

**Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report**  
**Lakeview Center – Circuit 1**  
**(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)**  
**Fiscal Year 2019-2020**  
**November 2019**

**Executive Summary:**

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (FFN) applied for risk pool funding on September 13, 2019.

The department established a Risk Pool Peer Review Committee pursuant to section 409.990(7), Florida Statutes, for state fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020. 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 326) for FY 2019-2020. 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 (CBCs) including a comprehensive system of care analysis. This submission also included a financial viability plan from all lead agencies.

Due to the early application process this fiscal year, 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 FY 2019-2020
- Financial Viability Plan (FY 2019-2020)
- Budget Projections provided by the CBC
- CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report
- [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#)
- [CBC Contract Monitoring Reports\\*](#)
- CBC Contract Monitoring Survey Data
- CBC Contract Monitoring Data Packets
- [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#)
- Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Aggregate Payment Data
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\*Note: The most recent CBC Contract Monitoring Report for FFN is dated January 2019. The next monitoring is scheduled for September 30 – October 4, 2019.

To resolve any outstanding questions, additional information was requested by the team from the CBC.

The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee for FFN consisted of:

Barney Ray, Team Leader, Director of Revenue Management and Partner Compliance  
Larry Rein, CEO, ChildNet

Lauren Hahn CFO, Communities Connected for Kids  
Catherine Macina, CFO, Embrace Families  
Walter Sachs, Regional Managing Director, Suncoast Region  
Eric Emery, Staff Director, Office of Child Welfare

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

### **Application Summary:**

FFN's application for risk pool funding requested \$950,000. In their application, FFN cited that the number of removals for children entering care for FY 2018-2019 showed a slight decrease from 965 in FY 2017-2018 to 836 children in FY 2018-2019. However, they said that Escambia County had an increase in removals which led to a 50% increase in out of home care from 500 to 750 children in that county. They also said they experienced an increase in the number of children served in-home from 687 in FY 2017-2018 to 858 in FY 2018-2019.

They state that risk pool funds will be used to continue funding a process to identify gaps in prevention and diversion services, enhance prevention/diversion services in at least two counties (Okaloosa and Walton) to reduce removals and recruit and support foster parents in order to begin stepping children out of group care especially ages 12 and under.

### **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.***

Child protective investigations are conducted by the department in Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa Counties; the Walton County Sheriff's Office began conducting child protective investigations in July 2018. Children's Legal Services (CLS) are performed by the department for all of Circuit 1. Pre-service training is outsourced to the University of West Florida. In-service training is collaborative with

the department's investigations and region staff. Case management, adoptions, licensing, placement and independent living services are provided by FFN while most family support services are provided by community partners who contract with FFN.

The median household income in Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties is above the state average, while in Escambia and Walton Counties the median household income is slightly lower. The percentage of the population living in poverty is lower than the state's in three of the four counties served by FFN. In Escambia County the percentage is slightly higher than the state. Except for Walton County, a higher percentage of the population in Circuit 1 has earned a high school diploma. However, only Okaloosa County exceeds the state in the percentage of the population with a college degree. The following chart provides a side-by-side comparison of these elements by county and for the state:

US Census Facts	Florida	Escambia	Okaloosa	Santa Rosa	Walton
Median Household Income	\$48,900	\$46,117	\$57,655	\$60,652	\$46,910
Percent of population living in poverty	14.7%	15.2%	10.7%	10.6%	13.1%
Percent of population over 25 years old with a college degree	27.9%	24.9%	29.4%	26.9%	26.3%
Percent of population over 25 years old with high school diploma	87.2%	89.9%	91.3%	90.2%	84.9%

Table 1. Data Source: census.gov/quickfacts/(2012-2016 v2016)

The number of reports accepted for investigation and the number of children entering out-of-home care decreased in FY 2018-2019. The number of children receiving in-home services has increased; the number of children receiving out-of-home services and family support services has increased while the number of young adults receiving services has fluctuated with the most recent FY seeing a decrease. The following chart illustrates the changes over the past three fiscal years:

