

**Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report**  
**Safe Children Coalition – Circuit 12 (Desoto, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties)**  
**Fiscal Year 2020-2021**

**Executive Summary:**

Safe Children Coalition, Inc. (SCC) submitted an application for risk pool funding on December 14, 2020. The application was subsequently reviewed by the Suncoast Region and submitted to the Office of Revenue Management and Partner Compliance.

The department established a Risk Pool Peer Review Committee pursuant to section 409.990 (7)(c), F.S., for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2020-21, 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 330) for State Fiscal Year 2020-2021. 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 with relevant information available from multiple sources to make recommendations. The documents reviewed are below:

- Risk Pool Funding Application SFY 2020-2021
- Financial Viability Plan (SFY 2020-2021)
- Budget Projections provided by the CBC
- [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#)
- [CBC Contract Monitoring Reports](#)
- CBC Contract Monitoring Data Packets
- [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#)
- Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Aggregate Payment Data
- SCC Previous Risk Pool Report
- June 30, 2020 Single Audit (CPA Audit)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this fiscal year, the Risk Pool Peer Review team conducted a review virtually in January 2021 with relevant information available from multiple sources to make recommendations. The documents reviewed are below:

The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee for SCC consisted of:

Lee Kaywork, Team Leader

Barney Ray, DCF Director of Revenue Management and Partner Compliance

Eddie Encarnacion, DCF Northeast Region, Regional Managing Director

James Weaver, DCF Director of Protective and Supportive Services

Larry Rein, CEO, ChildNet, Inc.

Lauren Hahn, CFO, Communities Connected for Kids, Inc.  
Nadereh Salim, CEO, Children's Network of SW Florida, LLC  
Raeann Bacchus, DCF Southern Region, Regional Managing Director  
Stephanie Hayden, DCF Quality Office Manager

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:**

SCC's application for risk pool funding requested \$1,102,583 due to significant changes in the number or composition of clients eligible to receive services. Specifically, this funding is needed to cover projected FY 2020-2021 deficit as the removal rate has been historically high; ranging from 25% to 45% and has leveled off at this rate.

The primary causes SCC attributed to their current financial challenges are outlined below:

- Removal rates that are high and significantly above the statewide average the past five fiscal years. The rates of removal per 100 children were an average of 36% higher than the statewide average.
- Core funding has been consistently below the statewide average. SCC is funded at 74.7% of optimum funding based on the Florida Funding for Children Model (FFFC).

Due to the significant average number of removals in Circuit 12 compared to the statewide average over the past 5 years, funds are necessary to cover the additional costs associated with the 'new normal' number of children in the system of care. In FY 2012-13 – FY 2013-14, an average of 483 children were removed annually. Since FY 2014-15 – FY 2019-20, an average of 777 children have been removed annually. This represents a 61% increase in removals over baseline.

A comparison of the SCC's rate of removal per 100 children to the statewide average:

<b>Removal per 100 Alleged Victims</b>		
	<b>Avg for 12 months</b>	<b>Statewide Avg</b>
Nov 2019-Oct 2020	7.05	5.3
Nov 2018-Oct 2019	7.22	5.2
Nov 2017-Oct 2018	6.64	5.3
Nov 2016-Oct 2017	7.65	5.5
Nov 2015-Oct 2016	8.53	5.8
Nov 2014-Oct 2015	6.64	6
Nov 2013-Oct 2014	5.35	5.2

## 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.***

SCC serves Circuit 12 which covers Manatee, Sarasota and Desoto Counties. The Child Protective Investigation function is performed by the sheriff's office in Manatee County and by the department in Sarasota and Desoto counties. Children's Legal Services functions are performed by the department in all counties.

Initially, case management was subcontracted in all three counties; however, over the past several years, SCC has had to adapt and transform. The lead agency now provides case management services in Sarasota and Desoto Counties while Lutheran Services Florida provides case management in Manatee County.

