

Florida Department of Children and Families



Strategic Direction 2009 - 2011



Charlie Crist
Governor



George Sheldon
Secretary

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Governor's Intent

Governor Crist's leadership has established an environment in which his administration will serve the people. The Governor has established "an ethical and hard working administration that will reflect Florida's diversity, that will listen to your ideas and that will fight for you, the people of Florida." Governor Crist firmly believes that leaders in administration must demonstrate integrity and "work hard with me everyday to provide hope, safety, and opportunity for every Floridian."

Governor Crist has provided guidance to the Department through public statements, Executive Orders, and in conversations with the Secretary. The key Executive Orders are summarized below; however, the Governor has provided one simple overall directive to the Department, **"Do the right thing."**

EXECUTIVE ORDERS

1. **Ethics, Plain Language and Customer Service:** Continue to implement Code of Ethics, Plain Language and Customer Services tasks as outlined in Executive Order 07-01. See Appendix B for specific tasks.
2. **Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Continue to implement actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as delineated in Executive Order 07-126.
3. **Open Government:** Continue to follow the Citizens' Open Government Bill of Rights to support citizen access to Florida state agencies.

Secretary's Strategic Direction for 2009 - 2011

Secretary Sheldon's Strategic Direction gives guidance and summarizes the Department's major initiatives for 2009 - 2011. This document provides the Secretary's intent on what the Department and its partners are expected to accomplish this year and in the future. The Secretary's guidance drives the strategic initiatives outlined in this document and provides the essential framework for developing operational business plans which depict how the Department will achieve these initiatives, when they will be accomplished and what metrics will be used to measure progress.

DCF Mission

- ✓ **Protect the vulnerable**
 - ✓ **Promote strong and economically self-sufficient families**
 - ✓ **Advance personal and family recovery and resiliency**
-

Major Accomplishments in 2007 and 2008

Over the past two years, the professional and caring people of the Department of Children and Families, along with our partners, have substantially improved the social services system in Florida. Major accomplishments are highlighted below and a more detailed list of accomplishments is found in Appendix A.

DEPARTMENT-WIDE

- Provided focused action through a commitment to Common Sense, a Sense of Urgency and a Sense of Community
- Reorganized the Department by establishing Regions and Circuits, restructuring DCF Legal Services, and adding a Criminal Justice Director and Regional Criminal Justice Coordinators responsible for enhancing child location efforts
- Redesigned the Refugee Services Program, strengthening the linkage with other services and communities
- Dismissed 1,000 lawsuits and moved to settle cases where continuing to litigate was not in the best interest of the State or the children involved
- Assisted in implementing the most comprehensive inter-agency agreement to serve individuals and families in Florida communities
- Implemented “Operation Full Employment” leading to the employment of over 100 former foster youth with the Department and with partner agencies
- A total of 2,388 statewide documents were identified for conversion to plain language. The conversion was completed on December 22, 2008

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Reduced the adult forensic wait list to zero
- Expanded competency restoration services, both in-jail and in the community
- Completed all contracts for the Community Reinvestment Grant legislation empowering counties to divert individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system
- Developed legislation and community concepts for the Supreme Court Study to transform the substance abuse and mental health system of care for individuals with mental illness
- Initiated the state’s community Comprehensive, Continuous, Integrated Systems of Care, which contains the Department’s co-occurring treatment initiative
- Significantly reduced the Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed waiting list for community competency services

CHILD WELFARE/ ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- Finalized 3,674 adoptions – the highest one-year total ever achieved
- Promulgated written Rights of Foster Care Children
- Implemented reforms to the Child Abuse Hotline providing priority attention to calls most likely to impact safety of children

- Continued implementation of the statewide child welfare (title IV-E) demonstration waiver and safely reduced the number of children in out-of-home care by over 25 percent (more than 7,000 children)
- Implemented recommendations by the Child Protection Task Force including achieving dramatic increases in children seen monthly, and reductions in the number of missing children statewide
- Implemented the first Adult Protective Services Statewide Peer Review Quality Assurance process designed to assess program effectiveness.
- Established a Select Advisory Panel for Adult Protective Services and held the first adult protective services training event for over 300 staff from the Department and partner agencies
- Began the Home for the Holidays initiative to reunite children with their families over Christmas vacation

ACCESS

- Won the Ash Institute, Kennedy School of Government, Innovation in Government Award
- Significantly improved the Food Stamp accuracy rate, resulting in a bonus award of \$5.4 million for most improved state
- Implemented on-line access to benefit information through MyACCESS Account
- Implemented pilot sites in each Region to provide same day Electronic Benefit (EBT) card issuance
- Partnered with Louisiana to develop the capacity for interstate processing of disaster benefit applications

Secretary's Guidance

We must never forget the importance of our work at the Department of Children and Families. Every decision we make and every action we take affects children, vulnerable adults and their families. We are the last hope and “safety net” for so many people.

We are protecting children and teenagers who have been worn down and traumatized from abuse and neglect. We are preserving the dignity and comfort of adults who are unable to fully care for themselves because of disability or the frailties of age. We are confronting the devastation of substance abuse and mental illness. We are providing critical economic assistance so that families can put food on the table in bad times. We are helping dysfunctional families get their lives back together.

As our workloads increase, as federal and state funding decrease, and as our challenges seem ever greater, we cannot forget those who need us. We cannot forget the price that will be paid by our most vulnerable citizens if we don't do our jobs right every single time. We cannot forget the special responsibility we have to serve Floridians and to protect Florida's children.

An important part of our work is reaching out to the people we serve and their advocacy organizations. Just as our initiative to reduce out-of-home care was driven by the personal stories and recommendations of former foster children, we will continue to seek out

opportunities for consumer input in our circuits and program offices, and will continue to partner with existing advocacy groups.

When the challenges seem greater than ever, we must be more determined than ever. We can't accept just getting by. We have to commit ourselves to creating the best social service system in America. It will not be because we have the most money. It will be because we do the most with what we have. We will continue to rely on our most valuable asset, the dedication and innovation of our employees and the employees of Florida and community partners. They are our strength and we will build on that foundation to meet the challenges before us.

We are in the midst of very difficult economic times. Certainly people sometimes wonder how we will get the job done with the resources we have. But in our line of work, we know there will never be enough. We must keep finding new ways to get the job done.

That has become a hallmark of our agency – innovation. We have changed our Hotline practices so that we better target our investigative resources. We have used technology to handle the rising number of ACCESS calls without more counselors. We are implementing mobile devices, championed by Governor Crist, to reduce the administrative tasks of our investigators and put more information literally at their fingertips. We have embraced new and better ways to integrate substance abuse and mental health services into all service components. We have moved Refugee Services to Miami, where the largest number of our customers live. We have reduced our headquarters staff in favor of putting more authority and capacity in the regions and circuits.

We have to rededicate ourselves to never failing a single child.

We must reunify families when we safely can, and do it with a sense of urgency, common sense, and a sense of community. We must provide timely, effective substance abuse and mental health services to prevent the devastation of the family.

And when we cannot keep a family together, we have to give every child a safe, stable home and a forever family. We have to do better by our foster children, who, in the words of author, and former foster child Andrew Bridge, “wake each morning without their parents and each day are brave enough to do their best on their own.”