FamiliesFirst Network					Page 1
Service Area Data					
		FY 2016/2017	Fy 2017/2018	Fy 2018/2019	
Child Protective Investigations and Child Removals (Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton Counties)	Reports accepted for Investigation by DCF (Initial & Additional Reports, Child Intakes)	10,757	11,105	10,477	
	Reports accepted for Investigation by DCF (Initial & Additional Reports, Special Conditions)	774	795	968	
	Children Entering Out-of-Home Care	865	967	824	
Children Served by FamiliesFirst Network	Children Receiving In-Home Services	1,570	1,563	1,675	
	Children Receiving Out of Home Care	2,104	2,165	2,176	
	Children Receiving Family Support Services	994	1,061	1,137	
	Young Adults Receiving Services	203	176	149	

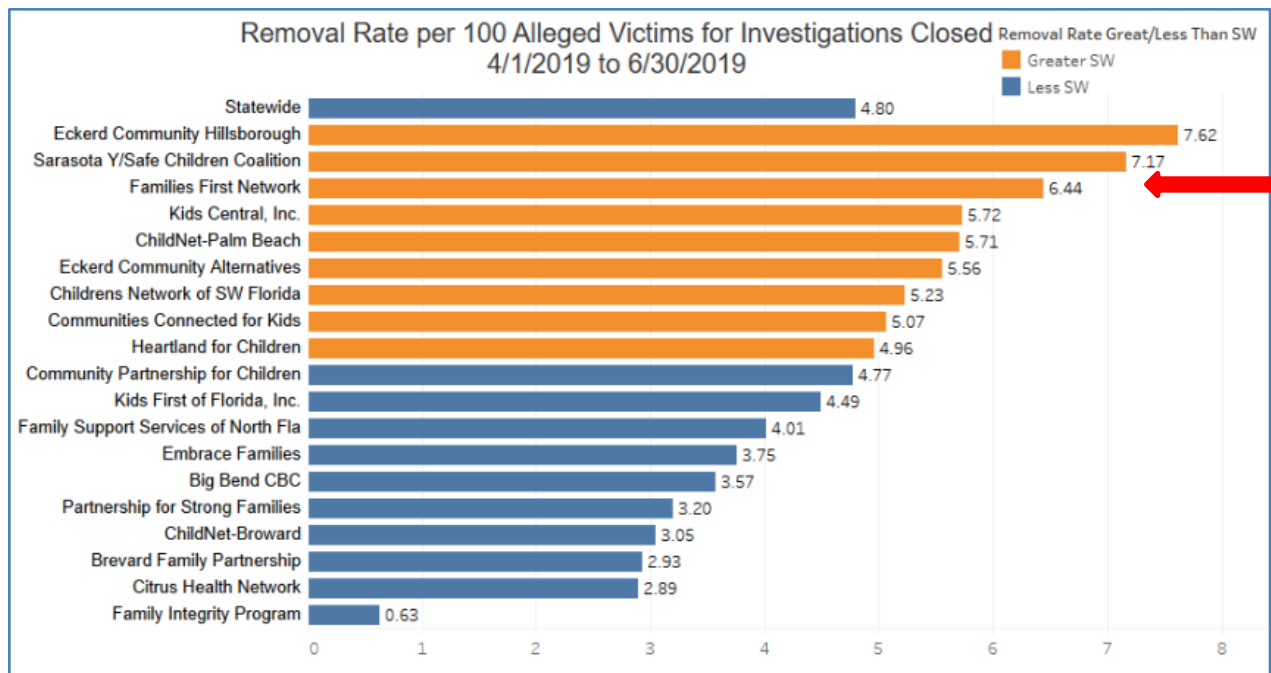
Table 1. Data Sources: Child Protective Investigation Trend Report, Child Welfare Dashboard, PSFN OCWDRU Report 1006, Data Run Date: July 24, 2019

There are no local Children's Services Councils in Circuit 1.