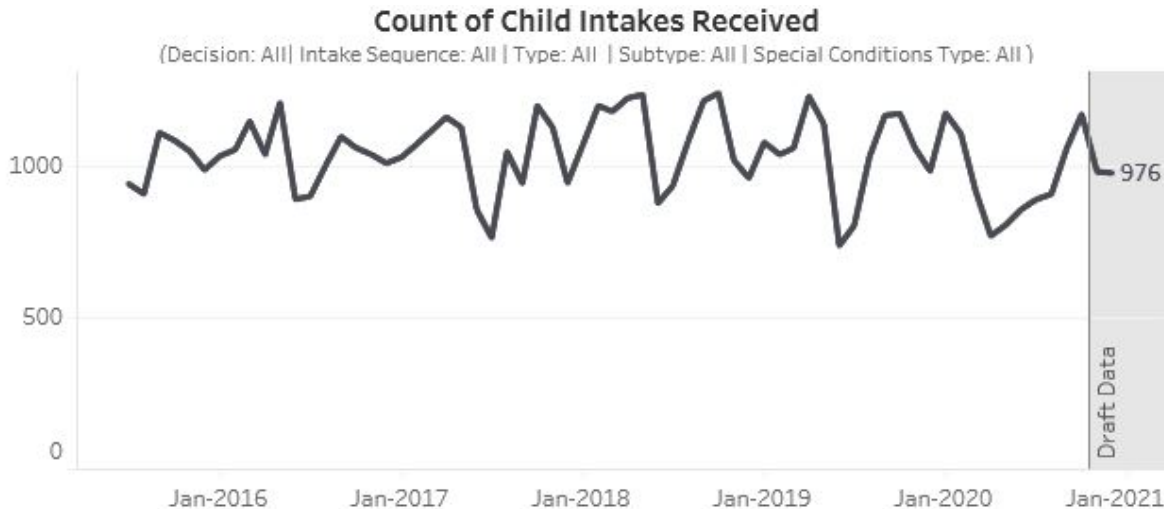
Census Facts				
US Census Facts	Florida	Desoto	Manatee	Sarasota
Median Household Income	\$55,660	\$35,438	\$59,009	\$62,236
Percent of population living in poverty	12.7%	21.8%	11.3%	7.8%
Percent of population over 25 years old with a college degree	29.9%	11.5%	29.8%	35.4%
Percent of population over 25 years old with high school diploma	88.2%	73.5%	89.7%	93.1%

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

SCC serves a wide range of clients within the three county area, from Desoto County with a higher percent of poverty and lower education rate, to Sarasota and Manatee Counties with lower poverty and higher education rates than the state average.

Manatee County has a Children's Services Council which focuses on funding prevention efforts. Service availability for both dependent and non-dependent children and their families varies between counties. Desoto County has fewer resources and service delivery is more challenging due to the rural nature of the county.

## Intakes Received Circuit 12 – June 2016 to December 2020

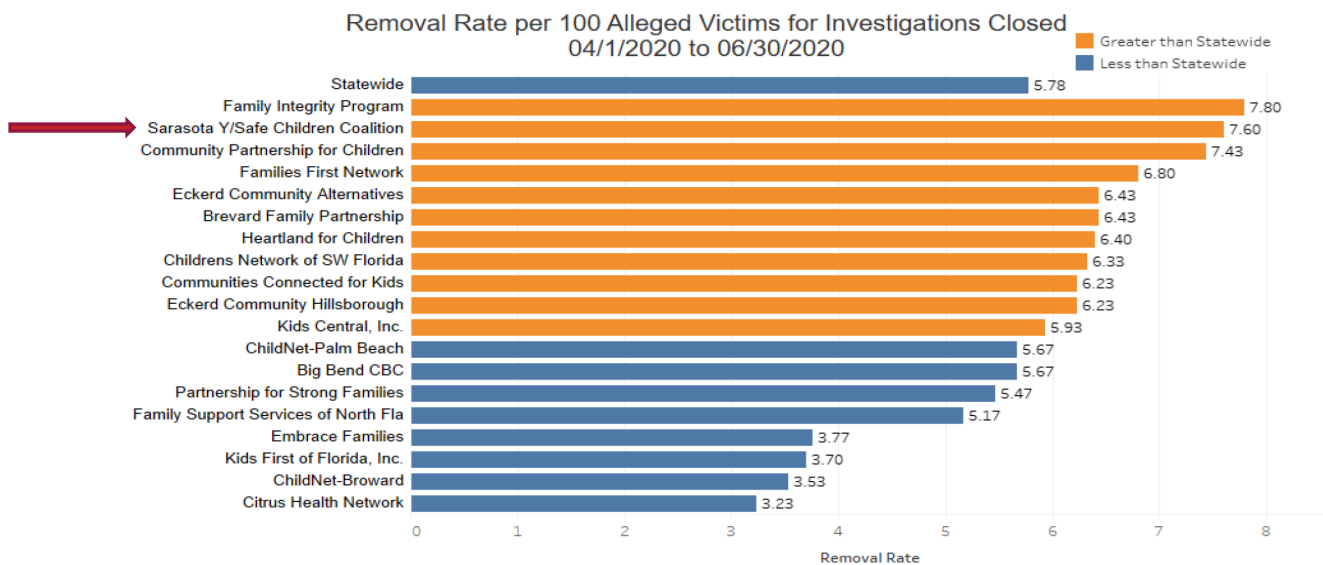


Circuit 12 had an average of 1,066 intakes per month in FY 2017-2018. The average number of intakes dipped slightly to 1,060 per month in FY 2018-2019. In FY 2019-2020, average number of intakes dropped to 986 per month, a trend which mirrored a decline experienced statewide.

