

Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report
Family Support Services of Suncoast
Circuit 6 (Pasco and Pinellas counties)
Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Executive Summary:

Family Support Services of Suncoast submitted an application for risk pool funding on February 23, 2022. Family Support Services of Suncoast was awarded the contract as Lead Agency for Judicial Circuit 6 (Pasco and Pinellas counties) and assumed operations on January 1, 2022. Eckerd Connects was the Lead Agency for Judicial Circuit 6 prior to Family Support Services of Suncoast assuming operations. Due to the timing of this report, performance and data throughout this report is a result of the management under Eckerd Community Alternatives (or Eckerd Connects) but is relevant to Circuit 6.

The department established a Risk Pool Peer Review Committee pursuant to section 409.990 (8)(a), F.S. (2021) for State Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022, the Risk Pool application process was informed by lessons learned from the prior year reviews as well as the availability of extensive additional information from reports developed pursuant to proviso language included in the General Appropriations Act (Specific Appropriation 321) for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. In compliance with this proviso language, the department completed a comprehensive, multi-year review of the revenues, expenditures and financial position of all Community-Based Care lead agencies including a comprehensive system of care analysis. This submission also included a financial viability plan from all lead agencies.

The Risk Pool Peer Review team conducted a review virtually in October 2021 and February 2022 with relevant information available from multiple sources to make recommendations. The documents reviewed are below:

- Risk Pool Funding Application FY 2021-2022
- Financial Viability Plan FY 2021-2022
- Budget Projections provided by the CBC
- [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#)
- [CBC Contract Monitoring Reports](#)
- [Previous Risk Pool Reports](#)
- [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#)
- Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Aggregate Payment Data
- CBC Contract Oversight Unit (COU) monitoring reports
- Status Update on Prior Risk Pool Recommendations (if any)
- June 30, 2021 Single Audit (CPA Audit)

As a part of the review, the team evaluated all available information from previous on-site visits, current data and monitoring reports. To resolve any outstanding questions, additional information was requested by the team from the CBC which allowed the team to make an

enhanced recommendation without an on-site visit being conducted by Risk Pool Review Committee.

The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee for Family Support Services Suncoast consisted of:

Barney Ray, DCF Director of Revenue Management and Partner Compliance
(Team Leader)

Nadereh Salim, CEO, Children's Network of SW Florida, LLC

Donna Eprifania, CFO, ChildNet, Inc.

Mohamed Ghalayini, CFO, Citrus Family Care Network

James Weaver, DCF Director of Protective and Supportive Services

Charles Scherer, DCF Central Region, Regional Managing Director

While the specific areas of review and analysis varied based on the unique needs and circumstances of each Region, Circuit and Lead Agency, the following framework provided an outline for organizing the work of the Peer Review Committee.

Application Summary:

Family Support Services of Suncoast's application for risk pool funding requested \$8,131,200 to address a projected deficit of \$8,131,200. Funding is requested to address significant changes in the number or composition of clients eligible to receive services in the past four years.

The primary causes Family Support Services of Suncoast (FSSS) attributed to their current financial challenges are outlined below:

- An inflated number of children in out-of-home care resulting in additional expenses to include staffing.
- Core funding is below the Florida Funding for Children model recommendations.
- Significant start-up costs associated with assuming the Lead Agency contract in a compressed time frame.

Family Support Services of Suncoast intends to use Risk Pool funding to cover additional staffing costs already incurred related to increasing salaries to be more competitive with the hiring market and address significant staff shortages, build the prevention and family preservation service array, and cover additional start-up costs related to IT infrastructure, vehicle purchases and other legal filings.

Findings:

After review of the information provided the Peer Review Committee was able to reach the following findings:

1. Findings related to the need for services and commitment of resources

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Reports](#))
- Summary below, See CBC Contract Monitoring Report, sections 2, 11, and 12 for more details

- 1.1. What is the relevant community context within which the child welfare system operates?**
- 1.2. This may include incidence of calls to the hotline, child poverty in the area, local factors that influence the need for services, etc.**
- 1.3. Factors may also include community resources available to meet the needs of children and families such as Children’s Services Councils, local governmental resources or other unique factors.**

Family Support Services Suncoast (FSSS) in Circuit 6 serves Pasco and Pinellas counties. Child Protection Investigations are performed by the Sheriff’s Offices in these counties. Community involvement varies between the counties, as Pasco is historically rural. In Judicial Circuit 6, FSSS now operates the largest child welfare system in the State of Florida.

Census Facts			
US Census Facts	Florida	Pasco	Pinellas
Median Household Income	\$55,660	\$52,828	\$54,090
Percent of population living in poverty	12.7%	11.3%	11.4%
Percent of population over 25 years old with a college degree	29.9%	24.0%	31.7%
Percent of population over 25 years old with high school diploma	88.2%	89.5%	91.3%

Data Source: [census.gov/quickfacts](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts) (2015-2019)

According to the US Census Facts, Pasco and Pinellas Counties have lower poverty rates than the statewide rate of 12.7% and a higher percentage of individuals with a

high school diploma. However, both counties have slightly lower median household incomes compared to the state. Pasco County has a lower number (24.0%) and Pinellas County has a higher number (31.7%) of individuals with college degrees.

The local Children's Services Council has always focused on delivery of prevention services to non-dependent children. Eckerd Community Alternatives previously engaged the Children's Services Council (operated locally as the Juvenile Welfare Board) to review their investment in child abuse prevention services with the intent to align services more directly with FSSS prevention and diversion efforts. This was a shift for the Board as previously they would measure the success of their programs by how many of the children served did not enter the system. They are now going to measure the success of their services by the reduction of children entering the system to assure the population the Board is serving are truly at risk of removal.

Service availability for both dependent and non-dependent children and their families varies between counties; Pinellas County has a variety of resources available, while Pasco has fewer resources available due to the historically rural nature of the county.

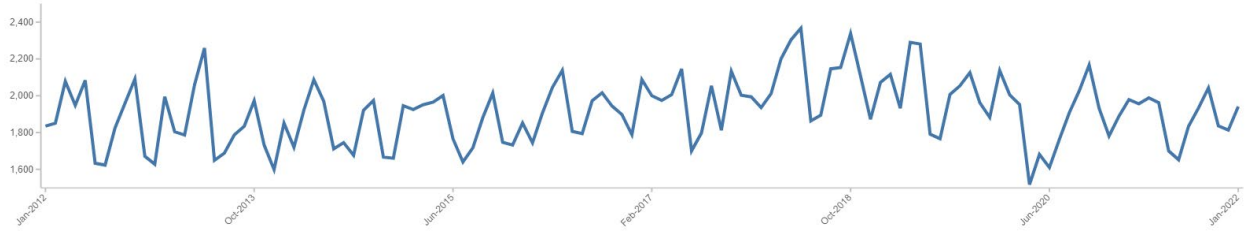
2. Findings related to protective services including removals, referrals for post-investigative services, activities to protect children without removal and use of resources focused on prevention and intervention.

