

CWG Recommendations: DCS Progress Report

June 14, 2019



COMPLETE



IN PROGRESS



NOT YET INITIATED



CONSIDERED

1

Address substance abuse treatment/mental health needs. Intervention by DCS must not be the first resource for families struggling with substance abuse and mental health needs. Treatment and support must be available outside of DCS for direct self-referral with outreach to be sure parents and other community groups coming into contact with parents know about those resources.

1A

Collaborate with stakeholders. This includes but is not limited to other state agencies (the courts, DOE, DMHA, FSSA, ISDH, the Indiana Commission to Combat Drug Abuse, etc.); providers (Volunteers of America, Valle Vista, etc.); nonprofits (Indiana 2-1-1, Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers, Mental Health America of Indiana, etc.); schools; parent groups; faith-based groups; and other community organizations. **DCS is working with other state agencies and community partners to make self-referral and ongoing engagement in mental health and substance use disorder treatment services possible without DCS intervention. DCS' provider relations advocates are in the process of performing a gap analysis to identify areas in the state that are underserved and in need of providers to serve individuals seeking help through self-referral. Once the gap analysis is complete, a self-referral process will be created and messaged to the public. DCS leadership has been working and will continue to work with other state agencies to discuss and develop ways through which DCS will not be the first resource for families struggling with substance abuse and mental health needs. DCS has engaged with the executive director for Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Enforcement; DMHA; FSSA; several key state providers, Indiana 2-1-1; and community partners and will continue to work with these agencies/groups in order to develop and provide individuals with options for self-referral to resources without DCS intervention.**

1B

Partner and Collaborate with the Courts to consider additional Family Recovery Courts and Drug Courts in strategic locations around the State. It is important that there be collaboration with drug courts as decisions are made about treatment approaches to ensure coordinated development and funding. **Governor Holcomb provided \$2M to assist in this effort. DCS continues to collaborate with the Indiana Supreme Court and the Indiana Office of Court Services (IOCS) to establish additional family recovery courts (FRC) and drug courts in strategic locations around the state. A work plan has been drafted, and DCS is working toward its implementation with IOCS, which will look at outcome data and training. As of June 2019, 22 counties have either been certified, have an FRC or are in the process of implementation. The DCS legal team**

will work with the IOCS to develop training for attorneys regarding the purpose and functions of family recovery courts. DCS is in collaboration with IOCS to provide FRC 101 training to DCS staff to provide a basic overview of the FRC, including how it will utilize referrals and target participants. DCS is also developing a service standard to assist FRCs with a services array for participants.

2

Develop a network of supports for families facing certain challenges (parental substance abuse and mental health issues).

2A

Expand and strengthen START model. DCS should strengthen and expand the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) model. **DCS is strengthening START by spreading the principles of the model across Indiana by way of coordinated trainings involving DCS leadership, providers and other community stakeholders to lay a strong foundation with the potential for expansion in the future. DCS is applying current research to consider the entire family unit in the path to sobriety. START principles that can be expanded have been identified. Locations to expand START principles have been identified, and providers are prepared to include START principles in their SUD treatment protocols. In Indiana, scaling of the START program to fidelity has faced challenges. START relies on family mentors (someone with substance abuse and child welfare history) who are employees of a behavioral health agency. It has been challenging to find qualified family mentors, who are a cornerstone of the START program. DCS plans to hold four trainings annually, moving them around the state to maximize their impact and capture as many DCS field staff and providers as possible. Training was held in Valparaiso and Ft. Wayne on May 30-31, and southern region trainings are slated for Oct. 10-11 (locations TBA). Trainings include follow-up calls approximately six weeks after each training to discuss steps made in each community to adopt these principles and address continued barriers. DCS is also scheduling quarterly addictions treatment provider calls that will include all DCS-contracted substance use disorder treatment providers and individuals from DMHA. Ongoing work focuses on program monitoring and the spreading of START principles across Indiana.**

2B

Consider PCAP. Consider models such as the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) developed by the University of Washington. PCAP is an evidence-based home-visitation model for mothers who abuse alcohol/drugs during pregnancy. PCAP consists of 3 years of intensive services and seeks to help mothers build healthy families and prevent future births of children exposed prenatally to alcohol and drugs. **Research of the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) shows the model is best funded by other sources. The model requires three years of participation, which exceeds the time a family should be involved with DCS as we seek to provide timely permanency for children. Additionally, the model requires service for participants even if their children are removed from their care, and the state is pursuing or has successfully petitioned for termination of parental rights; at that point, the family is no longer being served by DCS, so continued funding is not appropriate. DCS is working with FSSA and DMHA to find DMHA-certified providers who can accept Medicaid to pursue training for PCAP, and a pilot in northeast Indiana is being pursued.**

3

Re-examine certain intake & assessment policies/standards.