## 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.

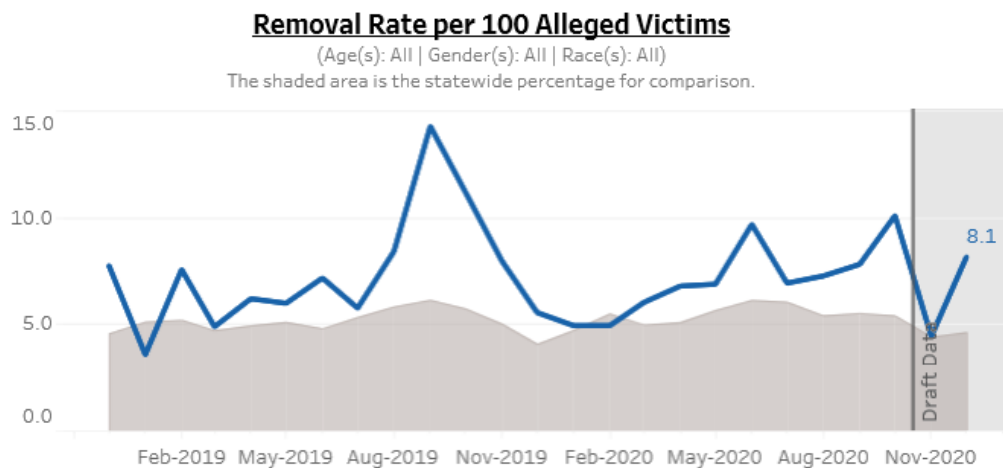
- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#))
- Summary below, See CBC Contract Monitoring Report, sections 5, 9, and 11 for more details

- 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?***



The statement in the application that Circuit 12 has consistently maintained a higher rate of removal per 100 alleged victims than the statewide average is supported by data from the Child Welfare Dashboard.

The removal rate per 100 alleged victims from 4/1/2020 to 6/30/2020 is higher than the statewide average, and second highest in the state, as shown in the graphic above. For the same quarter in 2019, the removal rate was 5.1 statewide and 5.9 for SCC. Both represent an increase in removal rates though at a greater increase for SCC.



Removal rates within the Circuit have been well above the state average for several years.

	CHILDREN			FAMILIES		
	Manatee	Sarasota/ Desoto	Total CHILDREN	Manatee	Sarasota/ Desoto	Total FAMILIES
<b>FSS (Family Support Services )</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>259</b>
No. Successfully Closed - No Removals/Shelters	518	266	784	161	84	245
% Successfully Closed - No Removals/Shelters	96%	97%	97%	95%	93%	95%
	Manatee	Sarasota	Total			
<b>SMS (Safety Management Services) 2019/2020</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>1045</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>498</b>
No. Successfully Closed - No Removals/Shelters	423	489	912	199	231	430
% Successfully Closed - No Removals/Shelters	84%	90%	87%	83%	90%	86%
<b>Prevention Services (FSS and SMS)</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>1857</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>757</b>
No. Successfully Closed - No Removals/Shelters	941	755	1696	360	315	675
% Successfully Closed - No Removals/Shelters	90%	93%	91%	88%	91%	89%

The integration and success of family support services, safety management services and prevention services is demonstrated by the number of cases successfully closed for which no removals occurred. SCC continues to enhance and increase diversion and prevention services. Even with the additional services, the number of removals has maintained well above the statewide average. In addition to utilization of DCF funds for prevention and diversion, SCC has also secured monies for the implementation of the CAPTA Grant. Additionally, SCC received funding from the Manatee County CARES Act Community Health and Wellbeing Program to provide in-home face-to-face prevention and diversion services. This new program allowed SCC the ability to provide services to all families in Manatee County with a child abuse or neglect investigation who were not already being served. It is estimated that 675 additional children will be served this year.

Prevention and diversion staff are co-located with the Manatee County Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) and will resume co-location with department investigators once the DCF office has fully opened following partial closure due to COVID-19.

Family support service (FSS) referrals are received from both CPIs and the Emergency Response Assessment Team (ERAT). Referrals are accepted on all cases with high or very high-risk level, where children are determined safe from impending danger. Support services can maintain engagement with the family for nine months and can be extended for another three months as needed.

Safety management services are provided by the Emergency Response Assessment Team (ERAT). The team addresses crisis needs when child protective investigations

determine present danger exists in a home. The team consists of master's level counselors to act both as an in-home crisis counselor as well as a resource linkage. Counselors are assigned immediately or within up to 4 hours of acceptance of the case and are required to complete a face-to-face response within 24 hours. As the safety monitor, the crisis counselor maintains face-to-face contact with the family twice a week at minimum but could be more depending on the safety plan.