We cannot leave these children and teenagers on their own. Not the foster children, not the children we leave in their homes, for whom we may be the last hope of restoring a functional family. We also have to be there for the adults we are called upon to protect as they cope with disabilities or the frailties of old age. Our mission is to turn despair into hope. Our mission is to be there so that people are not on their own during the toughest times. Our mission is to give them hope until they can succeed on their own.

This Department has been very successful over the past two years. We have helped more vulnerable people and families than ever before, and we have done it in a time of budget reductions. The people of this agency have risen to higher standards of performance. We are dedicated public servants. We have been accountable for our mistakes even as we have been proud of our successes. In the process, we have earned the respect of government leaders, opinion leaders and the people of Florida.

We cannot rest, however. So much remains to be done, and the economic challenges are greater than ever. Although we have reduced our children in foster care by twenty five percent, we still have almost 22,000 children in out-of-home care, and we have a growing number of calls about abuse, neglect or abandonment of children. We have unprecedented growth in applications for economic benefits to families, and the economic crisis has resulted in even greater needs for mental health and substance abuse services.

When people need our services, they need them NOW. A family in crisis cannot wait. A hungry family cannot wait. Abused or neglected people cannot wait. An individual experiencing a breakdown from stress, mental illness, or substance abuse cannot wait. A frail elderly person cannot wait. We have to act with a sense of urgency as well as a determination to help them persevere and put their lives back together.

Dreams and hope cannot wait, either. When we take a child or teenager into our custody and care, we have the same responsibility any parent has to pursue what is best for that young person. We can call it “temporary shelter,” but even a single day is a long time to a young child.

We must continue to challenge our old ways of doing business. We need to be innovative, and we have to focus on results. Customers don’t need policy changes, they need services. They should not have to go from place to place looking for help. We need to do the job of helping them with their family’s needs, and if that means breaking down the silos of programs and organizations, we have to do that. We have created the idea of “champions” to keep our clients from falling between separate agencies. We have to make sure that people who need different services within our own agency and from various providers also have a champion who will make sure they have the services they need. We have to focus on our customer’s needs without being bogged down by our internal organizational structure. One example is the work we have been doing to integrate substance abuse and mental health services into local Circuit operations, particularly with the child welfare system. This integration must become permanent, and we have to do the same with other social issues, such as domestic violence.

We also have to go further. We cannot wait until a child or an adult is hurt. We need to focus on preventing harm. We need to dig into root causes and work to solve them.

Most obviously, we need to focus on the deterioration of family life and its causes. Mental illness, substance abuse, economic stress, domestic violence and homelessness devastate families. We have made great strides at getting individuals with mental illness out of the criminal system and into the community. We need to help people identify signs of addiction and mental illness and seek treatment before they end up in crisis or in the criminal justice system. We need to help families suffering economic stress or homelessness deal with those problems before family relationships deteriorate into abuse or neglect. We need to deal with these issues sooner, so that we do not later deal with abused, abandoned, neglected or dead children.

We also need to focus on prevention in all parts of our Department.

We need to look at root causes of bad outcomes in cases we manage. Whenever a child dies, we need to be aggressive about learning and disseminating every lesson we can to prevent another tragedy. When something goes wrong in foster care, we need to be transparent in our approach,

look thoroughly at decisions that created that situation and aggressively change our decision-making process to avoid the same mistakes next time. Every lawsuit should be cause to re-examine our actions and the way we function. When we leave a child in a troubled home, we have to be sure that we do everything we can to ensure the safety and well-being of that child and the recovery of that family.

We have to use common sense in everything we do. We must continue to reduce regulatory and administrative burdens on the public, our partners and staff. We have made progress in the “Plain Language Initiative” to communicate with the public in clear, concise language, and our dedication to making sure we communicate clearly must continue. We already identified a total of 2,388 statewide documents for conversion to plain language, which was completed on December 22, 2008.

We can be the best social-service system in America. But it will not be easy. We are going to have to provide strong leadership at the highest levels of the agency and in every Region and Circuit. We are going to have to listen to the people we serve, to their advocates and to our community partners. And we have to act on what we hear.

Two years ago it seemed an impossible dream that we could come as far as we have. Two years from now, we want to be able to demonstrate that we are attacking the root causes of problems instead of desperately treating symptoms, that we are strengthening families instead of pulling them apart, that we are open and accountable with the people of Florida and have earned their confidence, and that together we have created the best social-service system in the country.

Key Department Initiatives

The Secretary has determined that the successful execution of the initiatives outlined below is critical to the overall success of the Department. Therefore the Secretary will be personally involved in planning, implementing and overseeing these key strategic areas.

ACTIONS TO PROTECT THE VULNERABLE

CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY PRESERVATION

Overall Child Welfare Initiatives

1. Finalize and implement the Quality Improvement Plan based on the federal Child and Family Services Review report
2. Complete a successful implementation of the Florida Safe Family Network (FSFN) and deploy document imaging capacity that interfaces with FSFN
3. Implement mobile devices for Protective Investigators and child welfare case managers to improve the effectiveness of work with families and enhance the efficiency of operation of the program
4. Institutionalize a systems performance reporting process utilizing FSFN for ongoing quality improvement monitoring
5. Stabilize the workforce in child welfare and improve pre-and in-service training requirements to achieve standards of excellence in the profession
6. Integrate substance abuse and mental health services to reduce devastation in our families

Child Safety

1. Screen calls to the Hotline according to the statutory definition of abuse, neglect, abandonment and exploitation:
 - (a) Establish alternative response systems that better serve the needs of children and families by eliminating unnecessary investigative protocols for low risk referrals
 - (b) Safely reduce the percent of calls accepted as reports
 - (c) Enable local decision-making on most effective approaches to assisting families, including the ability to withhold classification of a maltreatment code while serving families
2. Reduce the number of child deaths in Florida related to abuse, neglect and abandonment:
 - (a) Coordinate with the Executive Office of the Governor, Department of Health, and other organizations to educate the public to the dangers of the most likely causes of child deaths

- (b) Coordinate with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Department of Health, Department of Education and other agencies and organizations to educate mandatory reporters on the behaviors associated with perpetrators of child abuse
- 3. Implement the approved recommendations of the Task Force on Child Protection resulting from the Courtney Clark Action Plan
- 4. Reconstitute the Child Protection Task Force to address ongoing issues
- 5. Develop a means for capturing and reporting on the various diversion programs designed to strengthen families and keep children safely at home with parents

Family-Centered Services

- 1. Propose legislative changes to Florida's child protection statutes that emphasize family engagement practices when children can safely remain with families
- 2. Integrate the service functions of Family Intervention Specialists and Case Managers to ensure a seamless delivery system for families involved in substance abuse-mental health and child protection programs
- 3. Increase availability and access to in-home intervention and support so that more children can remain safely in their homes