3A

Consider redefining neglect. Indiana should re-examine its broad definition of neglect, excluding neglect that is based solely on poverty or limited, one-time lapses in parental judgment. **Recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that the definition of neglect be narrowed to exclude situations where poverty is the only issue leading to**

neglect or inability to provide. The Study Committee adopted DCS' recommendation in its final report. Rep. Gregory Steuerwald authored House Bill 1006, which included the language adopted by the study committee, to address this issue. HB 1006 passed third reading in the House 100-0 on Jan. 22, 2019. House Bill 1006 passed third reading in the Senate 48-0 on April 11, 2019. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 2, 2019, with an effective date of July 1, 2019.

3B

Consider redefining custodian. Indiana should re-examine its broad definition of custodian, limiting the definition to one who is assigned consistent caregiving responsibility (e.g., a day care provider) by the child's legal parent. **Redefining "custodian" could unintentionally restrict DCS' ability to intervene in the life of a child in need of services. After careful consideration, DCS recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that no legislative changes be made to the definition of custodian. The study committee's final report made no changes to the definition of custodian.**

3C

Consider redefining sexual abuse assessments. Redefine sexual abuse assessments under the purview of DCS as those in which a caregiver is the alleged perpetrator. **After careful consideration, DCS recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that no legislative changes be made to redefine sexual abuse assessments. The study committee's final report made no changes to the definition. To ensure thorough assessments are completed in instances of alleged sexual abuse, sexual abuse allegations remain part of the department's purview by Indiana code.**

3D

Assessments. Require that the statutory elements of a report be met for DCS to initiate an assessment regardless of the ages of the children involved.

4

Reconsider one-hour response time. The provision for a one-hour response time for child abuse and/or neglect assessments should be reconsidered. In many states, the most immediate referrals are assigned a 24-hour response time. Within that, child welfare agencies prioritize reports to respond as quickly as possible to certain situations such as those in which law enforcement is requesting immediate child protection assistance, those in which a child is disclosing maltreatment while at school and afraid to return home, and those in which children are in medical facilities that are requesting immediate intervention. Immediate intervention may be necessary in situations such as these, but such circumstances defy precise definition in policy and law and should be assigned to the discretion of the child welfare agency within the limits of a 24-hour response priority. **Despite diligent efforts to make contact with alleged victims within one hour, this standard is often difficult to meet, due in part to the geography of the state. Additionally, there are times when it is in the child's best interest for law enforcement to take the lead on initial contact, with DCS to follow up afterward. Timely follow-up remains important. Recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that IC 31-33-8-1 (d) be amended to increase the 1-hour response time to 4 hours. The study committee changed the response time to 2 hours in its final report. Rep. Gregory Steuerwald authored House Bill 1006 to address this issue. HB 1006 passed third reading in the House 100-0 on Jan. 22, 2019. House Bill 1006 passed third reading in the Senate 48-0 on April 11, 2019. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 2, 2019, with an effective date of July 1, 2019.**

5

Extend time limit to complete assessments. The 30-day assessment time limit, although adequate in some instances, may provide inadequate time in others for fully engaging family members and their support networks in assessment and safety planning. An upper limit of 60 days would be preferable and allow assessors to take additional time when needed to achieve a better outcome.

5A

Update policy. DCS is extending the time limit for the completion of a child abuse and/or neglect assessment from 30 days to 45 days. All assessments assigned on or after 1/1/19 will reflect the new 45-day timeframe. **DCS agreed current policy allows inadequate time to complete reports but found the recommendation of a 60-day time limit to be excessive. DCS' FCM and FCM supervisor advisory councils reviewed the recommendation and advised the policy should be extended to no more than 45 days to ensure front-line staff members have sufficient time to design and implement effective safety plans for families. Change became effective 1/1/19.**