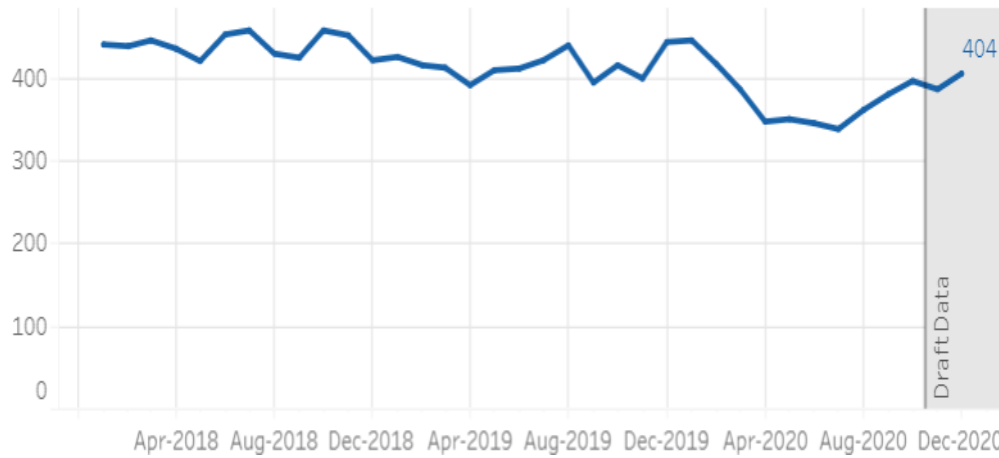
### **3. Findings related to provision of services for children in care (both in-home and out-of-home)**

- 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?***

### Children Receiving In-Home Services (as of the end of each month)

(Age(s): All | Gender(s): All | Race(s): All | Living Arrangement(s): All)



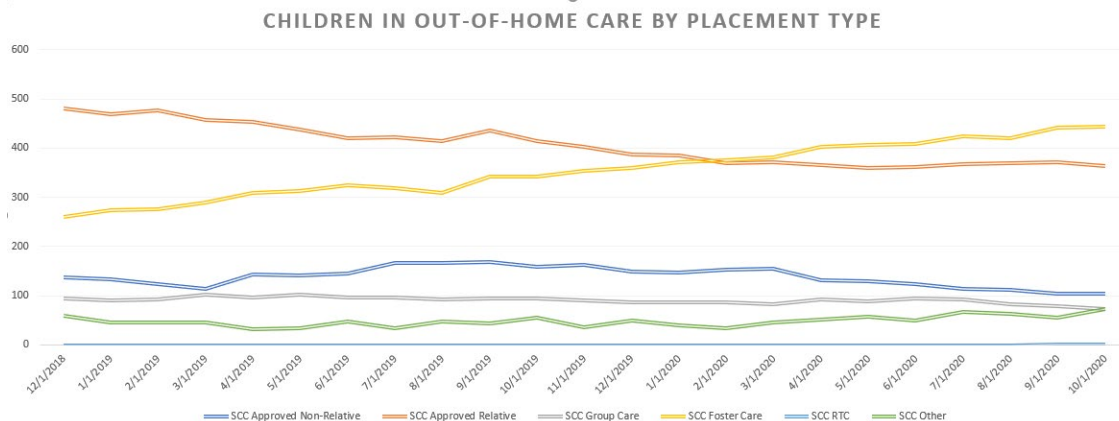
The end of month count of the number served through in-home services dropped to between 337 and 348 between April 2020 and July 2020. However the more recent trend is an increase to over 400 by the end of December 2020.

### Children In Out-of-Home Care (as of the end of each month)

(Age(s): All | Gender(s): All | Race(s): All | Placement Type(s): All)



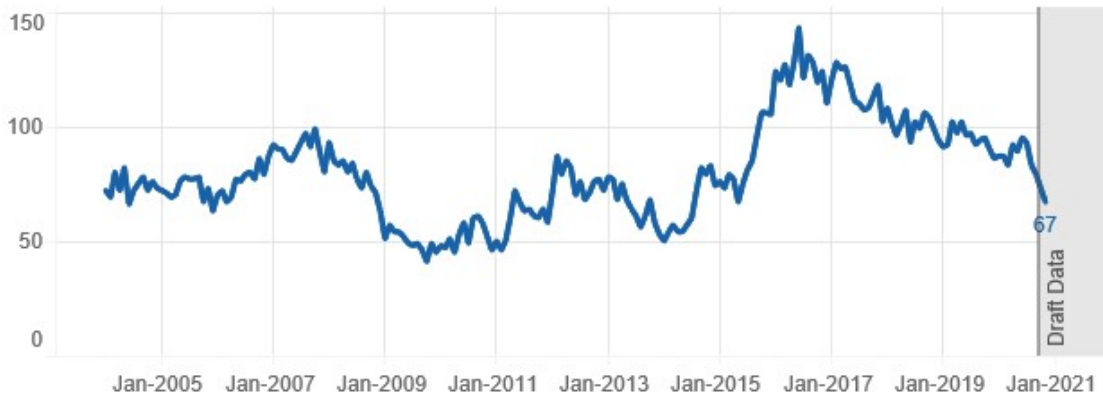
The number in out-of-home care (OOHC) in September 2017 was 1,158 has slowly declined to about 1,050 but has stayed relatively flat in the current year.



## Children Placed in Group Care Setting

### Children In Out-of-Home Care (as of the end of each month)

(Age(s): All | Gender(s): All | Race(s): All | Placement Type(s): Group Care)



Children in Group Care	Nov 2017-Oct 2018	Nov 2018-Oct 2019	Nov 2019-Oct 2020
Avg for 12 months	103.1	95.9	86.4

The number of children in group care peaked in late 2016 and has shown a steady decline since that time. Moving children out of congregate care has been an ongoing priority of SCC. In the three-year period ending in October 2020, SCC saw a 16% decrease in reliance on residential group care.