Out-of-Home Care

- 1. Continue advancing the 2012 Strategy: Safely reducing the number of children in out-of-home care by 50% by the year 2012 and implementing the communications strategy developed at the National Governor's Association Policy Academy
- 2. Reduce shift-based group care for all children and eliminate shift-based group care for children under age 5
- 3. Reexamine the situation of the 100 children longest in care and use the lessons learned to reevaluate children who have been in out-of-home care for long periods
- 4. Engage the family, taking extra care to involve fathers, in all aspects of planning for a child's care, well-being, safety and permanency
- 5. Continue technology advancements and reforms in the Out-of-County Inquiry and Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Program to expedite locating and approving in and out-of-state relatives
- 6. Improve the permanency of reunifications, guardianships and adoptions
- 7. Placement with Relatives:
 - (a) Increase the capacity to search for all potential relative placements for children who cannot remain with parents and conduct appropriate records and home study checks to determine most appropriate match for a child
 - (b) Decrease the time for children in relative placement to achieve permanency

- (c) Improve the support services for relative placements to reduce the potential for a placement move
 - (d) Establish case plan activities that promote the dignity of family relationships and serve to strengthen overall supports for a child who is cared for by relatives
8. Placement in Foster Care:
- (a) Decrease the time for children in foster care placement to achieve permanency
 - (b) Reduce the number of placement settings that children will experience in foster care
 - (c) Decrease the number of schools that children in foster care attend
 - (d) Eliminate the use of shift care by group or residential homes for children under age 5

Permanency

- 1. Ensure that every child's case is managed with the goal that a sense of urgency and common sense will be the guiding principles for seeking a safe, loving and permanent home
- 2. Enable children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to develop skills necessary for a successful and supported transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency
- 3. Decrease the number of children discharged from foster care due to emancipation or reaching their 18th birthday
- 4. Adoption:
 - (a) Improve the timeliness of adoptions
 - (b) Achieve the goal of a minimum of 2,751 adoptions in FY 2008-09
 - (c) Support the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Abuse Protection's initiatives encouraging the adoption of Florida's children in foster care and supporting a statewide public service campaign to let all Floridians know the value of adoption and how it will promote a culture of life in our state
 - (d) Increase adoptions of African-American children, enhancing outreach initiatives
 - (e) Enhance support services for children whose adoption is at risk for disruption
- 5. Permanent Guardianship:
 - (a) Improve the timeliness of establishing permanent guardianship for a child placed with a relative when reunification with a parent is ruled out
 - (b) Educate relatives on the availability of support services if a child's continued permanency becomes at risk in the future
- 6. Independent Living:
 - (a) Complete the second annual survey of youth age 13 to age 23 in cooperation with the Independent Living Services Advisory Council and the Florida Coalition for Children
 - (b) Increase the number of foster youth graduating from high school and post-secondary education

- (c) Facilitate foster youth having supports to enter into and complete high school and post-secondary education
- (d) Balance Road to Independence stipends with the number of young adults seeking post-secondary education
- (e) Increase the number of youth who obtain a job that provides a living wage by continuing to implement “Operation Full Employment” to hire youth in foster care in the Department; and challenge partners to support statewide employer/agency collaborations that help first-time workers enter and advance in the workplace
- (f) Continue to support the development and implementation of a transitional living or subsidized independent living housing experience for those youth aging out of foster care at age 17 who will not have the option of remaining in a foster care family or group home
- (g) Support the development of transitional housing programs and scattered site apartments with support services for youth ages 18-23
- (h) Prepare for implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database by October 1, 2010
- (i) Work with judiciary to establish Teen Court dockets to assure appropriate review of independent living transition plans

Well-Being

1. Achieve full compliance with referrals for Early Periodic Screening and Testing Diagnosis and Child Behavioral Health Assessments
2. Develop family-centered practice training modules to increase professionalism of casework and achieve case outcomes that strengthen family support systems
3. Enhance opportunities and supports for youth to fully participate in all aspects of primary and secondary school experience, as well as activities to enhance normalcy

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services for Children and Families in Child Welfare

1. Develop a comprehensive, cohesive, community-based prevention strategy designed to provide support to families and children, and targeted to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors for abuse and neglect, family disruption, substance abuse, mental illness, school failure and criminal justice involvement
2. Provide early identification of parents and children who need substance abuse and/or mental health services
3. Develop a comprehensive, integrated, and continuous system of care for parents and children requiring substance abuse and/or mental health services
4. Assist parents in attending and completing substance abuse and/or mental health services
5. Implement aftercare and recovery services for parents and children completing substance abuse and/or mental health services throughout their involvement in the child welfare system

6. Partner with the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to optimize services available for children in the child welfare system
7. Ensure staff involved in the child welfare system have training in substance abuse and mental health disorders and treatment available

CHILDREN'S LEGAL SERVICES (CLS)

1. Implement the CLS Strategic Plan finalized in 2008 throughout the state
2. Ensure that our stakeholders see concrete examples of our advocacy for children in the courtroom
3. Work closely with our community partners to ensure delivery of the highest quality services to Florida's children
4. Continue to educate our stakeholders on the "prosecutor" model of representation

CHILD CARE

1. Continue to ensure that children are safe while in out-of-home care through the provision of quality, timely child care inspections
2. Continue to provide professional development opportunities for child care licensing staff in order to professionalize and stabilize the child care program workforce
3. Pursue adequate resources to bring the Child Care Regulation and Information program staffing level up to 100% of need in order to ensure the health, safety and well being of children in care through the licensing inspections conducted as required by Chapter 402, Florida Statutes

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. Continue providing domestic violence training opportunities, especially in the area of child welfare, to better integrate domestic violence expertise across programs:
 - (a) Implement Regional/Circuit domestic violence trainings for child protection investigators on dangerousness assessment, identifying family strengths and safety planning to increase safety in the home for both children and the adult victim
 - (b) Work with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence on the development of certified trainers from the local centers that can continue the child welfare training initiative locally
2. Participate with the Department of Health multi-disciplinary fatality review committee to identify opportunities to share information from fatality review activities across programs with the goal of policy development that can prevent future deaths
3. Continue work with Family Safety and Children's Legal Services on the implementation of changes to s. 39.504 that provides injunctive relief for children in homes where domestic violence is occurring

4. Expand prevention activities by continuing to partner with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence on their statewide prevention agenda

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

1. Implement approved recommendations from the Select Advisory Panel on Adult Protective Services:
 - (a) Continue to pursue legislative authority for Department of Children and Families to initiate petitions for guardianship
 - (b) In partnership with community stakeholders, implement guardianship recruitment strategies to address shortage of guardians
 - (c) Develop and implement standardized statewide training curricula (pre-service and in-service) for Adult Protective Investigators
 - (d) Pursue statutory changes aligning definitions of “vulnerable adult,” “disabled adult,” and “activities of daily living” across relevant chapters of Florida Statutes
 - (e) Continue efforts toward collaboration, training, and interagency agreements among partner agencies (Agency for Health Care Administration, Office of the Attorney General/Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, Department of Health, Department of Elder Affairs, and Agency for Persons with Disabilities), including a statewide agreement on facility closures
2. Eliminate internal operational inefficiencies and deliver services that are better streamlined, integrated, and easily accessible through the Adult Protective Services Home and Community Based Services Aged and Disabled Adult Medicaid Waiver program by:
 - (a) Enhancing the statewide, electronic Adult Protective Services Information System (ASIS) to capture care plan costs to facilitate more efficient management and oversight
 - (b) Coordinating policy development with the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Elder Affairs in the areas of quality assurance, training, and monitoring; and,
 - (c) Shifting the Medicaid Waiver client care plan approval responsibilities from Headquarters to the Regional level to create a quicker response to the needs of consumers and to better manage health and safety issues for program participants.