5B

Update statute. IC 31-33-7-8 states that DCS currently has 30 days (in alignment with DCS' current assessment time limit policy) to provide a status report on child abuse and/or neglect assessments submitted by certain reporters. **Recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that IC 31-33-7-8 be amended to increase the amount of time allowed to provide the status update of the assessment to the reporter from 30 days to 45 days to align with DCS' policy on time limits to complete assessments. The study committee adopted DCS' recommendation in its final report. Rep. Gregory Steuerwald authored House Bill 1006 to address this issue. HB 1006 passed third reading in the House 100-0 on Jan. 22, 2019. House Bill 1006 passed third reading in the Senate 48-0 on April 11, 2019. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 2, 2019, with an effective date of July 1, 2019.**

6

Engage more families voluntarily (lessen court involvement). Indiana children and families would likely benefit from lower rates of court involvement in the context of child welfare intervention. DCS should attempt to engage families voluntarily and encourage safety planning for their children and participation in services to support child safety and well-being whenever possible. **DCS field and legal teams are investigating the options that are available and/or could be created to allow DCS to engage families voluntarily in safety planning for their children. The field and legal teams will make a recommendation to the director by Sept. 30, 2019.**

Under current law, the use of service referral agreements (SRAs) requires DCS to involve the court. Using SRAs would work against CWG's recommendation of lessening court involvement.

In addition, DCS has been discussing with the Juvenile Justice Improvement Committee and the Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges how earlier informal intervention with a family might result in reduced formal court intervention overall. Earlier informal intervention might also result in more positive outcomes in a timelier manner.

7

Reclaim family-centered practices that solicit, value and use input from families and their support systems in accordance with the model that serves as the foundation for DCS' approach to child welfare.

7A

Relaunch practice model with executive team. DCS should reclaim the family-centered practice model that it adopted shortly after its formation. **Executive training completed in November 2018.**

7B

Relaunch practice model statewide. DCS should formally relaunch its family-centered practice model to DCS staff and providers. **Relaunch to staff, foster parents and providers to be complete by 12/31/19, followed by relaunch to the courts by July 1, 2020.**

7C

Decrease cohort class sizes to 25 or fewer trainees. Additional trainer positions are needed to enable cohort classroom training to become more skills-focused. The staff development and training division should be given enough additional trainers to permit class sizes of no more than 25 trainees. **Three new trainer positions were hired and started on Feb. 11, 2019. All future cohort classes will have 25 or fewer trainees.**

7D

Expand peer coach consultant team. Expand the number of peer coach consultants focused on strengthening the child and family teaming process by modeling team meeting preparation and facilitation and providing feedback to supervisors, local mentors and family case managers. **Nine new peer coach consultant positions were created to ensure best practices are applied consistently across the state, doubling the size of the peer coach consultant team and allowing DCS to have 1 peer coach consultant in each of its 18 regions. 9 consultants and 1 new peer coach consultant supervisor were hired by April 2019.**

7E

Increase mentoring. Create positions for a full-time or part-time mentor in smaller counties and multiple mentors in larger counties. Mentors should be selected based on their commitment to practice and skills in applying the DCS practice model. **DCS is working to determine the appropriate number and scope of work of full-time mentors for larger counties. Four additional family case managers have been assigned to the DCS Rapid Safety Feedback (RSF) team. The RSF team uses a coaching and mentoring approach to engage with staff statewide in a dialogue about safety threats.**

7F

Launch regional cohort training. Pilot the regional delivery of cohort training in a single regional location to test the benefits and cost effectiveness of closer proximity to participants. **First regional cohort training was held on Dec. 3, 2018, in Knox County. DCS plans to continue hosting regional cohort trainings; a second began May 20, 2019, in Jackson County, and a third is planned for July 15, 2019, in St. Joseph County. Note: Survey of Knox County cohort suggests participants enjoyed increased interaction among trainees, prefer regional option.**

7G

Child and Family Team Meetings. Strengthen the use of child and family team meetings. A number of seasoned staff who experienced the original teaming implementation process acknowledge that the quality of team meetings has declined generally as the training has become less intensive and as prior facilitation experts have left the system. **The hiring of additional peer coach consultants ensures sustainability of child and family team meetings (CFTM) that adhere to the practice model. These additional consultants are working closely with county offices to ensure a continual and seamless process of training all FCMs on the team meeting practice-model process.**

8

Improve outcomes for children exiting foster care.