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#))
- Summary below, See CBC Contract Monitoring Report, sections 5, 9, and 11 for more details

- 2.1. *What are the rates of removal, rates of verification and other measures from protective investigations that affect the need for child welfare services? How have these measures changed over time and how do they compare with other areas of the state?***
- 2.2. *What activities are in place to provide support to protective investigators and families to permit children to remain safe in their homes? What services are provided with funds used for prevention and intervention?***
- 2.3. *What services are provided with funds used for prevention and intervention?***
- 2.4. *How well integrated are the CPI, safety management and intervention services components? Are there case transfer issues that affect performance?***

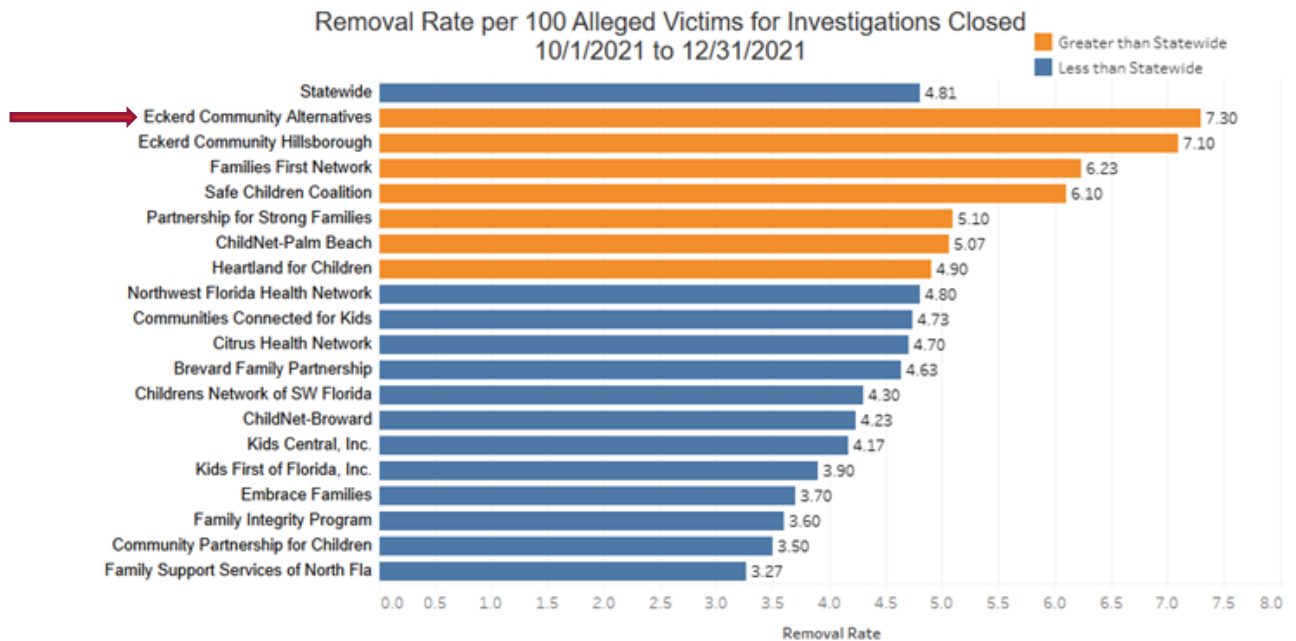
Count of Child Intakes

Count of Child Intakes Received
 Last Updated: 2/19/2022 (Data on or after Dec-2021 is draft data and will be updated next month.)



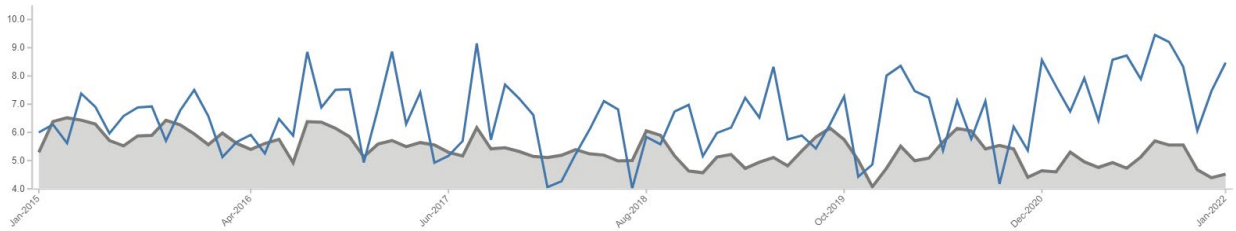
Intakes in Pasco and Pinellas County have increased significantly over the past eighteen years. Prior to FY 2010-11, intakes averaged around 1,400 across the two counties. However, over the past ten years, average intakes across the two counties are around 1,900 a month.

Pasco and Pinellas Sheriff's Offices maintain a higher rate of removal per 100 alleged victims than the statewide average. From October 2021 through December 2021, Circuit 6 experienced a removal rate of 7.30 children per 100 victims, much higher than the statewide average of 4.81 per 100 alleged victims. This removal rate is the highest in the state.



Removal Rate per 100 Alleged Victims

Removal Rate per 100 Alleged Victims in Investigations Closed During Report Month
 Last Updated: 2/19/2022 (Data on or after Dec-2021 is draft data and will be updated next month.)