**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.**

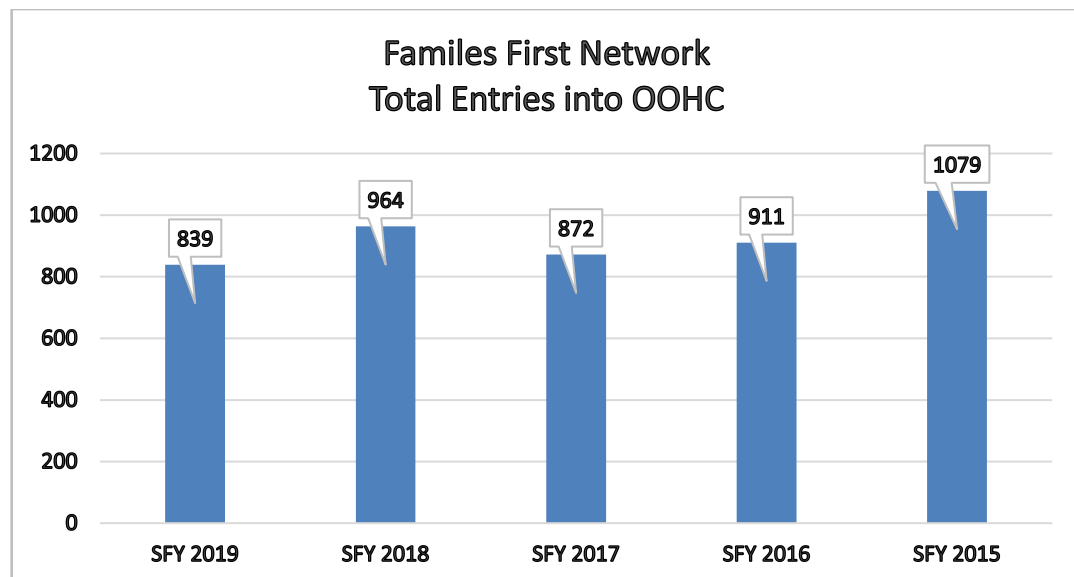
1. Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#))
2. Summary below; see CBC Contract Monitoring Report, sections 5, 9, and 11 for more details
  - 2.1. *What are the rates of removal, rates of verification, and other 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 safely 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. *What evidence exists to show that investment in prevention and intervention services re, in fact, resulting in reduced flow of children into out-of-home care rather than just adding to the cost of services?*
  - 2.5. *How well integrated are the child protective investigations (CPI), safety management, and intervention services components? Are there case transfer issues that affect performance?*

Circuit 1 maintained a higher rate of removal per 100 alleged victims than the statewide average for the past three quarters.



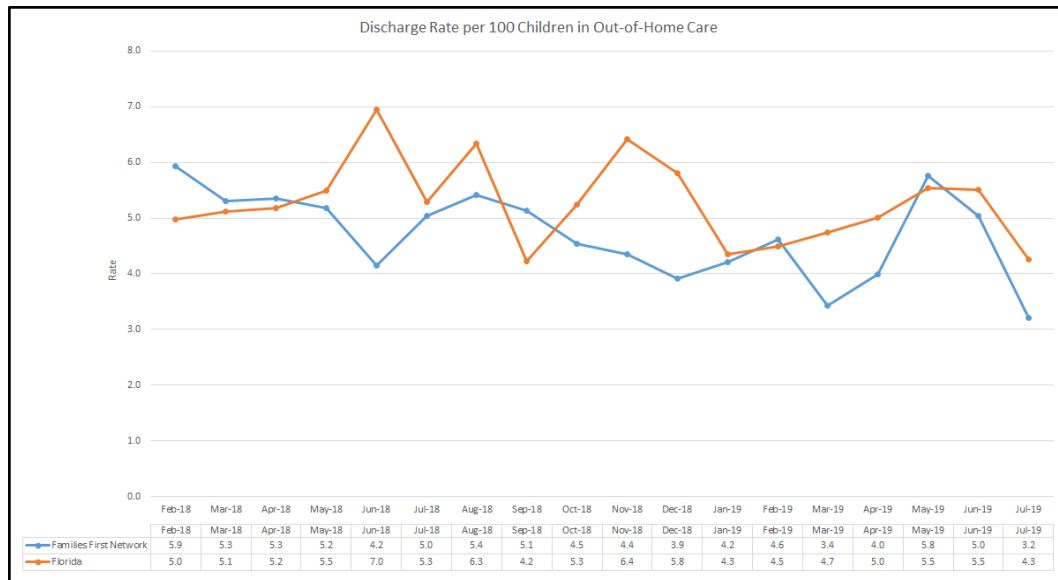
Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report August 2019

The removal rate per 100 alleged victims for investigations closed from 4/1/2019 to 6/30/2019 is above the statewide average and 3rd highest in the state, as shown in the graphic above. For the same quarter in 2018, the removal rate was 5.1 statewide and 7.0 for FFN. So relative to the statewide average which increased, FFN's rate of removal decreased compared to the previous 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