ACTIONS TO PROMOTE STRONG AND ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT FAMILIES

ACCESS

1. Decrease the time required for eligible families to receive public assistance benefits:
 - (a) Reduce the processing time for public assistance applications
 - (b) Increase the percentage of food assistance application approvals processed within the applicable federal time standard
 - (c) Provide quicker access to benefits for families eligible for expedited food assistance

- (d) Distribute work statewide: use technology to move work where production is more effective and efficient
- 2. Remain a national leader in low food assistance error rate, not only avoiding federal penalty but qualifying for additional federal bonus funding
- 3. Fully implement new client notices to provide easier to understand information for customers
- 4. Implement additional mechanisms for customers to submit electronic applications, such as through the Benefit Bank
- 5. Increase access to health insurance:
 - (a) Through multi-agency action, increase the number of eligible children enrolled in KidCare through Medicaid or Healthy Kids
 - (b) Reduce the adverse impact of federal administrative requirements on enrollment of eligible children and adults in Medicaid
- 6. Through coordination with Workforce Florida, the Agency for Workforce Innovation and local Regional Workforce Boards, assist in the achievement of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families federal work participation requirements

HOMELESSNESS

- 1. Reduce homelessness among at-risk families and vulnerable adults
- 2. Increase affordable housing for persons with mental illness, young adults transitioning out of foster care, and veterans
- 3. Target veterans who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless with Department services (mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc)
- 4. Increase prevention efforts to help individuals and families avoid homelessness, including emergency aid to families to avoid evictions
- 5. Make educational opportunities available to the homeless to promote employment and self-sufficiency
- 6. Enhance the capacity of the local continuums of care to secure the resources necessary to address the services needed by the homeless population
- 7. Evaluate efficacy of expanding the use of the Camillus House sanctuary model

REFUGEE SERVICES

- 1. Increase the visibility of refugees and Refugee Services through community outreach efforts and the integration of the program staff into regions
- 2. Implement approved recommendations of the Refugee Services Review:
 - (a) Increase engagement of Refugee Services on national level issues of funding and policy
 - (b) Work with the Florida Washington Office and Florida's Congressional delegation to protect the state's interests on funding for refugee issues

3. Provide leadership and support to the Department's efforts against human trafficking by raising awareness, particularly on issues related to child trafficking
4. Promote the integration of refugees and immigrants through enhancing self-sufficiency, English language acquisition, family support and civic engagement

ACTIONS TO ADVANCE PERSONAL AND FAMILY RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

1. Work with the Governor's Office and Legislature to pass the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment and Crime Reduction Act. Work with stakeholders, Governor's Office and Legislative staff toward the acceptance and funding of the programming and statutory language during the 2009 legislative session.
2. Prioritize the integration of substance abuse and mental health services into the child welfare system
3. Strengthen Management of Treatment Facilities:
 - (a) Improve administrative, human resources, and fiscal operations
 - (b) Maintain forensic wait list at 0 individuals beyond 15-day placement criteria
 - (c) Develop a 5-year strategy for meeting statutory requirements in the Sexual Violent Predator Program
 - (d) Manage census, quality of care, and waiting list for Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed Program
4. Improve Systems of Care:
 - (a) Implement managing entity or comparable collaborative, accountable system in selected Department regions and circuits, in accordance with Chapter 394.9082, Florida Statutes
 - (b) Facilitate community Comprehensive, Continuous, Integrated Systems of Care. Assist Department-funded providers of Substance Abuse and Mental Health services in becoming dually-diagnosed capable through statewide training and interventions.
 - (c) Implement the use of national outcome measures and five system quality indicators as the standard for system performance measurement and accountability. Develop baseline for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health National Outcome Measures.
 - (d) Strengthen the Baker Act in partnership with the Florida Legislature and communities
 - (e) Sustain prevention and treatment funding during the economic downturn
 - (f) Strengthen state agency collaboration in "state authority" role
 - (g) Partner with the Department of Education-Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to prioritize individuals with disabling serious mental illnesses for VR services
 - (h) Partner with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to create set-asides for individuals with extremely low incomes, making more units available for youth aging out of foster care and adults with serious mental illnesses

- (i) Continue to explore ways to introduce concepts of self-direction into the state's mental health system, in accordance with Chapter 394.9084, Florida Statutes
- (j) Expand the community services continuum and the self-directed care model
- (k) Require continuous quality improvement initiatives for all agency and provider activities

ACTIONS TO ENHANCE SERVICE INTEGRATION, INTERAGENCY COORDINATION, AND EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF SERVICES

1. Continue implementation of the interagency agreement with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Department of Health, and the Department of Juvenile Justice:
 - (a) Fully engage all agencies at the region, circuit and county level to assure casework solutions occur as close as possible to the customer
 - (b) Provide training for managers at all levels on implementation procedures
2. Continue and strengthen state-level and local coordination of educational services and sharing of information regarding education
3. Strengthen and streamline the contracting system to improve oversight of contracted services and the efficiency of contract administration
4. Develop additional mechanisms for employee recognition and support
5. Enhance new employee orientation and supervisory training to insure consistent communication of the Department's mission, values and strategic priorities
6. Support the implementation of a hybrid vehicle pilot program in the Department's Central region to promote efficient use of green technology
7. Implement Information Technology Strategic Direction:
 - (a) **Standardization** – Strengthen operations by implementing technology standards and best practices, particularly in relational database technology
 - (b) **Integration** – Facilitate Inter/Intra agency process integration to improve services to our citizens
 - (c) **Data Mining and Sharing** – Implement an IT infrastructure which allows program offices and different business partners to exchange data
 - (d) **Business Intelligence** – Utilize tools, automation, and specialized software to capture and present better business information and assist decision making
 - (e) **Geographic Information System (GIS)** – Leverage GIS technology to view, analyze, and advance our geographic service delivery framework
 - (f) **Web Based Platforms & Solutions** – Provide dynamic and distributed services and enhance information sharing

8. The Department has been working with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to create new incentives and requirements for creating affordable housing to serve our clients with special housing needs. In particular, the Department, along with its Community-Based Care providers, have committed to work with Florida Housing in 2009 to target apartments for occupancy by youth aging out of foster care. Similar efforts are also in progress for the local homeless coalitions to commit to partnerships with the apartment project sponsors and property managers to house the formerly homeless.
9. A second housing related effort is underway to tap a federal grant opportunity for family unification and housing for former foster care youth. This effort links the Department, the Community-Based Care agencies, and the local public housing authorities to compete for new Housing Choice Vouchers. These rental assistance payments will help keep families together that face out of home care for their children due to the lack of adequate housing, as well as provide safe and affordable housing to youth ages 18-21 who exited foster care after the age of 16 and who face being homeless.

Major Issues and Champions of Change

The following initiatives have been designated as deserving priority attention by the Secretary. Each initiative has been assigned to a "Champion" who will work with the manager who has responsibility for the program or issue. The Champion will help facilitate the initiative, monitor its progress, and assist in any way possible to ensure a successful outcome. The Champion will update the executive management team periodically on the status of the initiative.