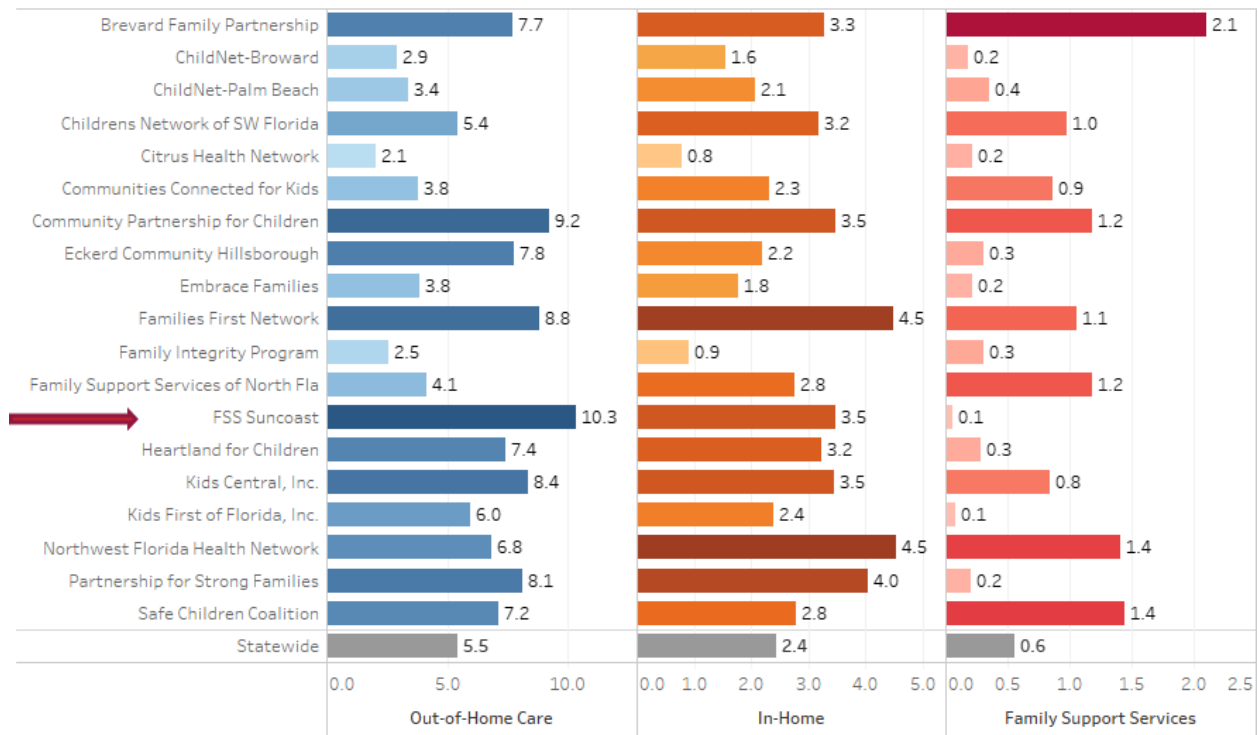


Annual average removal rates have exceeded the statewide average removal rate every year.

There was a significant drop in the number of new entries into out-of-home care from FY 2018-2019 to FY 2019-2020. A total of 135 fewer children (-9%) entered care in FY 2019-2020. However, from FY 2019-2020 to FY 2020-21 there was an increase of 20 (1.5%) children entering care. It should be noted that while the total number of new entries into out-of-home care is still down from a high in FY 2016-2017 (1,576), this circuit still has the most entries into out-of-home care as compared to any circuit in the state.

The disproportionate rate of removal in circuit 6 has continued. In FY 2020-2021, there were more children (1,340) entering out-of-home care than leaving (1,191). The 1,191 children exiting out-of-home care is the highest of any circuit in the state. There is a significant trend of entries into care outpacing exits from care over the past three fiscal years with a net increase of 602 additional children.

Children Receiving Service by Type on 1/31/2022-- Rates per 1,000 Child Population



Data Source: FSN Data Repository, Tableau Data Source

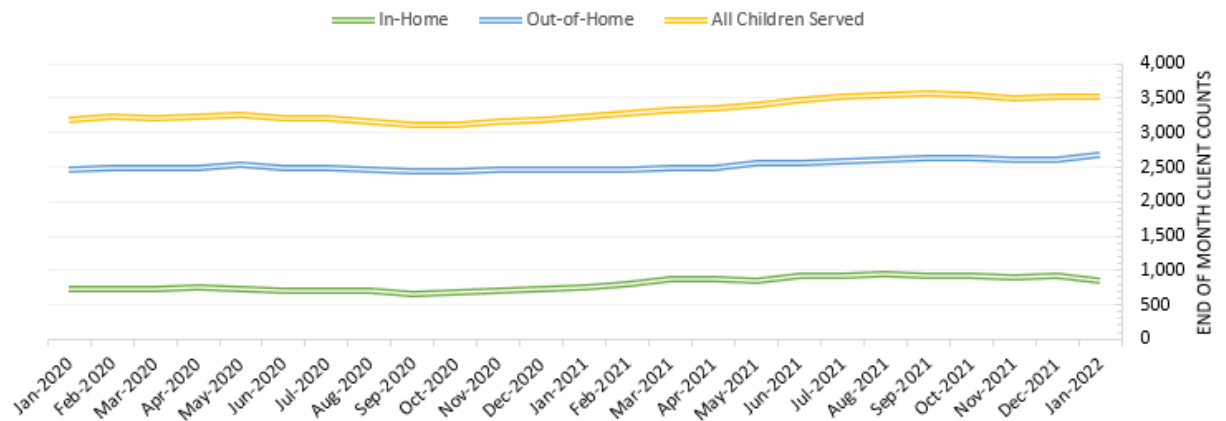
Circuit 6 has the highest number of children receiving services in out-of-home care at 10.3 children per 1,000 child population. This is almost double the statewide average of 5.5 and is a heavy financial burden on the system of care. The rate of children being served in-home is 3.5 per 1,000 children and also more than statewide average of 2.4. FSSS serves 0.1 children per 1,000 child population with family support services, which is just 17% of the statewide average of 0.6.

3. Findings related to provision of services for children in care (both in-home and out-of-home)

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), CBC Financial Viability Report, CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, CBC Budget Projections, and Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Aggregate Payment Data)
- Summary below, See CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, CBC Budget Projections, CBC Financial Viability Report, and [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#) for additional details.

- 3.1. **What is the composition of the children in care including age cohorts, placement types, use of specialized higher costs settings, use of congregate care, etc.**
- 3.2. **What is the cost of various placement types? To what extent are the rates paid for foster care (including care with various rates of intensity), congregate care consistent with statewide norms (considering community context)? Have these rates remained relatively consistent over the past few fiscal years?**
- 3.3. **What is the cost for dependency case management? Is this consistent with norms for such services? Have these rates remained relatively consistent over the past few fiscal years?**
- 3.4. **To what extent is the Lead Agency appropriately utilizing non-child welfare funding for services (such as DCF SAMH Funds, Medicaid, and other non-DCF funding sources).**
- 3.5. **What evidence exists that case management services are well-managed by the Lead Agency? (see overall management section for response)**
- 3.6. **To what extent is the CBC meeting its obligation to the Family First Prevention goals? Have they reduced reliance on Residential Group care? How much? If not, what is the action plan going forward? Has the CBC met the 40% goal for all relative/non-relative placements licensed as Level I Foster Homes?**