SCC received feedback of FY 2019-2020 Financial Viability Plan to put additional effort in the reduction of youth in group care. As of November 2020, group care placements were 6.2% of all out-of-home care placements compared to statewide average of 6.7%.

SCC reduced the percent of youth in group care from 9.5% to 5.7%. The total reduction from a high of 144 children in June 2016 to 58 children as of December 2020.

The average daily cost of group care was at a high of \$15,273/day in May 2020. Since that time there has been a steady decline in the average daily cost. As of November 2020, SCC had reduced this amount to \$12,284.

Due to the reduction in the percent (and average daily cost) of youth in group care, the daily cost of out-of-home care (OHC) has been reduced. The daily OHC cost was reduced from \$25,178/day in June 2020 to \$21,504/day in November 2020.

As of January 27, 2021, SCC has not met the goal of 40% penetration of Level 1 licensing. SCC has 24.88% homes licensed, below the statewide average of 28.73%. They are currently the fourth lowest performing CBC in implementing and maintaining the Guardianship Assistance Program. SCC has indicated that this is a priority initiative for FY 2020-2021.

Average Caseload (By Case and Child)*		
	SCC	Statewide
December 2019	16.74	18.83
December 2020	18.67	18.23

From December 2019 to December 2020, average caseloads increased by 10.3% compared to the statewide average decrease of 3%. However, their average caseload is only slightly higher than the statewide average.

#### **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?**

### Permanency Achieved within Twelve Months - SCC



The number of children achieving permanency in Circuit 12 has trended down and fell below the statewide target in FY 2019-2020, Quarter 1.

### Children in Care 12 to 23 Months Achieving Permanency – SCC



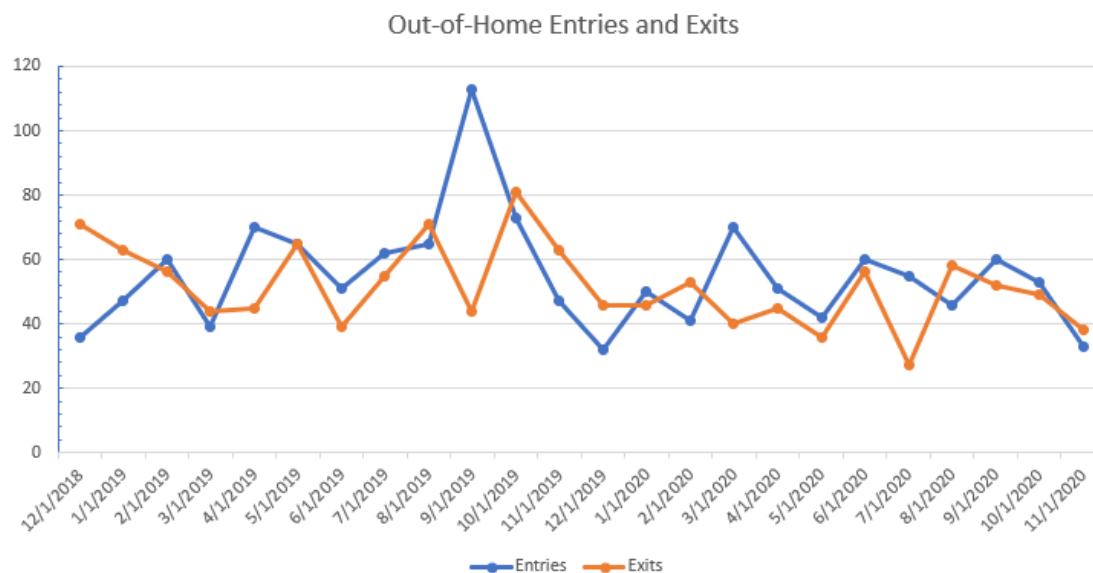
Permanency for children in care 12 to 23 months has maintained above the statewide target of 40.5%. /

### Entries, Exits and Children in Out-of-Home Care – At a Glance

Children Entering Out-of-Home Care	Nov. 2017-Oct. 2018	Nov. 2018-Oct. 2019	Nov. 2019-Oct. 2020
Total – 12 Months	722	738	607

Average – 12 Months	60.2	61.5	50.6
Average – Last 6 Months	65.3	71.5	52.7
Average – Previous 6 Months	55	51.5	48.5
<b>Children Exiting Out-of-Home Care</b>	<b>Nov. 2017-Oct. 2018</b>	<b>Nov. 2018-Oct. 2019</b>	<b>Nov. 2019-Oct. 2020</b>
Total – 12 Months	742	699	571
Average – 12 Months	61.8	58.3	47.6
Average – Last 6 Months	63.5	59.2	46.3
Average – Previous 6 Months	60.2	57.3	48.8
<b>Net - Entries less Exits</b>	<b>Nov. 2017-Oct. 2018</b>	<b>Nov. 2018-Oct. 2019</b>	<b>Nov. 2019-Oct. 2020</b>
Total – 12 Months	-20	39	36
<b>Children In Out-of-Home Care</b>	<b>Nov. 2017-Oct. 2018</b>	<b>Nov. 2018-Oct. 2019</b>	<b>Nov. 2019-Oct. 2020</b>
Average – 12 Months	1,088.1	1,036.6	1,041.9