8A

Extend older youth services (Chafee from age 21 to age 23). DCS already permits youth age 18-21 to continue to receive services. CWG recommends that DCS consider extending the age in which foster youth can receive services to age 23. **The Children's Bureau, an office of the Administration for Children & Families (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services), approved the Chafee certification request on 12/27/18. The OYS policy, service standards and contracts have been updated, went into effect 2-1-19.**

8B

Extend Collaborative Care (older youth) services from age 20 to age 21. Increasing to age 21 maintains step-down relationship between Collaborative Care and Chafee services. **Recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that the eligibility age to remain in Collaborative Care be increased from age 20 to 21. The study committee adopted DCS' recommendation in its final report. Rep. Gregory Steuerwald authored HB 1006 to address this issue. HB 1006 passed third reading in the House 100-0 on Jan. 22, 2019. House Bill 1006 passed third reading in the Senate 48-0 on April 11, 2019. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 2, 2019, with an effective date of July 1, 2019.**

9

Adjust caseload standard for family case managers.

9A

Establish new caseload standard. Establish a caseload standard of no more than 17 families (not children) for in-home services and no more than 15 children for out-of-home care in adherence to the Child Welfare League of America best practice standards. **Recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that the caseload standard statute be amended to change the maximum number of active cases (to be carried by a family case manager) related to ongoing in-home services included in the caseload calculation from 17 children to 12 families (because family case managers conduct family-centered casework). DCS also recommended decreasing the maximum number of active cases related to ongoing out-of-home placements to be used for caseload calculation purposes from 17 children to 13 children. The study committee adopted DCS' recommendation in its final report. Rep. Gregory Steuerwald authored HB 1006 to address this issue. HB 1006 passed third reading in the House 100-0 on Jan. 22, 2019. House Bill 1006 passed third reading in the Senate 48-0 on April 11, 2019. The bill was signed into law by Gov. Eric Holcomb on May 2, 2019, with an effective date of July 1, 2019.**

9B

Recommit to in-home visits. Require case managers visit with parents in their own homes at least once per month as caseloads approach the caseload target. **Regions 1 and 4 have begun piloting this program. To better engage parents located in different parts of the state, DCS is considering dividing the state into sections and sending FCM teams out to each section to see parents in that section.**

10

Increase capacity to analyze data to improve outcomes for children.

10A

Create data analysis unit. DCS should create a small unit made up of data professionals who can take responsibility for analyzing the voluminous data currently being collected and identifying new opportunities to assess the effects of system interventions in the lives of children and families. **DCS has created and is in the process of filling seven new positions (including data analysts, research analysts and an epidemiologist) for the data analysis unit.**

10B

Identify key outcomes and performance measures. The data analysis unit should work closely with child welfare program leadership to identify a limited set of key outcome and process measures that can be displayed in regular management reports and disaggregated by region and county so that staff at all levels of the organization can regularly assess their performance and use data to develop and test questions about practices that improve safety and permanency outcomes for children and families. **Once created, the data analysis unit will work with the deputy director of strategic solutions and agency transformation to determine which outcomes should be measured.**

11

Strengthen quality assurance and quality improvement (QA/QI) framework.

11A

Establish hiring criteria. Analyze staffing needs and ensure those leading the QA/QI work have either practice experience or the opportunity to learn in some detail what is involved in front-line child welfare practice and supervision. **Hiring criteria for the QA/QI team indicates preference for those with child welfare field experience.**

11B

Revive Quality Service Reviews (QSR). Add or reassign resources to build on DCS' QSR expertise, experience and baseline data to revive the QSR: Indiana has invested considerable time and energy in the development of QSR and has a valuable baseline of information connecting practice with out-

comes at the case level. DCS does not currently have a substitute for QSR's ability to provide feedback on what is working and what is not. Without regular systemic feedback, validated at the case level, systems tend to bog down in competing subjective explanations about why things are the way they are, and what to do to improve. **DCS created three quality assurance analyst positions and one supervisor position to revive the quality service review (QSR) process. The review process is comprised of two teams, each team has a supervisor and four quality assurance analysts. The supervisors are working to solicit feedback from field staff and stakeholders to create a Practice Model Review (PMR). The PMR is designed to take components of the QSR and the requirements of the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process in an effort to better understand how the system is working, share the information with staff and stakeholders in an actionable manner, and improve the system as needed. The first PMR pilot is scheduled for October 2019.**