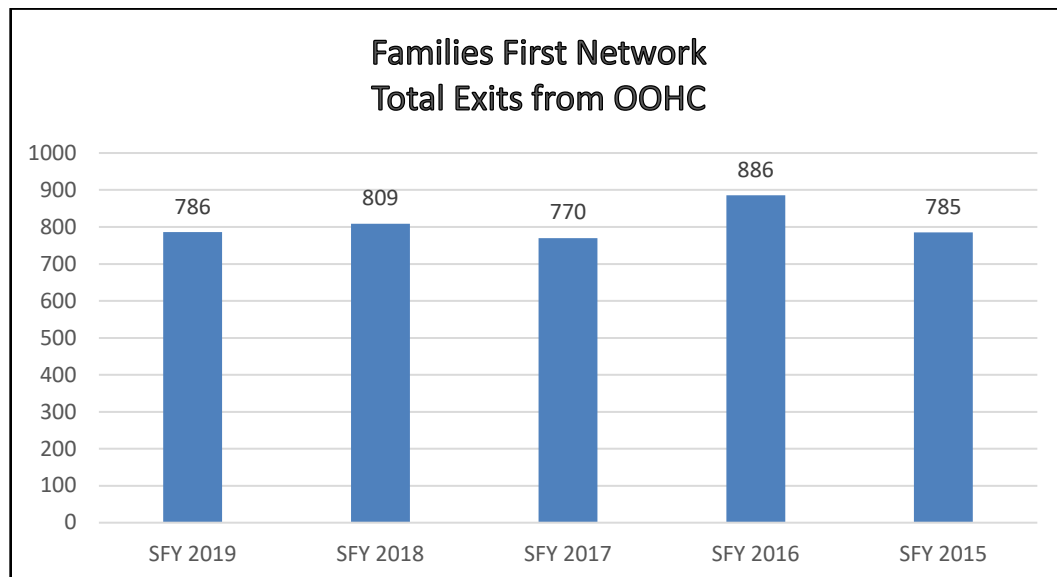


Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children & Young Adults Entering Out-of-Home Care (updated 10/11/2019)

As the chart above indicates, the actual **number of entries into Out-of-Home Care decreased** in SFY 2018-2019 by 125 or 13% from the previous year.

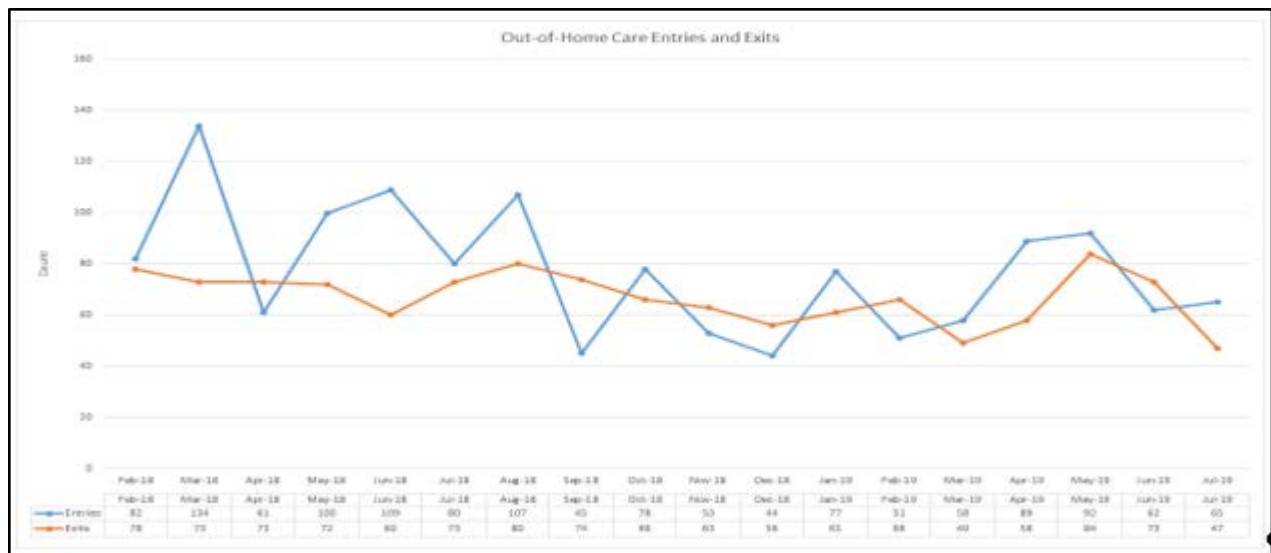


The chart above shows that the Discharge Rate (Exits) per 100 children in out-of-home care for FFN has been mostly lower than the statewide average though tracking relatively close to the statewide average.



Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children & Young Adults Entering Out-of-Home Care (updated 10/11/2019)

The actual number of **Exits from Out-of-Home Care decreased** by 25 or 3% in SFY 2018-2019 from the previous year. The total number of Exits has consistently trailed behind the total number of Entries into Out-of-Home Care by fiscal year.



There was a spike in removals (Out-of-Home Care Entries) in March, June, and August 2018. Removals were on the decline until April 2019, and then started to level out in June 2019. Exits had been relatively flat since January 2018 but began trending down in September 2018 with an improvement April through June 2019, but back down in July 2019.

This graph depicts the rate of children, served by FFN, receiving in-home, out-of-home and family support services compared to the statewide average. In each category, FFN's rate is higher than the statewide average with the most substantial difference being in the number of children receiving out-of-home services.

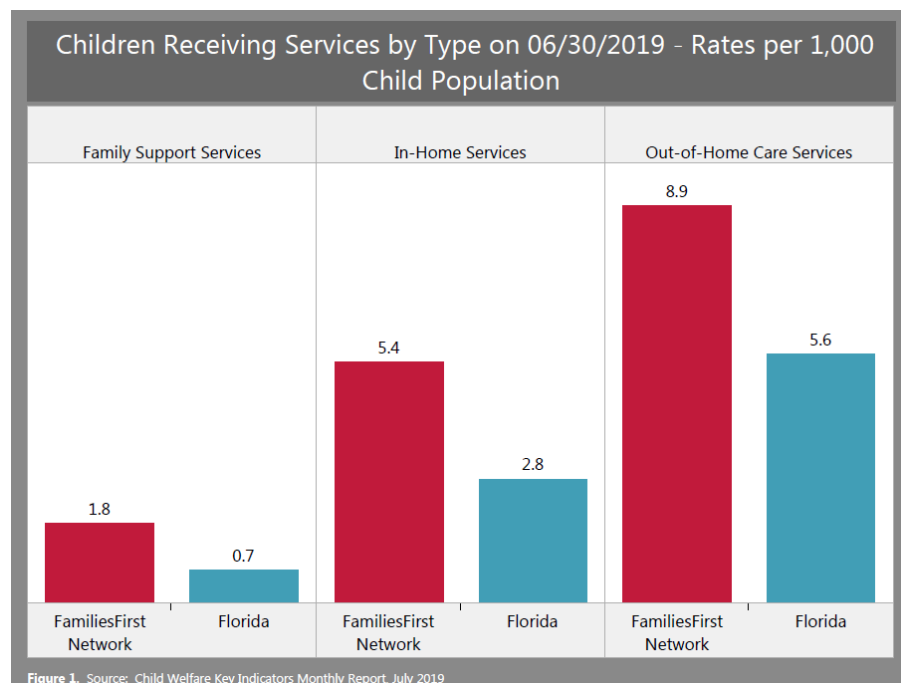


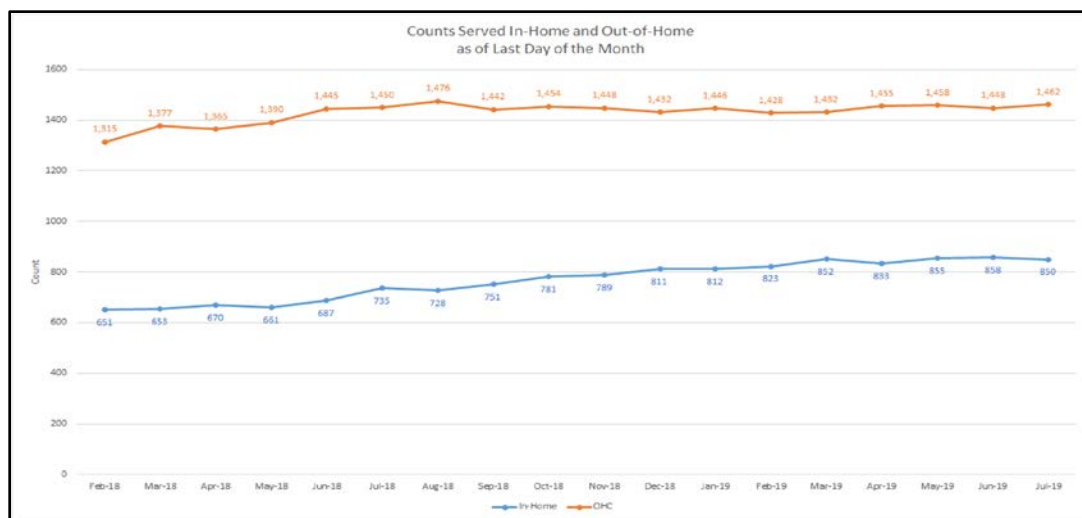
Figure 1. Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, July 2019