The number of children entering out-of-home care has decreased substantially from November 2017 to October 2020. Despite a decrease of 16% in the average new entries, the removal rates are still significantly above the statewide average. While the number of children entering care has slowed, so too has the number of children exiting care. During the same time period, the number of children exiting out-of-home care has declined from an average of 61.8 per month to 47.6 children. When combined, this results in a net increase of 36 children being served in out-of-home care from November 2019 to October 2020.



## 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)	FY15-16	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21
Core Services Funding	\$19,826,917	\$20,677,650	\$22,294,024	\$22,460,858	\$23,643,449	\$26,316,811
Risk Pool Funding	\$1,891,577	\$1,785,000	\$2,719,085	\$1,402,921	\$1,694,162	\$0
CBC Operations "Back of the Bill" Funding	\$0	\$709,002	\$0	\$0	\$1,471,198	\$0
Other Amendments to Initial Allocations	\$192,572	\$56,549	\$390,189	\$867,087	\$341,013	\$0
<b>Amended Core Services Funding</b>	<b>\$21,911,066</b>	<b>\$23,228,201</b>	<b>\$25,403,298</b>	<b>\$24,730,866</b>	<b>\$27,149,822</b>	<b>\$26,316,811</b>
<b>Funding not defined as Core Services Funding</b>						
Independent Living (IL and Extended Foster Care)	\$564,234	\$564,234	\$664,114	\$768,388	\$860,855	\$860,855
Children's Mental Health Services (Cat 100800/100806)	\$300,158	\$300,158	\$300,158	\$300,158	\$300,158	\$300,158
PI Training, Casey Foundation or other non-core svc	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Safety Management Services (Nonrecurring)	\$0	\$329,521	\$0	\$329,521	\$329,521	\$0
<b>Total at Year End</b>	<b>\$22,775,458</b>	<b>\$24,422,114</b>	<b>\$26,367,570</b>	<b>\$26,128,933</b>	<b>\$28,640,356</b>	<b>\$27,477,824</b>
Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS)	\$7,035,052	\$7,277,070	\$7,530,772	\$8,482,703	\$9,131,838	\$9,491,364
Guardianship Assistance Payments (GAP)					\$46,562	\$46,562
MAS Prior Year Deficit	-\$157,689					
Carry Forward Balance from Previous Years	\$1,195,670	\$420,271	\$21,398	\$721,878	\$274,525	\$422,967
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$30,848,491</b>	<b>\$32,119,455</b>	<b>\$33,919,740</b>	<b>\$35,333,514</b>	<b>\$38,093,281</b>	<b>\$37,438,717</b>

The SCC has had a deficit every year since FY 2015-16 and received a total of \$1.16M in Risk Pool and "Back of the Bill" funding. The Risk Pool request for FY 2020-21 of \$1,102,583 is ~35% of the total additional funding (\$3,165,360) provided during FY 2019-20.

Fiscal Year	% Core Below Equity	Total core funding below equity
FY 15/16	1.9%	(\$365,281)
FY 16/17	9.5%	(\$2,087,581)
FY 17/18	18.0%	(\$4,499,208)
FY 18/19	7.0%	(\$1,685,941)
FY 19/20	21.7%	(\$4,856,464)
FY 20/21	26.5%	(\$6,032,215)

Core funding for SCC has been consistently below the statewide average. Additionally, the gap has grown over time. SCC is funded at 74.7% based upon the Florida Funding for Children Model (FFFC). This is the third lowest funded CBC in the state.

### Expenditures on Core Services and Administration

Reported Expenditures by Fiscal Year	FY15-16	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20
Administrative Costs	\$1,076,778	\$1,097,410	\$1,110,645	\$1,164,570	\$1,140,815
Admin Cost Rate (Exp as % of Total Allocations)	3.6%	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%	3.0%
<b>Core Services Expenditures</b>					
Dependency Case Management	\$12,696,277	\$12,021,702	\$11,772,163	\$13,242,847	\$15,406,095
Adoption Services Promotion & Support	\$231,247	\$246,814	\$322,085	\$378,435	\$374,402
Prevention/Family Support/Family Preservation	\$971,505	\$379,031	\$553,090	\$633,612	\$641,974
Client Services	\$1,018,058	\$1,235,453	\$1,676,065	\$1,925,336	\$1,760,564
Training - Staff and Adoptive/Foster Parent	\$519,418	\$1,270,347	\$1,977,496	\$1,400,260	\$339,944
Licensed Family Foster Home (Level I Child Specific)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$131,684
Licensed Family Foster Home (Level II-V)	\$1,447,678	\$1,663,625	\$2,567,412	\$2,486,309	\$2,890,735
Licensed Facility Based Care	\$5,239,995	\$5,957,165	\$5,268,949	\$5,008,292	\$5,059,782
Services for Victims of Sexual Exploitation	\$119,555	\$294,610	\$173,800	\$80,102	\$202,620
Safety Management Services	\$0	\$697,609	\$343,230	\$576,468	\$501,347
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Core Services Expenditures</b>	<b>\$22,243,733</b>	<b>\$23,766,356</b>	<b>24,654,289</b>	<b>25,731,661</b>	<b>27,309,147</b>