Issue	Champion
• Integration/synchronization of DCF services	Secretary Sheldon
• Safe reduction of out-of-home care by 50%	Don Winstead
• Implement interagency agreement with Department of Education and make education a priority for foster children	Mary Cagle
• Implement Interagency Memorandum of Understanding	Peggy Sanford
• Operation Full Employment expansion and youth in transition housing	Jason Dimitris
• Implement use of mobile devices for investigators and case managers in the field	Chris Pantaleon
• Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed	Bill Janes
• Maintain national leadership in food stamp program	Don Winstead
• Implement Child Protection Task Force Report	David Fairbanks
• Document imaging (FSFN interface)	John Cooper
• Forensic beds	Bill Janes
• Expansion of expedited food stamp pilot	John Cooper
• Enhance employee recognition efforts	Nancy Dreicer
• Strengthen contract system	Melissa Jaacks
• Enhanced hospital management system	Bill Janes
• Organization/measurable objectives of SA/MH system	Bill Janes
• Interstate Compact (ICPC) reforms	Stephen Pennypacker
• Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan	John Cooper
• Risk management	Neil Skene
• ACCESS process and workload	John Cooper
• Deploy innovative data mining and matching technologies to improve child protection, client service and program integrity	Ramin Kouzehkanani
• Sexual Predator treatment	Bill Janes
• Use of \$ 5.4 million incentive	Melissa Jaacks
• Implement new ACCESS notices	Ramin Kouzehkanani
• Independent Living survey and analysis	Don Winstead
• Improve workplace environment	Matt Howard
• Refugee Services revitalization	David Fairbanks
• Hotline revitalization	Steve Holmes
• Adult Protective Services redesign	David Fairbanks
• Benefit Bank Pilot Project	Ramin Kouzehkanani
• Employee and supervisor orientation	Dennise Parker
• Redesign of DCF homepage	Jason Dimitris

Note: Issues not in priority order.

Critical Few Performance Measures

There are numerous measures that are part of the Department's performance management system. The following measures represent critical priorities that will be highlighted for special emphasis during the coming year. (Note: *Additional performance measures will be added as substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and other data initiatives are promulgated.*)

✓ **Protect the vulnerable**

1. Hotline responsiveness
2. Child abuse investigations completed timely
3. Adult abuse investigations completed timely
4. Placement stability for children in out-of-home care
5. Children in out-of-home care visited

✓ **Promote strong and economically self-sufficient families**

1. Adoptions completed
2. Safe reduction in out-of-home care
3. Food stamp accuracy
4. Timeliness of food stamp approvals – regular and expedited
5. Timeliness of public assistance application processing

✓ **Advance personal and family recovery and resiliency**

1. Forensic mental health admissions made timely
2. Juveniles incompetent to proceed placed

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Department of Children and Families Accomplishments

Governor and Secretary Directives

1. Implemented Culture Change Initiatives:
 - (a) Secretary's Six Guiding Principles
 - (b) Common Sense / Sense of Urgency / Sense of Community
 - (c) Transparency and Open Government
 - (d) Plain Language
2. Reorganized Department:
 - (a) Established Regions and Circuit-based delivery of services
 - (b) Restructured DCF Legal Services (created Children's Legal Services as a statewide law firm)
 - (c) Added Criminal Justice Director and Region Criminal Justice Coordinators
3. Established Task Force for Child Protection:
 - (a) Published report including recommendations
 - (b) Assigned workgroups to monitor, implement, and make further recommendations
 - (c) Reconstituted task force for continuing oversight of child protection system
4. Established Adult Protective Services Advisory Panel
5. Launched *One Church One Child* pilot in Hillsborough and Duval counties to promote adoptions
6. Received access for investigators to National Crime and Information Center
7. Changed the Department's legal philosophy regarding lawsuits to resolve issues when this action is in the best interest of the State and affected individuals
8. Played an active role in the development and implementation of the Children and Youth Cabinet
9. Refocused Departmental attention on prevention of child abuse
10. Implemented "Operation Full Employment" leading to the employment by over 100 former foster youth with the Department and with partner agencies
11. Increased interaction with and involvement of advocates with Departmental initiatives
12. Launched the Department's Leadership Institute, which provides a structure for the systematic development of leadership talent and serves as a Department-wide change agent:
 - (a) Implemented the Florida Youth Leadership Academy as the result of a Child Welfare Leadership class project

- (b) Initiated three levels of leadership development: Executive Leadership (24 participants); Managing for Excellence/Certified Public Manager (172 participants); and Supervising for Excellence (330 participants)

13. Developed "Florida Performs" Web site for the Executive Office of the Governor. This web site enhances transparency and stores agency performance data for the public to see

ACCESS

1. Boosted KidCare enrollment statewide by 30% during the first six months of FY 2007 compared to the same time period in FY 2006
2. Implemented statewide electronic/paperless case file system, using document imaging technology
3. Won the Ash Institute / Kennedy School of Government Innovation in Government Award
4. Significantly improved the Food Stamp accuracy rate, resulting in a bonus award of \$5.4 million for most improved State
5. Developed plans for pilot projects in Duval and Broward Counties to reinstate Medicaid eligibility of prisoners receiving medications for mental illness prior to their release
6. Maintained status as the most innovative public assistance eligibility system in the country
7. Continued to streamline and prioritize work flows enabling the processing of 34% more applications and 35% more eligibility reviews than previously. Experienced record numbers of food assistance recipients and caseload growth of 24% in the food assistance program, 15% in cash assistance and 11% in Medicaid, as a result of the economic downturn. This includes a 12% increase in children receiving Medicaid under the title 21 part of KidCare
8. Implemented the "My Account" system enabling customers to obtain secure access to information on their applications and eligibility status 24 hours a day, seven days a week
9. Rewrote client notices in plain language and began deployment of new notices
10. Implemented 65 provider funded positions, paving the way for future expansion
11. Partnered with Louisiana to develop the capacity for interstate processing of disaster benefit applications
12. Established an Internal Controls Workgroup and a Worker Fraud Taskforce to prevent and detect employee fraud
13. Completed Phases I and II of the Client Notices Modernization Project. This effort rewrites all Public Assistance notices in plain language in order to enable the Department to provide clearer information and instructions to customers
14. Developed plans to expedite processing of Medicaid and other applications for assistance on behalf of children in non-licensed, out of home placements
15. Incorporated an attestation of identity for children under 16 into Medicaid applications to better manage federal administrative requirements

16. Implemented new policy and procedure to suspend Medicaid eligibility during incarceration to help people receive medications for mental illness upon their release from prison
17. Tested on-site issuance and express delivery of benefit cards in six regional pilot projects