11C

Involve others in child fatality review process. Take active steps to involve sister state agencies, community partners, providers and the public to develop a deeper and more contextualized understanding of the factors contributing to child deaths and of those factors promoting child safety. **DCS is working to exchange data with the Management and Performance Hub (MPH) in an effort to understand who the children are who had child welfare involvement prior to their death (particularly when DCS is not involved in the child fatality review). Once this is completed, DCS and ISDH will work together to better understand the factors involved in the life and death of the identified children and share learning related to child death reviews across systems and stakeholders. DCS will continue to partner with ISDH and Child Fatality Review Panels across the state to more fully understand the factors and trends involved in child fatalities in an effort to reduce child fatalities in Indiana. Additionally, DCS is partnering with Casey Family Programs to implement a safe systems improvement tool to better understand child-related safety trends within Indiana.**

11D

Share quality assurance information. DCS should share its strengths and needs with its community partners and stakeholders in order to allow the community to play a role in achieving better outcomes for children and youth. **Director Stigdon and members of the Strategic Solutions and Agency Transformation team provided information to local office directors on how to access data and use reports. DCS will continue to refine opportunities to share information with DCS employees at all levels and empower employees to share information with their local teams and stakeholders. Practice Indicator (PI) reports are available online and updated on a monthly basis for stakeholders to access. DCS is also working to develop a dashboard that will provide information in a visual way to improve child welfare practice in Indiana.**

11E

Improve reports and data. Improve the organization and presentation of reports and data to increase its usefulness and impact for its end user, e.g., QA/QI information to management, field personnel and the community. **DCS has been developing dashboards with the use of Tableau in an effort to visualize data that can be used to train employees on how data can improve case management. DCS is working with Casey Family Programs to build out additional dashboards and to meet the needs of various employees. DCS has engaged a Value Stream Steering Team (VSST) that has met and will work on classifying and building reports and data in easily accessible ways that help employees use data and information to improve outcomes for children and families.**

12

Better support Family Case Manager (FCM) supervisors.

12A

Improve FCM Supervisor-to-FCM ratio. Improve FCM Supervisor-to-FCM ratio to 1:5 (the Child Welfare League of America standard for front-line supervisors). The role of the supervisor is critically important in child welfare. Reviewers consistently found that supervisors in DCS have between six and

11 family case managers under their supervision. The best child welfare systems are those in which supervisors have the time, knowledge and skill to develop and support excellent casework practitioners. **On 9/2/17, the DCS ratio was 1:8.32. On 6/10/19, it was 1:5.48. Will be complete by 12/31/19.**

12B

Hire additional division managers. The aforementioned change (12A) necessitates additional supervisors for the next level of management. **DCS has hired 15 additional division managers: three for Marion County; two for Delaware county; one each for St. Joseph, Floyd, Vigo, Tippecanoe, Elkhart, Madison, Vanderburgh and Monroe counties. The hotline division and the foster care division each also added a division manager.**

12C

Encourage supervisor input; form FCM Supervisor Advisory Council. Develop a structure through which supervisors can have input into decisions that affect policy and practice. This advisory council helps to ensure the voice of FCM supervisors informs agency policy and practice. **DCS created an FCM supervisor advisory council in August 2018. DCS' deputy director of field operations oversees the advisory council. Results from a staff survey administered by the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute noted other examples "of the positive impact of the new leadership on organizational climate were the advisory councils recently created for FCMs and supervisors. Staff considered these advisory councils to be an important step in addressing the gaps in communication and lack of inclusivity in decision-making."**

12D

Prioritize supervisor training. Ensure supervisors are first to experience training in new skills and practice approaches, i.e., before it is offered to family case managers in pre-service or other training. **Three leadership development advisors were hired; all began by March 2019. These advisors will collaborate with local office directors to provide on-site office training as needed and support local leadership in navigating special staffing circumstances.**

13

Improve agency culture and climate. Conduct an inquiry into the extent to which culture and climate are factors that negatively impact recruitment, retention and development of high performing front-line staff. This inquiry should recognize, while there are some factors, such as compensation, that affect climate across the state, many culture and climate factors are localized and thus warrant individual, office by office identification and solutions based on direct input from front-line staff.