SCC has increased expenditures on dependency case management functions in order to keep reasonable caseloads in order to reduce turnover and get children to permanency. The have also increased expenditures on licensed foster home placements to reduce reliance on residential group care.

The most recent CPA audit dated December 28, 2020 found the SCC complied in all material respects with the types of compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs and state financial assistance projects for the years ended June 30, 2020. The result of the audit disclosed an instance of noncompliance and questioned costs related to Foster Care – Title-IV-E. During compliance testing of the Foster Care program, the audit found that the program did not meet the required initial contact within the time period as stated in the Florida Administrative Code and the Florida Administrative Register. It was recommended that management implement a process for reviewing case files to ensure the initial contacts occur within the required time frame. Management agreed with the finding and the Organization responded to this noncompliance via a Corrective Action Plan.

## **FY 2020-2021 Financial Viability Plan**

In their design and instruction for the Financial Viability Plan (FVP) templates, DCF requested that CBCs identify their actions to address three primary cost drivers:

1. Factors related to entries into care
2. Factors related to the cost of children while in care
3. Factors related to exits from care

SCC's FVP contains actions to address the three primary cost drivers affecting their financial position. The actions and quarter 1 update status were:

- Increase the percentage of children served in-home vs. out-of-home to 30% - quarter 1 milestone met
- Decrease the removal rate per 100 alleged victims to 7.5% - quarter 1 milestone met
- Increase the percentage of out-of-home relative/non-relative placements to 40% - quarter 1 milestone met
- Reduce the percentage of children in group or residential treatment placements to 7.5% - quarter 1 milestone met. (Lowest in SCC's history)
- Increase the percent of children in relative/non-relative placements in a Level 1 licensed home – failed to meet quarter 1 target of 20%, actual was 19.2% of children placed in a Level 1 licensed placement
- Reduce the total licensed care monthly expenditures (foster and group)- quarter 1 milestone met
- Reduce the percentage of children who have been in out-of-home care greater than 18 months - quarter 1 milestone met
- Increase the discharge rate per 100 children in out-of-home care – quarter 1 projected target 4.75%, actual 4.1% of youth, failed to meet target.

### **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?***

SCC works collaboratively with partner agencies to ensure children and families are receiving needed services despite budgetary deficits. Conflicts are resolved with a mutual respect and understanding of the circumstances and situational nuances. Continued effort to address relationships with the GALs, specifically in Manatee County, are warranted. There is a lack of substance abuse and mental health services available in all three counties. The ability to gather needed educational information from schools in Sarasota and Manatee Counties is problematic.

Continued engagement with GAL's, educational coordination, and other governmental agencies to address single point of access, further service delivery and availability as well as nurturing relationships between frontline staff to ultimately boost partnerships and further ease services for the community may be beneficial.

SCC has secured additional community and governmental funds of more than \$4.6M including approximately \$2.07M that directly support foster care services. Additionally, Sarasota and Manatee County Governments directly fund approximately \$370,000 to the Florida Center for Early Childhood to provide case management services through Early Childhood Court. Additionally, the Barancik Foundation has agreed to fund a Director of Philanthropy for the next three years.

Recently Sarasota, Manatee and Desoto Counties all came forward to invest in SCC to address technology needs. Additional community and government funding for SCC programs includes:

Additional Community/Governmental Funding for SCC programs

Funding	PRIMARY PREVENTION							OUT-OF-HOME CARE		Total
	Achievers	Afterschool	HIPPY	Schoolhouse Link	Youth Prevention Services	Youth Shelter	CAPTA Home Visitation	Group Home	Foster Care	
Federal Funding Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$132,000	\$0	\$113,247	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$245,247
DCF CAPTA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$714,804	\$0	\$0	\$714,804
FL Network	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$431,265	\$387,533	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$818,798
USF	\$0	\$0	\$260,475	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$260,475
School Board	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
Sarasota County Gov't.	\$18,308	\$0	\$72,581	\$105,460	\$0	\$119,037	\$0	\$0	\$16,491	\$331,877
Manatee County Gov't.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$383,605	\$383,605
United Way	\$0	\$0	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$12,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$87,500
Paycheck Protection Program	\$346	\$32,910	\$6,358	\$7,047	\$96,782	\$80,323	\$0	\$79,418	\$672,384	\$975,568
Other Foundations	\$69,202	\$0	\$44,001	\$47,916	\$0	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$287,513	\$450,632
Program Revenue	\$0	\$214,042	\$0	\$0	\$300	\$10	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$214,352
Total Anticipated Funding as of 10/1/20	\$87,856	\$246,952	\$458,415	\$442,423	\$528,347	\$714,650	\$714,804	\$79,418	\$1,359,993	\$4,632,859