In July 2016, the Office of Child Welfare initiated a Service Array Assessment with each CBC across the state. The assessment focuses on evaluating the availability, access, and application of services for families involved with the child welfare system.

management services and a “4” for their family support services programs. A “4” indicates that the CBC is providing the services consistently as defined, with no capacity issues. The CBC has developed methods to assess the quality and the effectiveness of the service and has processes in place to address issues identified from those assessments.

FFN is utilizing a Wraparound model for the provision of family support services. This model takes a team based, family driven approach to case coordination. The assessment process involves asking the family their perspective on the various aspects of their lives and interactions with one another. These conversations would include eliciting information in each of the areas of the six protective factors, parental resilience, social connections, concrete needs, social and emotional competence, and healthy parent-child relationships. In addition, the assessment takes a history of the parent's educational, employment, social/community, medical, financial, housing and service background in relation to family functioning. Wraparound Family Support services are provided in the homes and communities of the families served. FFN has contracted with a single point of access provider in each of the four counties who are responsible for delivering services within their county. Services are available to eligible families regardless of where they live in the circuit.

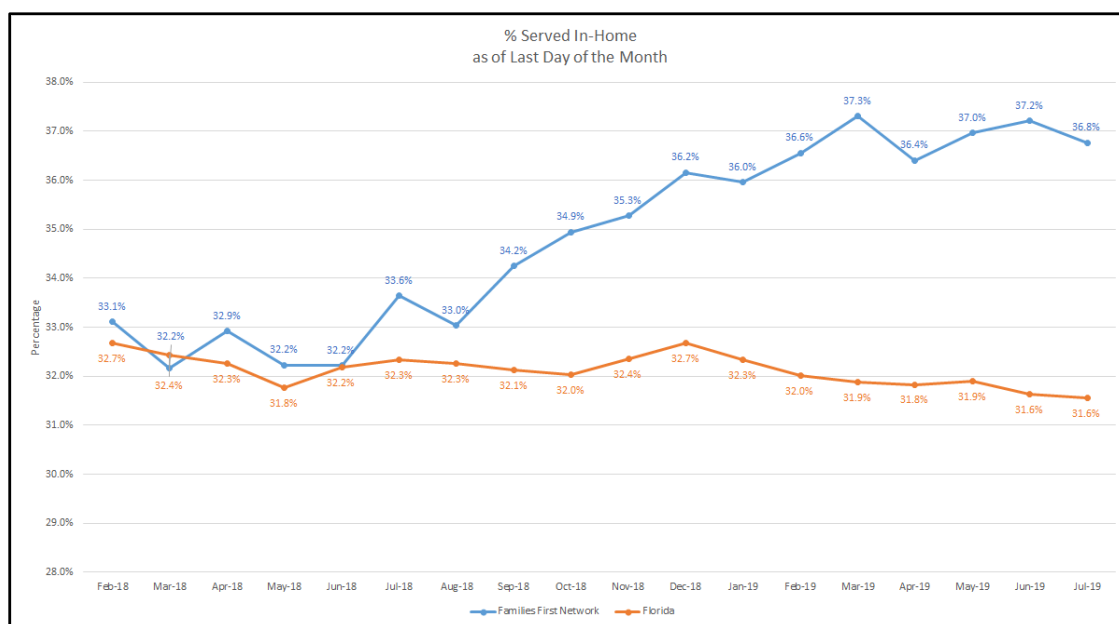
FFN previously subcontracted their safety management services with four different providers, one for each county. Despite having safety management services that were aligned with the child welfare practice model and were available at a sufficient capacity, FFN was not seeing the outcomes they had hoped with these services. To address these concerns, FFN sent several staff members to collaborate with another community-based care agency, Family Support Services of North Florida, and gathered information to enhance FFN's service array for safety management. As a result of this collaboration, FFN made changes to their safety management services, including bringing them “in-house” to be conducted by a certified child welfare professional. FFN completed a deliberate county-by-county roll out of their new safety management model, beginning in Santa Rosa County.