13A

Form FCM Advisory Council. The council will also help provide feedback on ways to improve the workplace culture within DCS. This advisory council helps to ensure the voice of FCMs helps inform agency policy and practice. **FCM advisory council created in August 2018, will provide recommendations on ways to improve culture and climate. DCS' deputy director of field operations oversees the advisory council.**

13B

Adjust salaries. Consider whether pay is commensurate with that of other positions in Indiana requiring similar education and equal pressures related to job stress, potential liability and after-hours work. Comparisons might also be drawn with other states having similar costs of living and substantially lower turnover rates. FCM turnover can result in longer stays for children in foster care, delays in timely assessments of allegations of abuse and neglect, disruptions in child placements and an increased rate of repeat maltreatment. Increased salaries improve retention of current employees, resulting in less case disruption for children, as well as aid in the recruitment of qualified applicants to work for DCS. **Salary adjustments were made on 10/17/18. More than 87% of DCS staff received a salary adjustment. Monthly family case manager turnover rate has been trending downward since salary adjustments were announced; from CY2017 to CY2018, FCM turnover dropped by 18.7%.**

13C

Assess organizational culture. Survey from National Child Welfare Workforce Institute on organizational culture and climate sent to staff, interviews conducted; results delivered in April 2019. Baseline conducted in 2015 through National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI). Latest results show:

- Agency-wide support for Director Stigdon's approach to leadership
- Staff appreciated making employee well-being a priority
- Those in leadership roles behave in an honest, fair and ethical manner
- Recent additional hiring of FCMs viewed as beneficial
- Many focus group participants cited the recent salary increase as an indication that agency leadership is demonstrating a renewed focus on taking care of employees
- Overall job satisfaction showed statistically significant increases for FCMs and supervisors
- The agency has made considerable progress improving the organizational climate and addressing the culture of fear evident in the 2015 baseline assessment

14

Clearly communicate commitment to support front-line personnel.

14A

Personal Liability. CWG noted that child welfare staff are unduly fearful to the extent that they place concern about the proximal consequences of personal liability related to case actions above the immediate and long-term well-being of children and families. **After consulting with the Attorney General's office, DCS determined it is satisfied with the personal liability protection statutes for DCS employees. DCS can improve by more effectively communicating to staff the rights and protections they have under the law. After careful consideration, DCS recommended to the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary that no legislative changes be made to the DCS personal liability statute (IC 31-25-2-2.5). The study committee's final report made no changes to the DCS personal liability statute.**

14B

Promote culture of safety. DCS is working with Chapin Hall (a policy research institution at the University of Chicago that focuses on child welfare and family well-being) to instill a culture of safety within the agency. DCS is engaged with Chapin Hall's Safety Culture Quality Improvement partnership, which includes 9 other child welfare agencies. DCS is working with Chapin Hall to instill a culture of safety within the agency. Safety culture survey was conducted in February 2019.

15

Retention and Recruitment of DCS Staff. Develop a clear strategy to recruit and retain front-line staff (including supervisors) and provide meaningful and ongoing training opportunities.

15A

Establish preferred hiring criteria. Establish selection criteria that state a preference for staff with a BSW or MSW. **Job postings for family case managers and family case manager supervisors now indicate a preference for applicants holding a BSW or MSW.**

15B

Adjust salaries. Consider whether pay is commensurate with that of other positions in Indiana requiring similar education and equal pressures related to job stress, potential liability and after-hours work. Comparisons might also be drawn with other states having similar costs of living and substantially lower turnover rates. FCM turnover can result in longer stays for children in foster care, delays in timely assessments of allegations of abuse and neglect, disruptions in child

placements and an increased rate of repeat maltreatment. Increased salaries improve retention of current employees, resulting in less case disruption for children, as well as aid in the recruitment of qualified applicants to work for DCS. **Salary adjustments were made on 10/17/18. More than 87% of DCS staff received a salary adjustment. Monthly family case manager turnover rate has been trending downward since salary adjustments were announced; from CY2017 to CY2018, FCM turnover dropped by 18.7%.**

15C

Establish a career ladder. Provide a career path that affords higher pay to staff with social work degrees and has opportunities for advancement in pay and status based on acquisition of additional certifications in specific practice skills. **DCS is working with the Indiana State Personnel Department to create a policy providing a one-time base pay increases for staff members holding a BSW and/or MSW with a goal of implementation by Dec. 31, 2019. Additionally, DCS is researching career-ladder models for family case managers and family case manager supervisors to encourage front-line staff to remain with the agency long term.**