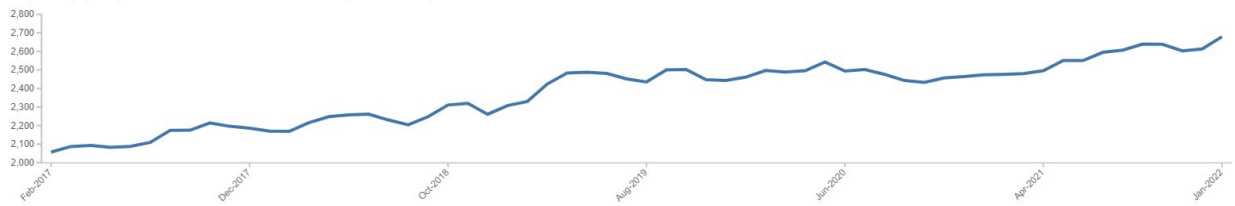
IN-HOME SERVICES, OUT-OF-HOME CARE AND ALL CHILDREN SERVED



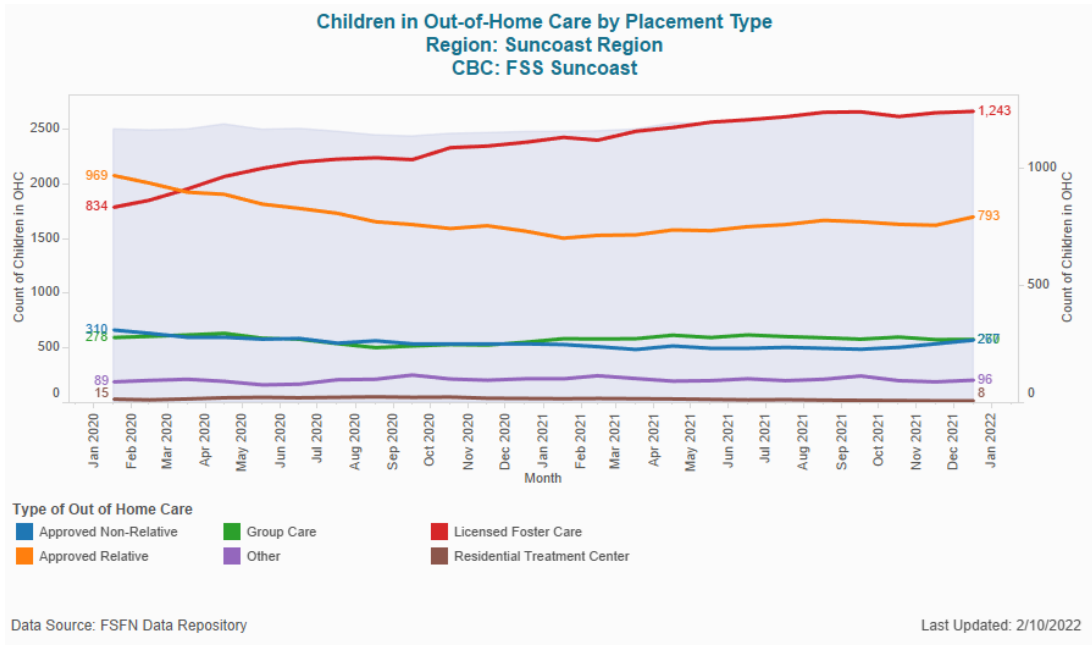
The number of clients being served in-home and out-of-home is high. The chart above shows there are between 729 and 856 clients served in-home and between 2,459 and 2,677 clients served out-of-home.

Children in Out-of-Home Care

Children in Out-of-Home Care (as of the end of the month)
 Last Updated: 2/16/2022 (Data on or after Nov-2021 is draft data and will be updated next month.)



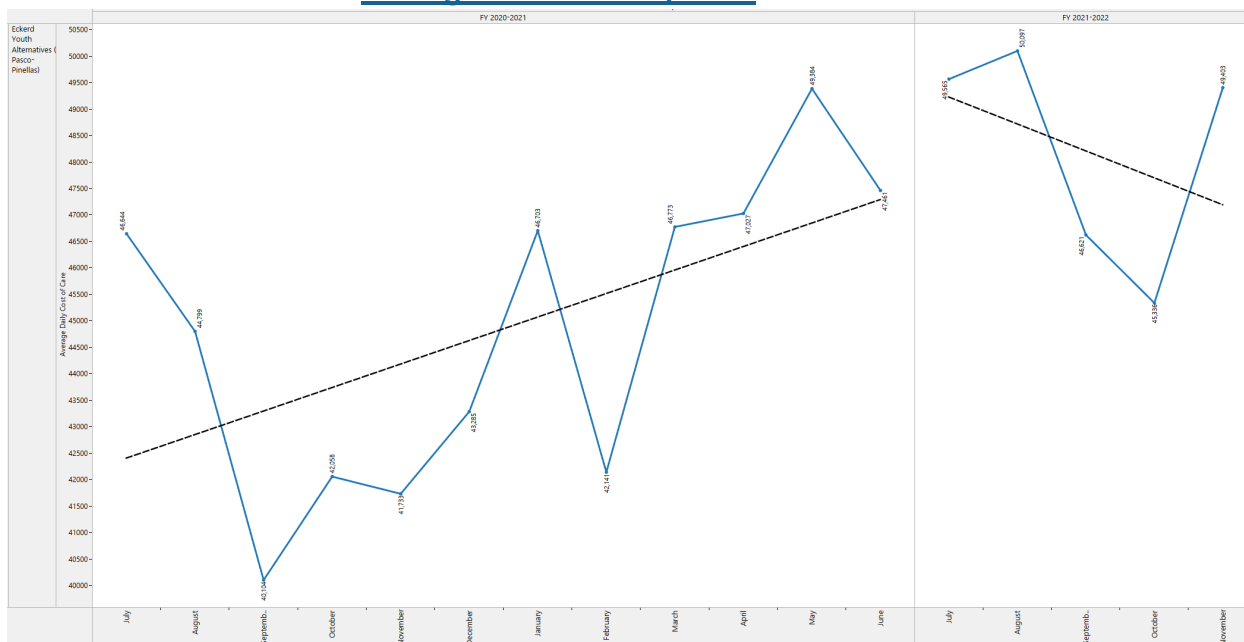
Children in out-of-home care has increased steadily. The above graph shows a five year history where the number of children in out of home care was 2,055 in February 2017 and is now 2,677 in January 2022.



Data Source: FSN Data Repository Last Updated: 2/10/2022

The number of children in group care has remained consistent over the last two years. In January 2020, a total of 278 youth were in group care. As of January 2022, a total of 270 youth (2.9% decrease) were in a congregate care setting. This equates to 10.4% of FSSS' out-of-home care population compared to the statewide average of 7.6%. The lead agency will not be able to achieve financial viability with a high percentage of children in group care under the current funding model. Much work remains to move these children to more appropriate and sustainable settings.

Average Cost of Group Care



The Lead Agency reported a steady increase in the average daily cost of group care for most of FY 2020-21. In FY 2020-21, Group Care averaged \$44,843/day.

