a transportation barrier exists because it is not a local option. The workgroup recognizes a need for Transitional/supervised apartments for Independent Living youth aging out of care, as well as families who would benefit from limited DCS supervision.

After review of all the survey findings the workgroup noted the low ratings concerning service availability (large number of Disagree or Strongly Disagree responses regarding availability) for a number of services. The workgroup attributed this, in some cases, to a lack of awareness of the array of DCS services and/or resources in the community by DCS staff and external community partners.

Public Testimony

The Region 6 Regional Service Council provided the opportunity for public participation in the Biennial Regional Strategic Plan process at a Public Hearing to receive verbal and written testimony on September 23, 2009 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm at Miami County Office of the Department of Child Services, 12 S. Wabash, Peru, IN 46970. The Public Hearing Notice announcement procedures were followed as required by the Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan process outline; however, no person(s) attended to present verbal or written testimony.

Summary of Available Services

The Department of Child Services (DCS) makes every effort to offer a comprehensive array of services to meet the needs of children and families they serve. Service needs vary greatly from region to region within the State, and to a lesser degree from county to county within a region. 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 the 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 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 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 priorities 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	\$552,589.36	202
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$218,361.99	107
Visitation Facilitation – Parent / Child / Sibling	\$184,991.63	95
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$170,562.31	65
Parent Education	\$ 68,365.10	55

* 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. An additional note regarding the region table above: Region 6 expenditures (Section I.c) indicate Chafee IL services as a top five service category based strictly on dollar amounts. However, these expenditures include Chafee IL youth from other regions because of the billing procedures from January through June '09. For Chafee IL services specific to region 6 youth, this service does not rank as one of the top five service types because of the limited number of eligible clients and therefore is not included.

The Region 6 workgroup reviewed the 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:

- A number of DCS purchased services do not have a locally-based provider in the county; rather, a staff person may be available for limited hours

- There are few, if any, options of service providers, especially in the more rural counties
- There are waiting lists for some DCS Home-Based Services
- Lack of transportation is a significant barrier to families accessing DCS and non-DCS services

Based on comments and observations from workgroup members, below is a closer look at each county in the region, summarizing common and unique factors; their challenges with the availability/accessibility to services; and their top five utilized DCS services, reflected by expended funds. (For additional information see Section I.b.)

Cass County (population – 39,123; county seat - Logansport)

- Diverse culture in the county, e.g. a high percentage of Hispanic families
- For some services there is a lack of service provider options
- Quality of some drug testing services is unacceptable
- The county historically has relied on home-based services

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$186,434.49
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$ 48,475.74
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$ 45,732.44
Visitation Facilitation – Parent / Child / Sibling	\$ 39,756.50
Foster /Adoptive / Kinship Caregiver Training	\$ 9,949.84

Fulton County (population – 20,319; county seat - Rochester)

- For many services there is a lack of service provider options
- Lack of service provider office or staff person located in the county
- Small rural county with recreation/tourist areas (lakes)
- The county historically has relied on home-based services

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$ 72,325.87
Visitation Facilitation – Parent / Child / Sibling	\$ 20,380.00
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$ 15,320.25
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$ 15,136.00
Foster /Adoptive / Kinship Caregiver Training	\$ 10,073.80

Howard County (population – 83,381; county seat - Kokomo)

- The most urban, populated county in the region
- Transportation, especially transporting child/families to/from services is an issue
- High rate of unemployment is a problem
- Drug abuse, especially methamphetamine labs, are a problem
- Lack of suitable housing for parents of children awaiting reunification
- The county historically has relied on home-based services

Service Type	Expenditure
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$129,480.75
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$ 99,853.50
Parent Education	\$ 66,555.50
Visitation Facilitation – Parent / Child / Sibling	\$ 53,317.75
Foster Home Studies/Updates/Re-Licensing Studies	\$ 30,993.75

Miami County (population – 36,219; county seat - Peru)

- Rural county with a high percentage of low-income population
- High rate of unemployment is a problem
- For some services there is a lack of service provider options
- Lack of service provider office/staff person located in the county
- The county historically has relied on home-based services

Service Type	Expenditure
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$230,056.36
Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Caregiver Training	\$ 10,107.84
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$ 9,840.38
Diagnostic and Evaluation Services	\$ 9,772.75
Visitation Facilitation – Parent/Child/Sibling	\$ 8,239.75

Wabash County (population – 32,706; county seat - Wabash)

- Cultural area with art/convention centers and a small liberal arts college
- Drug abuse (heroin) is a problem
- There is a good collaborative relationship between agencies/organizations and the community
- For some services there is a lack of service provider options

- The county historically has relied on home-based services

Service Type	Expenditure
Visitation Facilitation – Parent / Child / Sibling	\$63,297.63
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$59,961.63
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$18,168.00
Day Treatment	\$17,750.00
Child Advocacy Center	\$14,728.29

[Note: In Section I.c., the Provider Evaluation for Wabash County indicates expenditures for Chafee IL services of \$58,723.50. This figure includes many youth served at White's who were from other regions due to the billing procedures for Jan-June 09. When reviewing Chafee IL for only Wabash County youth, the purchased services were not one of the top five service categories.]