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

1. Collaborated with the Department's Child Welfare Program and the Department of Juvenile Justice to develop practice guidelines for addressing the needs of youth being served by both Departments
2. Continued to admit forensic individuals within 15 days of receipt of a complete commitment packet:
 - (a) Admitted forensic individuals during state FY 2008/09 (through 10/30/08), within an average of five days
 - (b) Closed the South Florida Evaluation and Treatment Center/GEO - Annex on August 1, 2008, (100 beds) two months ahead of schedule, saving the Department \$1.528 million
 - (c) Increased secure forensic capacity at South Florida Evaluation and Treatment Center/GEO by 25 beds on August 1, 2008
 - (d) Increased secure forensic bed capacity at the Treasure Coast Forensic Treatment Center by 48 beds on August 1, 2008
 - (e) Contracted with GEO to designate 25 of the 223 beds at Treasure Coast Forensic Treatment Center as "flex beds," to be opened/paid for only if needed
3. Completed Robert Wood Johnson-funded Advancing Recovery initiative. The Department's and provider efforts resulted in national recognition for cutting edge efforts toward the use of Medically-Assisted Treatment
4. Initiated the Certified Peer Specialist program statewide through a contract with the Florida Certification Board to develop, create and implement the certification of mental health consumers. This new peer professional certification has resulted in more than 250 people becoming Adult and/or Family Certified Peer Specialists. Created a Recovery Support Specialist certification for substance abuse
5. Developed legislative concept and supported implementation of the Florida Supreme Court Report: "Transforming Florida's Mental Health System"
6. Implemented with the Department of Corrections an on-line referral system to facilitate aftercare for inmates with serious mental illnesses reaching the end of their sentences
7. Completed competitive process with quality improvement enhancements for the Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed Program
8. Promulgated Comprehensive, Continuous, Integrated System of Care concept for communities and began statewide trainings
9. Mandated co-occurring services as a DCF "expectation, not exception"

10. Reduced the number of detainees in the Sexual Violent Predator Program from 301 to 267 through collaboration with Circuit Chief Judges
11. Achieved the goal of the Transformation Transfer Initiative grant to regionalize the Recovery and Resiliency Task Force, a consumer-led advisory group operating in each of the Department's regions
12. Completed an assessment of the statewide mental health crisis system to determine crisis stabilization bed capacity in response to tensions in the system
13. Funded 48 community anti-drug coalitions in 46 counties across the state; of those, 42 coalitions have completed community substance abuse needs assessments
14. Received a federal grant and subsequently implemented screening, intervention and brief treatment (SBRITE) services in primary care settings, directed at elders identified as needing substance abuse treatment services
15. Promoted employment through contracting for six active Mental Health Clubhouses, three of which have now secured certification from the International Center for Clubhouse Development
16. Conducted three public meetings across the state to obtain consumer and other stakeholders' input into the development of managing entities
17. Funded the "Be the Wall" statewide media campaign, engaging parents in underage drinking prevention
18. Achieved national recognition for the operation of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Mental Health Program
19. Implemented an automated system to track licensing by Departmental staff of substance abuse facilities statewide
20. Aligned the Substance Abuse and Mental Health information system with updated policy and law

Child Welfare

1. Finalized 3,674 adoptions in FY 2007-09 – the highest one-year total ever achieved
2. Promulgated written Rights of Foster Care Children
3. Implemented reforms to the Child Abuse Hotline providing priority attention to calls most likely to impact safety of children
4. Continued implementation of the statewide child welfare (title IV-E) demonstration waiver and safely reduced the number of children in out-of-home care by over 25 percent (more than 7,000 children)
5. Implemented release 1 and release 2A phases of Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN)
6. Transitioned Citrus County Child Protective Investigations to the Sheriff's Office on July 1, 2007

7. Conducted the first comprehensive survey of youth aging out of foster care in 2007 with the second annual survey scheduled for completion by January 31, 2009
8. Amended childcare licensing rules
9. Began the Home for the Holidays initiative
10. Increased emphasis on Community-Based Care (CBC) performance measures, outcomes, and accountability with linkage to the federal Child and Family Services Review measures
11. Began shifting the organizational culture toward keeping children in the home and on supporting families
12. Granted access to FLORIDA System to protective investigators
13. Conducted the Annual Dependency Summit in 2007 and 2008
14. Conducted a detailed review of the Courtney Clark case and implemented a number of system enhancements
15. Established housing in Broward County for youth aging-out of foster care
16. Implemented quarterly Regional Family Safety events
17. Instituted a number of CBC grant activities, such as the Department/Kids Central, Inc. Demonstration Project for Quality Assurance and Performance-Based Contracting
18. Implemented a number of mediation projects throughout the State and, at the Dependency Summit, recognized former Governor MacKay for his leadership role in these efforts
19. Selected as one of six States to participate in a National Governors' Association Policy Academy on Safely Reducing Out-of-Home Care
20. Developed "Explore Adoption" internet Web site to assist with increasing awareness on adoption in Florida with functionality to subscribe to a monthly newsletter
21. Deployed text to speech software and digital records to child protective investigators statewide in order to ease workload
22. Provided capability for judges and legal staff to view Interstate Compact Case/Home Study data via the Enterprise Client Index application
23. Redesigned caretaker background screening application
24. Incorporated document imaging workflow to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children application, reducing processing time from 30 days to a few days

Child Care

1. Developed a three-hour web-based Record Keeping course designed to assist child care professionals in the maintenance of appropriate information regarding child care activities, in addition to creating and delivering the mandated child care training online for greater accessibility

2. Established three (3) Regional Training Centers so that locations with low student enrollment could receive instructor-based training, which streamlined the delivery and is more cost effective
3. Developed and deployed an electronic uniform system of progressive enforcement pursuant to legislation for all child care facility and home standards

Domestic Violence

1. Secured competitive federal funding to implement a statewide Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project with the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence
2. Partnered successfully with the Family Safety Program on a legislative initiative to increase protections for both children and the adult victim in overlapping cases of child abuse and domestic violence
3. Implemented statewide training initiatives for child welfare workers and other professionals to improve their understanding and skill in addressing domestic violence
4. Increased outreach services 11%
5. Provided domestic violence consultation and resources to the Northeast Region for their innovative child welfare redesign project
6. Continued and improved upon our internal effort to support the Governor's Green Initiative by moving processes and paper to electronic media
7. Implemented a series of regional trainings for Batter Intervention Program assessors and facilitators to provide advanced training
8. Partnered with the Attorney General's Office on their Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) InVest project that brings together domestic violence advocates with law enforcement to provide services to domestic violence victims that have been identified as being at high risk of homicide

Homelessness

1. Awarded grants of \$1.1 million to build housing units in Jacksonville and Tampa specifically for Independent Living Youth to occupy
2. Awarded \$4.8 million in grants to fund 9 homeless housing projects to provide rental housing units for veterans (112 units), the long term homeless with mental health and substance abuse disabilities (82 units), families with children (33 units) and persons with HIV/AIDS (14 units)
3. Funded local agencies to serve more than 23,000 homeless persons with Challenge Grant awards of \$2.1 million, thus furthering the local continuum of care service plans
4. Funded local agencies with Federal Emergency Shelter Grants of nearly \$900,000 to prevent 2,115 individuals from becoming homeless. Funded local agencies with \$1.9 million in Federal Emergency Shelter Grants for renovations and services at homeless facilities. This \$1.9 million will help fund 727 beds and serve 2,765 individuals.