The application's statement that there was an increase in the number of children



served in-home is supported by data from the Child Welfare Dashboard. The number served as of 6/30/2018 was 687 and as of 6/30/2019 the number was 862 which represents an increase of 175 children or 25%.



(Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children & Young Adults Receiving In-Home Services & Children in Out-of-Home Care)

FFN has also seen an increase in the percentage of children served in-home versus out-of-home from 32.2% in June 2018 to 37.2% in June 2019; FFN has remained in the 36%-37% range since December 2018. This is significantly higher than the statewide average over the past fiscal year of 31.6% to 32.7%.

### Caseloads and Turnover Rates for Case Management

Budgeted Case Manager Positions	158
Case Manager Vacancies	15
Total Number Children Receiving Services:	2344
Average Child Caseload: per Case Manager based on filled positions:	16.8

FFN Case Managers				FFN Case Management Supervisors			
Period	12 Month Average On-Hand	12 Month Actual Terms	12 Month Rolling Turnover	Period	12 Month Average On-Hand	12 Month Actual Terms	12 Month Rolling Turnover
8/2018	138.92	57.00	41%	8/2018	27.83	5.00	18%
9/2018	137.5	55.00	40%	9/2018	27.67	5.00	18%
10/2018	136.92	58.00	42%	10/2018	27.5	4.00	15%
11/2018	136.92	61.00	45%	11/2018	27.58	3.00	11%
12/2018	137.25	69.00	50%	12/2018	27.75	3.00	11%
1/2019	136.5	72.00	53%	1/2019	28	2.00	7%
2/2019	135.83	80.00	59%	2/2019	28.42	2.00	7%
3/2019	135.58	73.00	54%	3/2019	28.92	1.00	3%
4/2019	136.17	77.00	57%	4/2019	29.42	0.00	0%
5/2019	137	75.00	55%	5/2019	30	0.00	0%
6/2019	137.25	70.00	51%	6/2019	30.5	0.00	0%
7/2019	138.17	67	48%	7/2019	31.08	0	0%

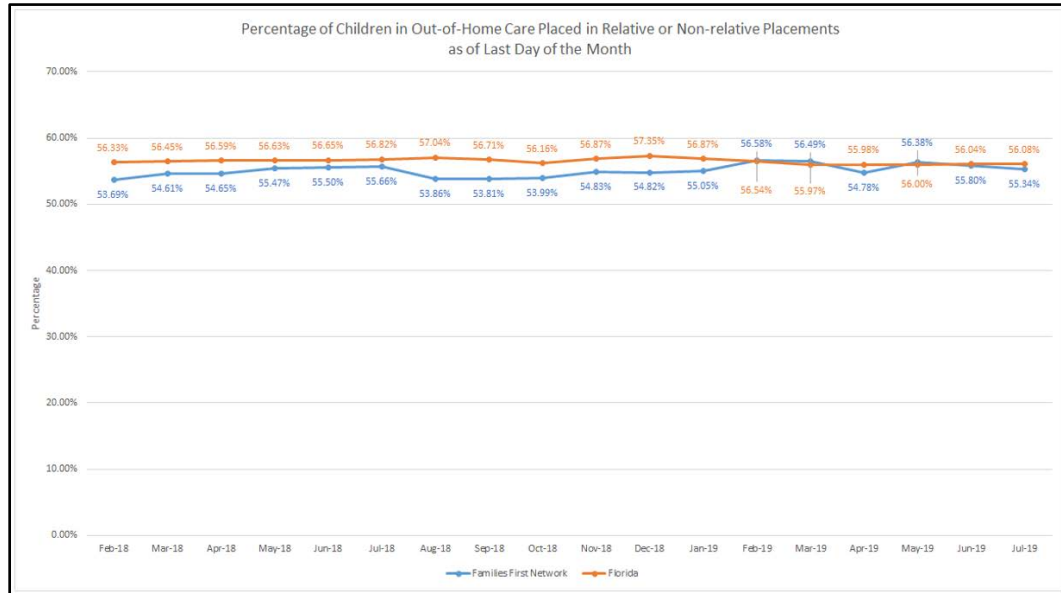
FFN retains the case management function in-house. Per FFN's August 5, 2019 posting of caseload and turnover as required by s. 409.988, F.S., the agency improved from their March 1, 2019 posting which had average child caseload per case manager based upon filled positions of 18.13 and a 12-month rolling turnover rate for case managers of 62% and supervisors of 12%.