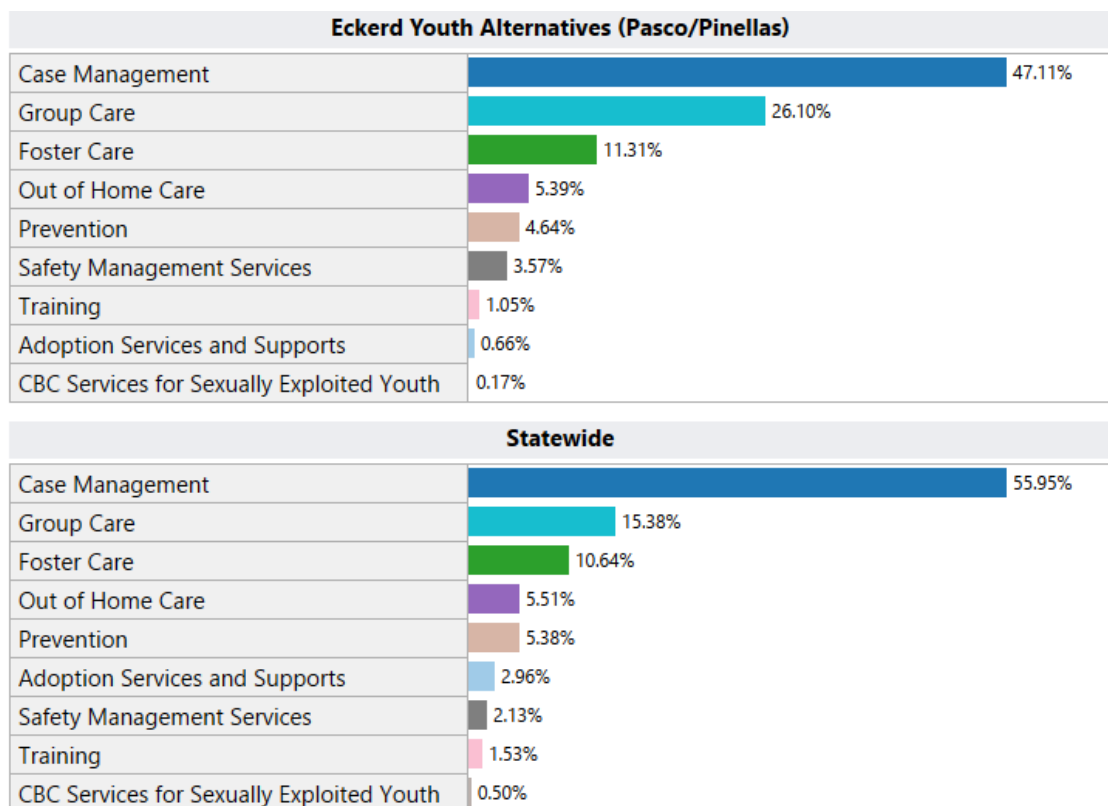
To date in FY 2021-22, the Lead Agency's average cost of group care is \$48,204/day but appears to be trending down. Continued efforts to move children and youth from congregate care should be a priority.

Total \$ of FSFN Payments to Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE, LCGHE & LCGHI)						
Age s	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)	FY 2021-22 (Thru Dec. Service Mths- 50% of the year)	FY 2021- 22 as a % of FY 2020-21
0-5	\$215,401	\$130,416	(\$84,985)	(39.5%)	\$96,054	75%
6-12	\$5,543,510	\$5,446,023	(\$97,487)	(1.8%)	\$2,950,286	54%
13-17	\$10,011,437	\$10,941,988	\$930,551	9.3%	\$5,925,388	54%
Total Number of Unique Clients in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE, LCGHE & LCGHI)						
Age s	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)	FY 2021-2022 (Thru Dec. Service Mths)	
0-5	14	21	7	50.0%	6	
6-12	235	234	(1)	(0.4%)	146	
13-17	355	371	16	4.5%	284	
Median Daily Rate \$ in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE, LCGHE & LCGHI)						

Age s	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)	FY2021-2022 (Thru Dec. Service Mths)
0-5	113.80	150.00	\$36.20	31.8%	\$105.00
6-12	125.00	145.20	\$20.20	16.2%	\$136.00
13-17	150.00	150.00	\$0.00	0%	\$150.00

Between FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021 the Lead Agency for circuit 6 experienced a 50% increase and 7 more clients in group care ages 0-5. There was also a 4% increase in the number of clients in the 13-17 age group and a 9.3% increase in the amount paid for his same age group. Overall, there has been a 4.7% increase in group care expenditures from FY 2019-2020 to FY 2020-2021. Both the 0-5 age group and 6-12 age group experienced a daily rate increase, representing a 31.8% and 16.2% increase respectively. To date, the Lead Agency was on track to spend more in each age group than the prior year, especially the 0-5 age group.

Percent of Core Services Expenditures FY 2021-2022



As of November 30, 2021, Eckerd Circuit 6 was spending significantly less than the statewide average for case management but almost 11% more than the statewide average for group care.

There has been a shift in children from relative/non-relative care to Level 1 licensed care beginning in July 2019. Level 1 foster homes. Eckerd has 28.64% of relative/non-relative homes licensed, well below the statewide average of 37.54%. They are currently the second lowest performing CBC in implementing and maintaining the Guardianship Assistance Program. This is an area deserving of increased attention and focus.

4. Findings related to exits from care including exits to permanence.

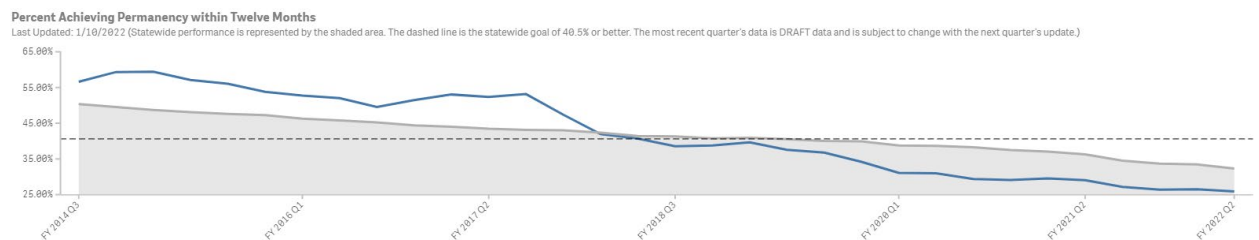
- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), Financial Viability Integrated Data Report)
- Summary below, see [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#) – Sections 4 and 11, for more details.

4.1. What is the performance of the Lead Agency in the recognized measures of children achieving permanence? Do these findings indicate that children are not remaining in care for longer than necessary? Are these permanency achievement rates consistent across placement settings?

4.2. What contextual factors (such as Children’s Legal services, dependency court dynamics, etc.) influence time to permanence for children served by the Lead Agency?

4.3. Has there been a change in number of exits or time to exit that is materially influencing the cost of out-of-home care?