Adult Protective Services

1. Convened the Select Advisory Panel for Adult Protective Services, utilizing their recommendations to address system gaps in service delivery to vulnerable adults
2. Held the first Statewide Adult Protective Services Training Event in May 2007 with over 300 attendees from the Department and partner agencies
3. Implemented a statewide Quality Assurance Peer review to identify processes for improvement within Adult Protective Investigations
4. Conducted a statewide satisfaction survey with Adult Protective Services community partners; law enforcement, and judicial entities
5. Convened a statewide work group to help redesign the Adult Protective Investigations response in order to streamline work processes and maximize returns on limited resources
6. Convened an interagency work group, comprised of Agency for Health Care Administration Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, Department of Elder Affairs, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Health/Medical Quality Assurance, and Adult Protective Services Program Office staff members, in order to address interagency issues of mutual concern involving abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly and persons with disabilities, and to explore potential opportunities for increased efficiency
7. Aligned the Adult Protective Services Information System with the new DCF Organizational Structure and consolidated web screens, which allows Adult Protective Services case workers to view entire demographics for a client/person, enabling more ease of use and better service to clients
8. Enhanced the Adult Protective Services Information System to enable the program office to better manage/estimate the rate of federal funding expenditure for client care plans

Refugee Programs

1. Implemented a program re-organization plan and re-located its headquarters and program staff from Tallahassee to regions. The Program Director is now located in Miami, the county in which most clients reside
2. Enhanced community collaboration with the development of Community Liaison positions in all regions
3. Enrolled 18,311 newly arrived refugees in employment programs, of which 11,842 were placed in employment
4. Expanded employment authorization and naturalization services to refugee clients in the Suncoast and Central Regions
5. Expanded youth and family services to refugee clients in the Southeast and Suncoast Region
6. Based on community needs feedback, coordinated procurement training for the Suncoast and Southern Regions
7. Developed a web-based Eligibility Training for providers and community partners

Information Systems

1. Enterprise Technology:
 - (a) Redesigned DCFTracker into a user-friendly web-based platform
 - (b) Redesigned EForms into user-friendly web-based application called DCForms
 - (c) Improved the available network bandwidth statewide for all employees in partnership with Department of Management Services
2. Programmatic technology accomplishments are listed in the various program areas

Partnerships

1. Engaged Board Chairs and Chief Executive Officers of the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies as well as leadership from the Providers in active meetings and dialogue
2. Enhanced relationships and communications with other social service agencies, including the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health, regarding the response to and placement of children
3. Enhanced relationships with the criminal justice system, including the courts, public defenders, state attorneys and law enforcement
4. Expanded the Department's efforts to improve public perception and support
5. Improved relationships with the media and editorial boards
6. Improved relationship with advocacy groups and incorporated their input into the Department's efforts
7. Developed closer relationships with charitable foundations
8. Developed closer relationships with Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies from other states
9. Engaged current and former foster youth in discussions to learn from their experiences on how to improve the foster care system

APPENDIX B: Governor's Executive Orders

Executive Order 07-01

1. Code of Ethics:

- (a) Continued to train employees on the subjects of ethics, public records, open meetings, records retention, equal opportunity and proper personnel procedures annually.
 - (b) Continued to assure that the Department maintains and effectively enforces the highest ethical standards for state officials and employees, and promotes consistency of State agency policies on ethics, public records, open meetings, and personnel matters.
2. **Plain Language:** Assured continued compliance with the Plain Language Initiative to ensure that announcements, publications, and other documents sent by the Department contain clear and concise instructions and information.
3. **Customer Service:** Continued to review how each of the Department's employees can better serve the people. The purpose of the review is to: install performance-based incentives to improve service; install best practices relating to customer service; enhance procedures for soliciting, receiving and managing new ideas from the people we serve; and put in place a world-class training and review program to ensure that our public employees maintain their focus on service.

Executive Order 07-126: Immediate Actions to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Florida State Government.

- 1. Do not enter into new leasing agreements for office space that does not meet Energy Star building standards, except when certified by the Secretary that no other viable alternative exists.
- 2. Be prepared to implement energy conservation measures and guidelines developed by the Department of Management Services (DMS) for new and existing office space where the Department occupies more than 20,000 square feet.
- 3. Effective January 1, 2008, do not contract for meeting and conference space with hotels or conference facilities that have not received the "Green Lodging" certification, except when certified to the Governor by the Secretary that no other viable alternative exists.
- 4. Continue to assure that all vehicles are meeting minimum maintenance schedules shown to reduce fuel consumption.
- 5. Use ethanol and biodiesel fuels when locally available.
- 6. Extensive reduction of travel and sharing transportation when possible.
- 7. Challenge to employees to reduce carbon footprint through methods including carpooling to work.
- 8. Improve education and convenience for employees to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Executive Order 07-242: Continue to follow the Citizens Open Government Bill of Rights to support citizen access to Florida state agencies.

1. Drafted a Department Bill of Rights modeled after the Governor's Bill of Rights.
2. Improved training of Department employees, including on-line training.
3. Worked with community partners in training them on open government, including topics ranging from what the Department must provide to them and what they must provide to the public.

APPENDIX C: Department's Legislative Package

Legislative Proposals for the 2009 Legislative Session

1. **Mental Health, Crime Reduction and Treatment Act:** Ending the criminalization of individuals with mental disorders. This legislation is based on recommendations in the Fall 2007 Supreme Court Report, "Constructing a Comprehensive and Competent Criminal Justice/Mental Health/Substance Abuse Treatment System." Florida would invest in a redesigned system of care that: a) ensures adequate prevention and treatment services in the community; b) curtails unnecessary involvement of people with mental illnesses and/or substance abuse disorders in the criminal justice system; and c) develops strong collaborations among substance abuse, mental health and other provider agencies to provide integrated delivery of services.
2. **Complete Organizational Redesign:** This proposal will complete the process of organizational redesign that began in the 2007 Session. It will amend s. 20.19, F.S., to align the department's regions and circuits with the recommendations of the DCF workgroup that were approved by the Secretary. The proposal will also incorporate other statutory changes consistent with the comprehensive recommendations of the workgroup.
3. **Ensuring the Safety of Our Children in Their Own Homes:** The Department's commitment is to child safety, but we also put a high value on honoring familial relationships. By focusing early contacts with a family on services rather than on parents' misconduct, abuse and removal of the child, DCF and its community partners can effectively engage families to keep children safely in their homes to ensure better and safer outcomes. Proposed changes also enable judges to hold adjudicatory trials in abeyance when parties agree upon court-supported services. This legislation incorporates provisions important to realizing the Department's goal of safely reducing out-of-home care by 50% by 2012. The proposal enhances the flexibility of the Road to Independence program and makes permanent the flexible method-of-payment provisions for community-based care agencies allowed by pilot legislation that is expiring.
4. **Guardianship (Pending OPB Approval):** Elderly persons and persons with disabilities frequently do not have a designated advocate or family member who can petition the court for guardianship. The Adult Protective Services Office can seek temporary protective orders, but the underlying disabilities are not temporary. Upon expiration of the order, the neglect, abuse or exploitation can resume until a new Hotline report is received and a new cycle of temporary protection begins. The Department cannot and should not act as guardian, but protective investigators should be authorized to seek a permanent protector of the health and property of the person. The proposal authorizes the Department to file a petition to determine capacity in adult protection proceedings (under s. 744.3201, F.S.) and prohibits the Department from serving as the guardian or providing legal counsel to the guardian.
5. **Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children:** This proposal authorizes and requires the Governor to enter into the new Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). The existing compact was developed in the early 1960s and has not been updated to meet the needs of the 21st century. The biggest problem with the current

ICPC is the lack of a forum to address compliance issues by other states or a means to seek review of decisions made on home study requests. This results in delayed placements and occasional illegal placements of children.