15D

Provide ongoing training opportunities. Provide front-line staff and middle managers ongoing training opportunities to provide exposure to cutting-edge knowledge in the child welfare field. **DCS plans to relaunch the IU/Child Welfare Management Innovations Institute (leadership program) in 2019 to increase training opportunities for DCS staff. The institute provides intense focused development opportunities for high-performing DCS managers. The program emphasizes cultural competency, diversity and leadership development. Staff development is also working on expanding its library; a curriculum writer and instructional design manager will be hired to work on expanding training opportunities for staff.**

15E

Recruit more social work graduates. Work in partnership with state university schools of social work to improve recruitment of social work graduates and develop incentives (including higher rates of pay) for staff to pursue an MSW. **DCS is working with the IU School of Social Work to expand the number of employees eligible each year to participate in the BSW and MSW programs. Staff development has been meeting with local university leaders and college coordinators to discuss marketing strategies to attract students to the BSW scholars program.**

15F

Convert Child Services Assistant 5 contractor positions to state positions. This works to boost morale among employees who feel disconnected from the DCS workforce, which will reduce turnover. Clerical staff take ownership of many day-to-day operations that would otherwise fall to FCMs, allowing them to focus on their casework. **All legal division child services assistant 5 positions have been converted; remainder of staff to be completed by July 31, 2019.**

16

Take steps to decentralize some decision-making. DCS should identify opportunities to decentralize decisions that directly affect work with children and families. DCS should form a work group of local family case managers, supervisors, local office directors and selected state office staff to review local decision-making authority and its limits related to both policy and spending. The suggested group should be chaired by a local office director and have the responsibility of identifying areas of policy and spending decision-making now held centrally that can be relegated to the county level. The agency shall empower regional leaders to make decisions on local spending in an effort to best support their communities. **DCS formed a decentralization work group, and it first met on Sept. 26, 2018. The work group consists of 25 DCS employees from across the state. The work group is being co-chaired by 2 local office directors. Recommendations and final report identifying areas of potential decentralization related to policy and spending will be completed by July 31, 2019.**

17

Critically assess CHINS outlier cases.

17A

Identify counties whose children consistently exceed the state average length of time in care. Critically assess counties that are outliers in the time of involvement in CHINS cases from open to closure to determine what factors contribute to cases remaining open for lengths of time that exceed the state average by 20 percent or more. Longer length of involvement with families than necessary to ensure child safety and permanency consumes precious resources better allocated to families in need of intensive intervention and delays resolution for families. **The DCS Strategic Solutions and Agency Transformation (SSAT) division has identified the top 10 outlier counties and developed a data dashboard with Tableau. Preliminary findings of factors contributing to above-average cases were presented to DCS executive leadership, and an overview was given to the Juvenile Justice Improvement Committee. DCS employees, a representative from the courts and CASA were involved in a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) to better understand the underlying issues related to untimely filing of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), which was one of the identified factors. The legal and field divisions in consultation with the courts developed solutions to eliminate the backlog of cases without a termination petition filed. The improvements from the RIE have been sustained, and DCS will share the improvement work with four additional outlier counties by July 30, 2019. Another factor for outlier cases is the determination of eligibility for adoption payments. To better understand the underlying issues for adoption eligibility determination delays, an RIE is planned for the beginning of August 2019.**

17B

Implement rapid permanency reviews (RPR). RPRs were created by Casey Family Programs and increase permanency for children in out-of-home care for two-plus years. **DCS is working with Casey Family programs to implement rapid permanency reviews (RPRs) for long-stayers close to adoption. Pilot programs will be in full rollout by Dec. 31, 2019. Four new permanency consultant positions were created to implement the RPR and the PRT+.**

17C

Implement PRT Plus (PRT+) in one region. DCS should pilot PRT+ in one region to reduce the number of children who leave the child welfare system without reaching permanency. Bringing non-DCS personnel who are knowledgeable about permanency options and/or have specific knowledge of the child's situation to the discussion helps DCS, the GAL/CASA and court arrive at a permanency plan. **Permanency Round Table Plus (PRT+) will be implemented and evaluated in Region 4; pilot scheduled to begin in first quarter and be completed by Dec. 31, 2019. Four new permanency consultant positions were created to implement the Rapid Permanency Review (RPR) and the PRT+. RPR will be piloted in regions 16 and 7. A two-day training/orientation will be held for interior stakeholders June 18-19, 2019. Two specific counties in regions 16 and 7 will implement the RPR process first, with a multidisciplinary team of permanency consultants and adoption specialists leading the process.**

18

Maximize use of Medicaid for services.