Percent Achieving Permanency within Twelve Months



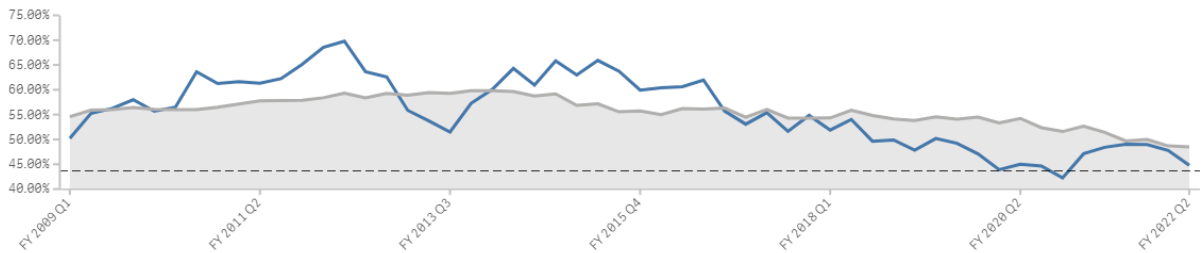
Children achieving permanency is a foundational measure for the health of the system. The statewide target is for 40.5% to achieve permanency within 12 months of removal. The lead agency has seen a steady trend downward from a high 59.29% of children achieving permanency in 12 months during FY 2014-15. FSSS last met the statewide target of 40.5% in FY 2017-2018, Q2. Historically, the lead agency was able to maintain a high level of success with this target for more than ten years. Since falling below the

40.5% target, FSSS has seen a steady downward trend over the most recent sixteen quarters. Most recently, FSSS achieved permanency for 323 of 1,253 children in FY 2021-22, Quarter 2 (25.78%). Currently, the Lead Agency for circuit 6 is the second lowest performing lead agency on this metric.

Children in Care 12 to 23 Months Achieving Permanency within 12 Months

Percent Achieving Permanency within Twelve Months

Last Updated: 1/10/2022 (Statewide performance is represented by the shaded area. The dashed line is the statewide goal of 43.6% or better. The most recent quarter's data is DRAFT data and is subject to change with the next quarter's update.)

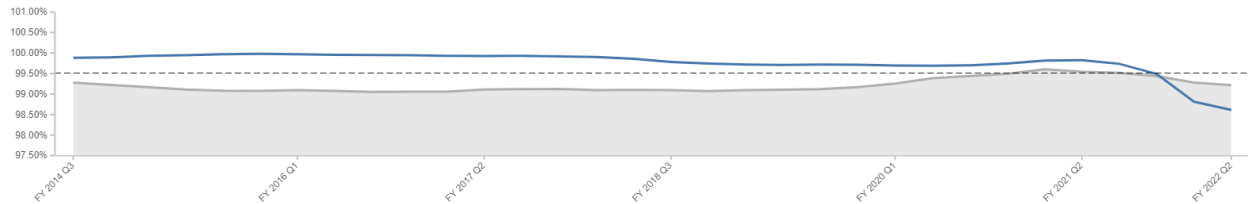


Just one quarter (FY 2019-20, Q4) in the past ten years, the previous CBC failed to meet the target of 40.6% of children in care 12 to 23 months achieving permanency.

Percent of Children Under Supervision Seen Every Thirty Days

Percent of Children Under Supervision Seen Every Thirty Days

Last Updated: 1/10/2022 (Statewide performance is represented by the shaded area. The dashed line is the statewide goal of 99.5% or better. The most recent quarter's data is DRAFT data and is subject to change with the next quarter's update.)

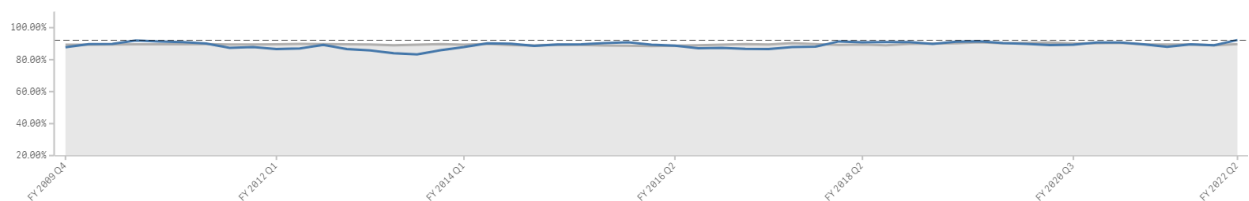


Until recently, the previous CBC consistently surpassed the target of seeing 99.5% of children under supervision every thirty days. However, beginning in 2020-21 Q4, the lead agency fell just below this target.

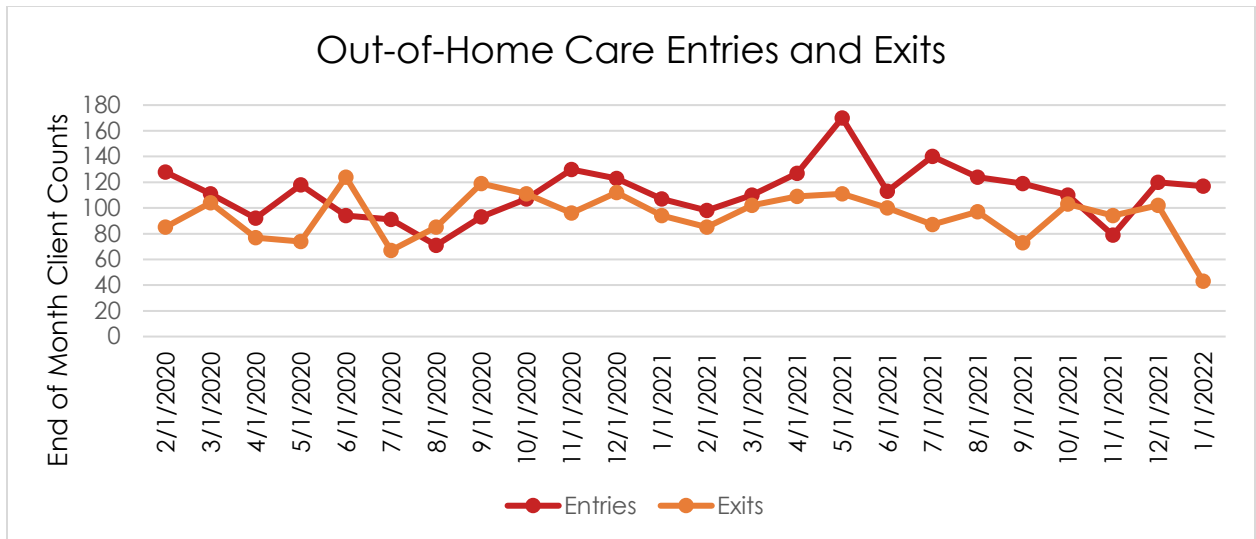
Percent NOT Re-Entering Care within Twelve Months

Percent NOT Re-Entering Care within Twelve Months

Last Updated: 1/10/2022 (Statewide performance is represented by the shaded area. The dashed line is the statewide goal of 91.7% or better. The most recent quarter's data is DRAFT data and is subject to change with the next quarter's update.)