6. **Chapter 766 Revision:** This proposal authorizes the Mental Health Program Office to convene a peer/quality review committee to examine sentinel events that occur in mental health facilities. This committee would be charged with conducting peer reviews, mortality reviews, and quality of care reviews pursuant to the confidentiality of reporting and immunity of committee members provided by s. 766.101, F.S.
7. **Chapter 394 Revisions:** This proposal revises the definition of the term “residential treatment center for children and adolescents” to eliminate the need for a contract with the Department and provides that licensing by the Department is sufficient for the designation. It revises eligibility requirements for substance abuse and mental health services funded by the Department, and provides rulemaking authority.
8. **Chapter 397 Revisions:** The proposal recommends amending Chapter 397, F.S., to update its provisions that address client care and quality improvements consistent with the advances made in the treatment of addictions. The advances in treatment include the adoption and use of nationally recognized evidence-based treatment practices and the emergence of medication-assisted treatment. The amendment of Part II, s. 397.409, F.S., authorizes the Department to license each program component provided by an agency. This will result in reducing the burdensome and expensive practice which requires that each site and premises be licensed where a service component is provided. The Department believes that this modification will not adversely affect client safety or services, but will provide regulatory relief.
9. **Confidentiality of Abuse Records:** This proposal indicates that all Department records are open to review with the exception of the identity of the victim and the identity of the person who called in the report. It also removes exemptions to the open records law.
10. **Homeless Prevention Grants:** The focus of the proposal is on those families with minor children who are facing eviction due to a financial crisis, or the impact on their home from a disaster event. This proposal allows for the family to receive aid faster by streamlining the process: a) increasing the amount and type of aid available to the family, by tying state aid to other local resources that are already available for emergency financial aid for rent, utilities and other needs; b) Promoting face-to-face contact with a community service agency, including providing case management to help the family with its other service needs, like employment, education and health issues; c) encouraging aftercare tracking of the family to continue to assist as necessary to keep the family housed; and d) providing greater flexibility in how the state aid dollar can be used to best meet the family’s housing and economic crisis.
11. **Chapter 39 Technical Revisions:** This proposal clarifies Chapter 39, F.S., provisions related to injunctions, background checks, adoption benefits, termination of parental rights, and visitation to align language with appropriate court decisions and other sections of statute.

12. **Food Stamp Program Name Change:** The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 renames the Food Stamp Program as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and allows state agencies to use state-specific program names. We are suggesting changing all references to the food stamp program in statute to “food assistance program”, and changing the term “food stamps” to “food assistance.” In 1997, food stamp coupons were replaced by electronic benefit cards.

APPENDIX D: Legislative Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2009 - 2010

1. “Must Fund” Needs

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE CRIME REDUCTION **\$9,152,303**

- Target individuals with mental illnesses and/or substance abuse disorders involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in the justice system
- Address the growing community and residential waiting list for Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed services

MAINTENANCE ADOPTION SUBSIDIES **\$27,095,014**

- \$14,155,729 Restore current year non-recurring funding
- \$12,939,285 Fund growth in MAS Program

INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) **\$6,901,440**

- Restore non-recurring wage increase for IL clients
- Additional funding to cover the increase in minimum wage for IL clients

ACCESS FLORIDA PROGRAM INCREASE IN DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES – ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION WORKLOAD & PROGRAM PROVIDER FUNDED ELIGIBILITY POSITIONS **\$14,549,046**

- 288 additional positions to support the workload associated with the increased number of applicants and eligible recipients served statewide
- 97 ACCESS Eligibility positions in the Economic Self-Sufficiency Services budget entity. Revenues to fund the 50% matching requirements of the Medicaid Administration Grant will be provided by agreements with health care providers and other public/private partnerships

VIOLENT SEXUAL PREDATOR PROGRAM **\$30,271,173**

- \$5,940,369 Restore current year non-recurring operations
- \$6,896,654 - 2009-2010 operations due to growth
- \$16,900,000 Fixed Capital Outlay due to growth
- \$534,150 Community Re-Integration Program

RESTORE SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH (SAMH) NON-RECURRING SERVICES	\$26,580,593
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- \$15,530,557 Restore SAMH Community Projects
- \$3,418,620 Restore Non-Recurring General Revenue Funding in the Substance Abuse Program
- \$2,250,000 Continuation of Funding for the Orange County Central Receiving Center
- \$1,000,000 Restore One-time Reduction to the Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Program
- \$3,181,416 Restore Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Funded Substance Abuse Services
- \$1,200,000 Restore Non-Recurring TANF Substance Abuse Services

MARISSA AMORA RELIEF BILL ANNUAL REQUEST	\$1,700,000
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The Marissa Amora Relief Bill request provides the second year of compensation to Marissa Amora, a minor, as part of a 10 year settlement

2. Critical Needs

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| • Infrastructure Development For Co-occurring Disorders and Medication Assisted Therapies | \$6,976,571 |
| • Florida Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Expansion | \$4,234,575 |
| Treatment Access for Child Welfare Clients | \$8,874,926 |

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| • Protective Investigator Workload Increase | \$6,418,924 |
| • Disabled Adults Home and Community-Based Waiver and Community Care for Disabled Adults Wait Lists | \$5,373,720 |
| • Increase Emergency Financial Assistance for Housing | \$1,550,000 |

OTHER WORKLOAD ISSUES

- Sheriff Child Protective Investigations Workload Increase **\$10,796,619**
- Child Care Licensing Workload **\$1,042,848**
- Florida Abuse Hotline Counselor Reports Workload **\$1,334,103**
- Criminal Intelligence Workload **\$730,214**

OTHER DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES

CHILD WELFARE

- Rate Increase for the Relative Caregiver Program **\$11,039,469**
- Payment of Relative Caregiver Assistance from Date of Adjudication and Cash Assistance Policy Changes **\$7,687,199**
- Healthy Families Expansion **\$2,496,233**
- Increased Adoption Benefits for State Employees **\$3,552,451**

ACCESS

- Increase To Base Rate of Pay for Eligibility Workers **\$5,811,004**

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Self-Directed Care Expansion **\$3,121,710**
- Special Risk Retirement Benefits for Hospital Staff **\$3,368,682**

PRIMARILY NON-RECURRING

• Vehicle Replacement	\$3,990,707
• Fixed Capital Outlay	\$10,124,164
• Fixed Capital Outlay for Domestic Violence Centers	\$3,000,000
• Technology Refresh	\$3,310,686
• Archille Relief Bill	\$1,200,000

Notes



“We will plan for the future while still protecting and caring for our most vulnerable – our children, our elderly and our persons with disabilities.”

Governor Charlie Crist
2008 State of the State Address



Charlie Crist
Governor



George Sheldon
Secretary