Summary of Spending

Region 6 has historically spent a significant amount of its allocated funds on Home-Based Services, Supervised Visitation, and Homemaker Services. Parent Education, Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Caregiver Training, and Foster Home Studies/Updates/Re-Licensing Studies are also widely utilized throughout the region. The table below indicates the types of DCS service priorities for the region as reflected through their expenditure or purchase of services. The top five DCS service type expenditures for the region from January 1 – August 31, 2009 were:

Service Type	Expenditure*
Home-Based Family Centered Casework Services	\$552,589.36
Homemaker/Parent Aid	\$218,361.99
Visitation Facilitation – Parent / Child / Sibling	\$184,991.63
Home-Based Family Centered Therapy Services	\$170,562.31
Parent Education	\$ 68,365.10

* 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. An additional note regarding the region table above: Region 6 expenditures (Section I) indicate Chafee IL services as a top five service category based on dollar amounts. However, these expenditures include Chafee IL youth from other regions because of the billing procedures from January through June '09. For Chafee IL services specific to region 6 youth, this service does not rank as one of the top five service categories because of the limited number of eligible clients, and therefore is not included.

The Region 6 annualized amounts for 2008 and 2009 of the 2010 budget (see Section I) indicate an overall decrease in the total expenditures for institutions and preservation services in 2009. For each county in the region, child welfare spending on preservation services is considerably higher than juvenile probation spending on preservation services. In Cass and Fulton counties there was a significant reduction in child welfare spending on institutional care. With the exception of Howard County, juvenile probation expended a percentage of funds for preservation services in 2009.

Below is a brief summary of spending on institutional care and preservation services for each county, based on the annualized amounts for 2008 and 2009.

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

Total Expended: \$2,578,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$179,000	7%	\$1,627,000	63%
Preservation	\$417,000	16%	\$355,000	14%

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

Total Expended: \$1,483,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$25,000	2%	\$863,000	58%
Preservation	\$387,000	26%	\$208,000	14%

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

Total Expended: \$1,504,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$804,000	53%	\$298,000	20%
Preservation	\$373,000	25%	\$29,000	2%

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

Total Expended: \$1,032,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$401,000	39%	\$385,000	37%
Preservation	\$233,000	23%	\$13,000	1%

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

Total Expended: \$2,528,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$845,000	34%	\$1,294,000	51%
Preservation	\$387,000	15%	\$2,000	0%

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

Total Expended: \$1,616,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$839,000	52%	\$424,000	26%
Preservation	\$353,000	22%	-	0%

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

Total Expended: \$2,461,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$1,000,000	41%	\$883,000	36%
Preservation	\$408,000	16%	\$170,000	7%

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

Total Expended: \$1,668,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$745,000	45%	\$477,000	29%
Preservation	\$372,000	22%	\$74,000	4%

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

Total Expended: \$1,539,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$300,000	19%	\$933,000	61%
Preservation	\$272,000	18%	\$34,000	2%

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

Total Expended: \$1,378,000*

	Child Welfare		Probation	
	Amount Spent	% of Total	Amount Spent	% of Total
Institutions	\$321,000	23%	\$832,000	61%
Preservation	\$181,000	13%	\$44,000	3%

*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 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), and
- 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 6 workgroup, through analysis of the above data, group discussion, and individual knowledge and experience, developed the following Action Plan. (See Section K for additional information).

1. Wraparound Services in Cass and Fulton Counties

Region 6 has chosen to develop wraparound services in Cass and Fulton Counties. With the addition of wraparound services in these counties, these services will be available to families in every county within the region. Within the first six months of 2010, the Regional Manager and Local Office Directors will convene a meeting of involved parties, including the affected mental health provider, to determine need, available resources, designate a workgroup, and define tasks. Working in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the region will identify funding that includes DMH grant, DCS funding and MRO match by December 2010. Subsequent action steps will be taken to implement wraparound services by the end of November, 2011.

2. Develop Affordable Housing Options for DCS Families

Within the first quarter of 2010, Region 6 will begin the process of examining affordable housing options for DCS families. The initial action step will be to convene a meeting of parties involved in each county, including Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) representatives, to identify available funding options/sources. A workgroup will be created to determine the overall process and to apply for available funding. If funding is approved, the workgroup will work with HUD to define eligibility, develop a referral process, and train staff

regarding the eligibility/referral process. By August 2011, the objective is to implement services that will provide affordable housing options for DCS families in the region.

Summary of Remaining Unmet Needs

Through the Regional Strategic Plan process, the Region 6 workgroup identified five remaining unmet needs. The consensus of the workgroup was the following:

- Support services for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth were rated by survey respondents to be the least available services in the region. The actual impact with regard to services for children is not determined. Current DCS budget allocations do not provide sufficient funds to pursue this as a new service. Funding would need to be secured from outside sources.
- Survey respondents also rated homeless shelters as a least available service. There is a homeless shelter in Kokomo (Howard County) but it is not well known in other counties. Funding for additional shelters would need to come from outside sources.
- Reliable public transportation for all counties within the region remains a significant barrier for DCS families in accessing services.
- Education of the public regarding the mission and values of DCS will be an ongoing project.
- Substance abuse prevention and education is a need in the region. Additional prevention services are needed to address the problem

Information regarding these unmet needs will be shared with appropriate community members within the Region.