The statewide target for children not re-entering care within twelve months is 91.7%. The previous CBC had struggled with this measure, only once meeting the target in FY 2009-2010, Q3. Draft data for FY 2021-22, Q2 indicates FSSS may meet the target with 92.04% not re-entering care within twelve months.



Entries into out of home care demonstrate a consistent influx of children into out-of-home care and those entries often out-pace the exits.

5. Findings related to funding, fiscal trends and fiscal management.

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), CBC Financial Viability Report, CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report and CBC Budget Projections)
- Summary below, See CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, CBC Budget Projections and CBC Financial Viability Report for additional details.

- 5.1. ***How has core services funding changed over time? (Financial) How has the Lead Agency managed these changes? What adjustments to the available array of services have been made? (For service array response see section1)***
- 5.2. ***How have any changes to core services funding contributed to any projected deficits for FY 2020-2021?***
- 5.3. ***What is the ratio of core funding as a Percent of the Allocation formula?***
- 5.4. ***In what ways are funding dynamics in the Lead Agency unique or atypical of funding in other Lead Agencies?***
- 5.5. ***What is the amount of the anticipated deficit for the current year? How reliable and valid are these projections?***
- 5.6. ***Are their options other than Risk Pool funding available to reduce the deficit?***
- 5.7. ***If the Lead Agency meets the criteria for Risk Pool funding, but the amount of funding available is insufficient to cover the projected deficit, what other options are available?***
- 5.8. ***Are there fiscal practices that could be completed with greater efficiency in order to reduce the projected deficit?***
- 5.9. ***Has the most recent CPA audit indicated any issues that would affect the financial health of the organization?***

Total Funding

DCF Contract Funds Available at Year End (by Fiscal Year)	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22
Core Services Funding	\$44,759,756	\$45,555,137	\$45,888,895	\$47,882,028	\$53,306,454	\$56,492,198
Risk Pool Funding	\$0	\$866,570	\$4,970,419	\$3,887,237	\$5,000,000	\$0
CBC Operations "Back of the Bill" Funding	\$0	\$2,837,214	\$2,263,802	\$7,279,784	\$5,749,108	\$0
Other Amendments to Initial Allocations	\$119,700	\$34,899	\$657,605	\$208,536	\$0	\$4,200,045
Amended Core Services Funding	\$44,879,456	\$49,293,820	\$53,780,721	\$59,257,585	\$64,055,562	\$60,692,243
Funding not defined as Core Services Funding						
Independent Living (IL and Extended Foster Care)	\$1,386,293	\$1,630,662	\$2,224,750	\$2,552,253	\$2,552,253	\$2,552,253
Children's Mental Health Services (Cat 100800/100806)	\$647,125	\$647,125	\$647,125	\$647,125	\$647,125	\$647,125
PI Training, Casey Foundation or other non-core svcs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,104,579
Safety Management Services (Nonrecurring)	\$604,942	\$0	\$604,942	\$604,942	\$0	\$0
Total at Year End	\$47,517,816	\$51,571,607	\$57,257,538	\$63,061,905	\$67,254,940	\$65,996,200
Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS)	\$19,666,457	\$20,572,633	\$22,196,558	\$23,114,740	\$24,341,352	\$25,380,118
Guardianship Assistance Payments (GAP)				\$89,654	\$89,654	\$332,576
MAS Prior Year Deficit						
Carry Forward Balance from Previous Years	\$1,125,711	-\$195,642	-\$508,998	-\$52,009	-\$650,086	-\$1,590,737
Total Funds Available	\$68,309,984	\$71,948,598	\$78,945,098	\$86,214,290	\$91,035,860	\$90,118,157

Circuit 6 has received a total of \$10.7M in Risk Pool and "Back of the Bill" funding in FY 2020-2021. Even with the additional funds, the lead agency finished the year with a \$1.6M deficit. If the risk pool and "Back of the Bill" funding were excluded, the entire deficit for FY 2020-2021 would have been \$12,339,845. Circuit 6 also received 4.2M in FY 2021-2022 to partially cover a deficit prior to Risk Pool discussions.

Allocation of New Funding for Caseload 1 to 17 in State Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (Table 1)					
CBC Lead Agency	Current Level of Funding	% of Optimum Funding Before Allocation	Allocation of New Funding	New Level of Funding	% of Optimum Funding After Allocation
Big Bend CBC dba Northwest Florida Health Network	27,835,031	90.4%	363,641	28,198,672	91.4%
Brevard Family Partnerships	21,190,590	87.1%	373,008	21,563,598	88.8%
Childnet (Circuit 17)	60,818,442	95.6%	296,310	61,114,752	96.6%
Childnet (Circuit 15)	34,886,015	89.3%	511,688	35,397,703	90.4%
Children's Network of SW FL	37,774,164	67.8%	2,165,220	39,939,384	71.6%
Citrus Family Care Network	77,376,515	117.0%	0	77,376,515	117.4%
Communities Connected for Kids	23,854,417	96.6%	104,872	23,959,289	96.9%

Community Partnership for Children	28,328,507	74.5%	1,171,780	29,500,287	77.5%
Eckerd Community Alternatives (Circuit 6)	50,610,140	65.4%	*4,371,313	54,981,453	70.9%
Eckerd Community Alternatives (Circuit 13)	60,277,503	73.4%	*3,863,739	64,141,242	78.3%
Embrace Families	61,938,655	101.1%	0	61,938,655	101.0%
Families First Network	37,820,641	72.1%	1,757,925	39,578,566	75.5%
St Johns County	5,024,545	71.5%	243,478	5,268,023	74.7%
Family Support Services of North Florida	39,009,868	88.7%	615,527	39,625,395	89.8%
Heartland for Children	36,231,773	82.5%	935,158	37,166,931	84.4%
Kids Central	42,246,842	78.0%	1,424,759	43,671,601	80.7%
Kids First of Florida	7,426,216	72.3%	347,084	7,773,300	75.3%
Partnership for Strong Families	25,000,080	87.7%	434,325	25,434,405	88.9%
Safe Children Coalition	24,765,387	71.2%	1,203,895	25,969,282	74.7%
Total	702,415,331	83.8%	20,183,722	722,599,053	87.0%

The Department of Children and Families and the Florida Coalition for Children worked together and developed the Florida Funding For Children model to provide a need based funding strategy and assure each child regardless of where they reside in the state would have equitable resources to provide care and to manage the case to permanency. Eckerd Circuit 6 (Now Family Support Services of Suncoast) is funded at 70.9% of the Florida Funding for Children model and remains the lowest funded lead agency.