18A

Hire Medicaid expert. Hire or contract a Medicaid expert with experience working with child welfare and behavioral health systems to assist in maximizing the use of Medicaid for services. **Medicaid expert has been hired; Chris Fletcher, deputy chief financial officer of Medicaid initiatives, joined DCS on 1/7/19.**

19

Legal representation. Critically assess and take steps to resolve factors that contribute to attorney turnover and lack of expertise in planning and participating in evidentiary hearings.

19A

Adjust attorney salaries. Attorney pay and job responsibility should be examined as it compares to other public sector attorney positions in Indiana and pay adjusted accordingly. Attorney turnover can result in longer stays for children in foster care, delays in timely assessments of allegations of abuse and neglect, disruptions in child placements and an increased rate of repeat maltreatment. Increased salaries improve retention of current employees, resulting in less case disruption for children, as well as aid in the recruitment of qualified applicants to work for DCS. **Salary adjustments were made on 10/17/18.**

19B

Determine optimal caseloads for DCS attorneys. Work with the Indiana Office of Court Services, using the American Bar Association (ABA) standards as guidance to determine optimal caseloads for DCS attorneys. **Legal department provided recommendation to the director that caseloads not exceed 75 cases per attorney with 60 cases being the optimal caseload.**

19C

Develop standards of training for DCS attorneys. Work with the Indiana Office of Court Services and the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, using the American Bar Association standards as guidance, to determine and develop training standards for DCS attorneys, especially in the area of trial advocacy and develop an apprentice type of training at the beginning of employment. **Legal department has divided its practice development and training unit into two divisions, one that focuses on child welfare law and professional development and another that focuses on trial advocacy, training and support. New positions have been created to run this unit. These new positions include an assistant general counsel to oversee the unit, another chief counsel to run the trial advocacy division and two new staff attorneys (totaling six staff attorneys in the unit) to coordinate the day-to-day responsibilities of training and legal support. Additionally, the legal department has developed a training course focused on Indiana rules of evidence and trial procedure. DCS worked with IPAC to create the multi-tiered trial advocacy course covering basic and advanced litigation skills. This is a multi-disciplined training that includes DCS attorneys, family case managers, defense attorneys, court-appointed special advocates/guardians ad litem and judges, training together and practicing their newly learned/refined skills together in a mock trial setting. The course piloted in Tippecanoe County in April 2019 and was met with great success from all professionals involved. The training is scheduled to take place again in July 2019 and in five other jurisdictions in the state by Dec. 31, 2019.**

19D

Improve long-range planning. Support other stakeholders (e.g., the courts and the Indiana Public Defender Commission) in the improved representation of parents involved in CHINS cases. **DCS has been working with the courts, the General Assembly and public defenders to develop a long-range plan to improve representation for parents in CHINS cases. The plan includes engaging parents earlier in the process, e.g., pre-filing, in order to provide them counsel to potentially avoid government intervention. This pre-filing engagement could involve the appointment of a social worker for the parent, who can review the DCS assessment and provide guidance, feedback and validation on the direction of the case. The plan also includes exploring the use of lawyers as a referral source for parents who need legal advice to remove barriers that potentially create risk factors for their children. A work group was formed to address these issues and is actively researching how DCS could implement such measures through the use of Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) funds and IV-E federal reimbursement for legal services related to the representation of parents in CHINS cases. The work group will propose recommendations by August 30, 2019.**

20

Improve partnership with agency providers. Engage providers in a demonstration of partnership with a focus on what the provider community needs in order to best serve children and families. This may include, for example, assessment of current policies or procedures regarding audit requirements, data collection or strengthening assessment of outcomes for services.

20A

Hire provider relations advocates. DCS will create three provider relations advocate positions to be posted around the state to build and strengthen relationships between DCS and service providers, who should have direct input on the services provided to Hoosier children. **All three provider relations advocates (PRAs) started on Jan. 28, 2019. Each advocate represents a distinct region of the state (north, central or south). The PRAs have recurring meetings with members of IARCA and other providers around the state. The PRAs have developed and are utilizing a feedback form that they provide to the various DCS divisions. In addition, the PRAs are working with DCS staff development to implement practice-model training for the provider community.**