**Follow up to FY2019-20 Risk Pool Recommendations:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action/Update</b>
SCC should request and accept the Department's assistance in the form of sending experienced employees and/or contractors to help with one or more areas of specific need which could help improve case manager stability and discharges to permanency.	*
SCC must continue to follow the recommendations of the previous risk pool report.	*
SCC should increase efforts toward timely permanency.	*

\*Based upon review of current year data trends, SCC actions from prior risk pool recommendations are positively impacting primary cost drivers to the system. Despite these positive trends, further reductions to entries and placement in residential group care and increasing permanency measures are still needed.

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

SCC will utilize the \$1,102,583 in Risk Pool funds to cover the operating deficit of the child welfare contract with the Department. SCC was able to reduce the FY 2019/2020 Risk Pool request from \$3,704,788 to the FY 2020/2021 request of \$1,102,583. The reduction of the request is based on SCC's ability to reduce OHC costs (estimated reduction of \$1,450,000), increase emphasis on prevention/diversion, increase community revenue to reduce allowable expenses charged to the DCF contract, obtaining a \$1,000,000 special appropriation from the legislature and securing Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)/CARE Act funds.

The most effective strategy used to reduce OHC costs is the development and implementation of individual youth placement timelines that includes a financial forecast. Each week senior leadership of case management and the lead agency participates in a mini-Permanency Round Table staffing to review the timeline of one youth who is in group care (with overview presented by case manager and supervisor). The implementation of this strategy has realized an annualized reduction of OHC expense of \$1,450,000 with no additional expense. SCC

continues to be a fiscally conservative organization and is doing everything possible to manage the budget.

**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:

- Deficit will be reduced by additional allocation of available funding of \$117,335 for Level 1 foster home payments to meet their projected spending in this area.
- SCC is at 74.7% of optimum funding according to the Florida Funding for Children Model; they are the third lowest funded CBC in the state.
- SCC has been one of the most underfunded CBC's in the state for many years, despite this, they have managed to perform above statewide average for the most part.
- SCC applied for a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan and applied a portion of the loan to their Children In Need (CINS)/Families In Need (FINS) and Child Care operations and some to their CBC contract expenses, which has helped reduce their deficit.
- SCC had some of the highest removal rates in the state for several years, but most recently, the number of removals are trending down. The recent downward trend may be COVID-19 related.
- Despite record removal rates for several years, between June 2019 and June 2020 SCC has reduced average monthly in-home cases by 22 children and out-of-home cases by 33 for a total net decrease of 55 children.
- SCC has maintained steady discharge rates that are above the statewide average; albeit a slight decline in FY 2019-2020.
- SCC made a significant reduction in group home census since June 2020 from 100 to 58 placements, although their daily rate has gone up. Over the last 4 years they have reduced group care costs by \$1 million.
- SCC has had several major events in their recent history (3 years) that created additional challenges and opportunities:
  - Separated from Sarasota YMCA and established their own entity (SCC)
  - One of their Case Management Organizations (CMOs) providers gave them a 30-day notice to terminate their contract for family preservation services.
  - SCC began providing CMO services in-house for Sarasota and DeSoto Counties.

- One CMO was changed due to poor performance and Lutheran Services Florida was selected to serve Manatee county.
  - DCF closed a local group home (Everyday Blessings), SCC stepped up and opened their own group home for their most challenging youth.
  - SCC was asked to take over diversion services in Manatee County, funded by Manatee County Government. Removals in Manatee county have gone down drastically.
- SCC has sought and received more than \$4.8M in additional funding for a variety of local grant programs.
- SCC has a strong management team which has overcome many obstacles including significant under funding.
- SCC has successfully implemented previous Risk Pool recommendations.

#### **Risk Pool Allocation:**

The Peer Review Committee found that Safe Children Coalition qualifies for risk pool funding and recommends a partial distribution of \$879,352 which is equal to the CBC's estimated deficit of \$1,102,584 less \$117,335 in Level I deficit which the Department will fully fund within existing budget authority, and less \$105,897 in budget projection adjustments. The Risk Pool funding is approved to be used to offset out-of-home care costs.

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 409.990 (7)(c), F.S..

#### **Recommendations:**

1. SCC has implemented many strategies and initiatives to reduce entries, maintain and increase exits, reduce group care placements and manage costs while maintaining good performance. SCC continuing these efforts should produce long term positive effects on their system, including finances.
2. SCC should focus on increasing Level 1 licenses which should help reduce entries into foster care.
3. SCC should continue to seek additional community and grant funding.