Core services funding increased ~\$5.4M from FY 2019-2020 to FY 2020-2021 and by ~\$1.5M from FY 2020-2021 to FY 2021-2022.

Eckerd Circuit 6 (now Family Support Services of Suncoast) also received a recurring allocation for a pilot project aimed at improving safety, permanency and well-being of children in the local system of care. In FY 2021-22 the total pilot project funds available to circuit 6 was \$4,999,909 which provided additional financial resources. \$4,371,313 of these funds will be included in FSSS' core services in FY 2022-23.

Core Services Expenditures by Category

Reported Expenditures by Fiscal Year	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21
Administrative Costs	\$2,597,942	\$2,628,117	\$2,527,940	\$3,475,315	\$3,710,195
Admin Cost Rate (Exp as % of Total Allocations)	3.9%	3.6%	3.2%	4.0%	4.0%
Core Services Expenditures					
Dependency Case Management	\$23,355,866	\$24,610,073	\$25,569,425	\$28,385,526	\$28,396,015
Adoption Services Promotion & Support	\$203,597	\$231,381	\$284,237	\$373,752	\$354,564
Prevention/Family Support/Family Preservation	\$4,391,775	\$4,139,019	\$4,014,869	\$3,999,154	\$1,996,484
Client Services	\$3,722,944	\$2,510,926	\$2,511,902	\$3,032,554	\$3,688,078
Training - Staff and Adoptive/Foster Parent	\$1,506,928	\$1,579,706	\$1,239,314	\$804,712	\$694,340
Licensed Family Foster Home (Level I Child Specific)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$184,817	\$1,054,189
Licensed Family Foster Home (Level II-V)	\$4,702,184	\$4,737,305	\$5,384,032	\$6,234,299	\$7,095,172
Licensed Facility Based Care	\$7,337,139	\$10,430,853	\$13,946,466	\$15,602,765	\$16,378,679
Services for Victims of Sexual Exploitation	\$32,018	\$21,698	\$21,641	\$29,352	\$138,144
Safety Management Services	\$604,942	\$804,541	\$754,083	\$1,504,201	\$3,517,159
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Core Services Expenditures	\$45,857,393	49,065,502	53,725,969	60,151,132	63,312,824

When comparing core service expenditures by category, FY 2020-2021 had a decrease in prevention/family support/family preservation from 3.9M to 1.9M representing a 50% decrease. Dependency case management spending remained unchanged. Safety Management Services expenditures doubled from \$1.5M to \$3.5M.

6. Findings related to overall management.

- Sources: ([CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), Financial Viability Plan)
- Summary below, [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#) – Sections 4 and 11, and the Financial Viability Plan for more details.

6.1. To what extent is there clear and effective communication between and among the Region, the Lead Agency, the Sheriff (if applicable), case management organizations and other key community partners?

6.2. How actively and effectively does Lead Agency management track programmatic performance and fiscal performance?

6.3. What actions have been taken by the Region and/or the Lead Agency to resolve the fiscal issues without accessing the Risk Pool? What further actions are planned?

FSSS will create a new financial viability plan as it assesses the needs of the community.

7. Other factors or considerations noted on the application or determined relevant by the Peer Review Committee.

A six-year history shows Eckerd Circuit 6 (now Family Support Service of Suncoast) has received \$37M for deficits the previous four years through secondary funding (Risk Pool, Back of the Bill and LBC amendments). The allocation for deficits in FY 2020-21 was \$10,749,108.

According to the Florida Funding for Families model Eckerd Circuit 6 is funded at 70.9% of the optimum funding level; which contributes to its ongoing deficits.

8. Provide a detailed analysis of the projected Return on Investment (ROI) in terms of future cost avoidance, reduction in Out of Home Care, increase in prevention in home services, reduction in removals or other related factors.

FSSS indicated the return on investment of risk pool funds within Circuit 6 will be seen in the enhancement of the service array to include but is not limited to additional staffing to address shortages and the current strain on the system, increased subcontractor services and creation of FAST and SAFE programs.

9. The areas identified above are illustrative of the expected areas for review and analysis, but additional factors may be identified in the application or suggested by findings during the course of the Peer Review Committee's work.

Summary of Findings:

Based on the information reviewed the Risk Pool Review Committee was able to affirm the following:

- DCF gave notice of contract cancellation to the previous lead agency, Eckerd Connects, in November 2021.
- FSSS was awarded the contract as lead agency in Judicial Circuit 6 and assumed operations on January 1, 2022, under a shortened time frame for transition.
- In October 2021, Eckerd Connects projected a \$14 million deficit for State Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and had received risk pool and additional budget for operation deficits every year since State Fiscal Year 2017-2018.
- Circuit 6 is funded at 70.9% of optimum funding based on the Florida Funding for Children model (FFFC) which is the lowest percent of funding of any CBC in the state.
- Although removals have recently trended slightly downward, there is a lag time between removals and exits from care. Therefore, it will likely take up to 24 months before those reductions will be realized and the number of kids served declines.
- The previous CBC has struggled with meeting their performance measures over the past several years.
 - Placement moves per 1,000 bed days is the lowest in the state.
 - The second lowest in the state for placing siblings together.
 - Did not meeting 7 of the 12 Scorecard goals.

- There has been a significant increase in total population served, and more importantly a significant increase in out-of-home care, which is more costly than in-home care.
- The previous CBC experiences a significant increase in total population served, and more importantly a significant increase in out-of-home care, which is more costly than in-home care.
- The previous CBC experienced an increase in Residential Group Care (RGC) especially for the teen population. They are the second highest in the state.
- Circuit 6 has experienced a decrease in exits under the previous CBC. Their months to discharge and their time to permanency have been steadily going up. Their Average Length of Stay is 21.31 months which is higher than the State Average of 18.53 months and it is trending upward.
- Front end services seem substantial however there is a question as to the cost effectiveness of these programs.

Risk Pool Allocations:

The Peer Review Committee found that Family Support Services of Suncoast qualifies for risk pool funding.

The expenditure of approved risk pool funds is based on relevant and verifiable service trends and changes that have occurred during the current fiscal year. The applicant's financial need is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the lead agency management. The use of risk pool funds meets at least one of the purposes specified in section 490.990 (8)(c), F.S. (2021).

Recommendations:

1. Place a stronger emphasis on the reduction in the number of children in residential group care to a more appropriate placement
2. Examine and review for effectiveness front end services with providers since the number of families served is going down but the cost remains the same.
3. Explore rapid permanency reviews and/or other targeted reviews to move cases to permanency.
4. Review in-home placements over 6 months (including post placement supervision) to assess for continued service needs or safe case closure. 142 out of 493 children have been in in-home placements more than 6 months.
5. Focus on reducing the caseload ratio (as recommended in prior risk pool reports)
6. Focus on addressing case manager turnover.