### 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.

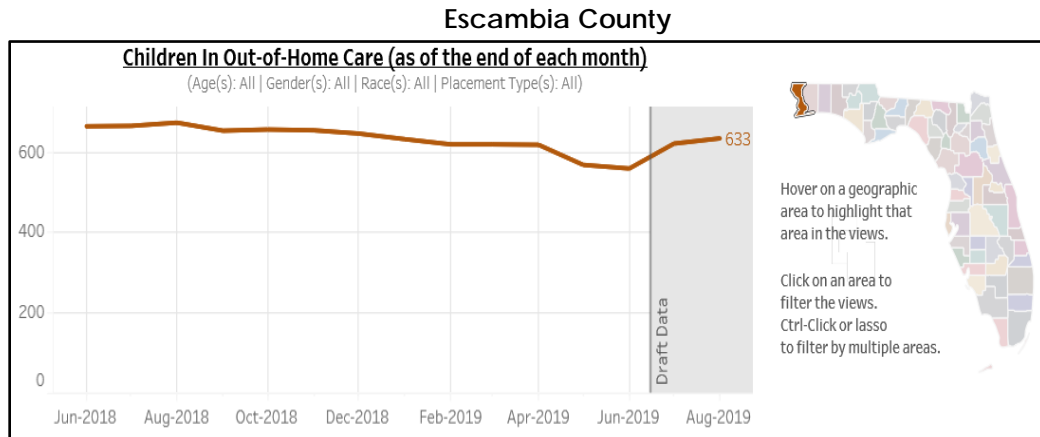
- 3.1. *What is the composition of the children in care including age cohorts, placement types, use of specialized higher cost settings, use of congregate care, etc.*
- 3.2. *What is the cost of various placement types? To what extent are the rates paid for foster care (including care with various rates of intensity) and 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 CBC 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 CBC?** (see overall management section for response)

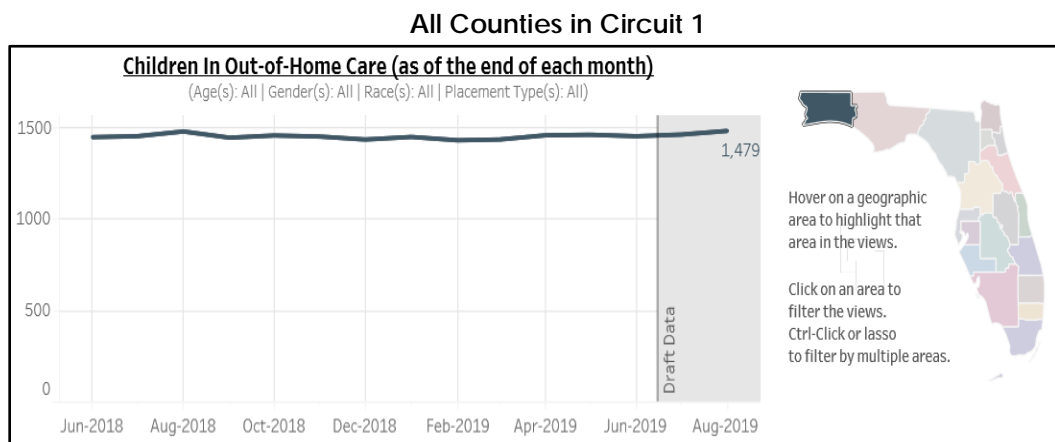


Children in out-of- home care placed with relatives/non-relatives was below the statewide average February 2018 through January 2019 ranging from 53.69% to 55.66% while the statewide average was 56.16% to 57.35%; FFN has been hugging the statewide average within +/-1% since February 2019, except for April 2019 when FFN was at 54.78%; 1.2% below the statewide average.

<b>Families First Network</b> <b>Out-of-Home Placements by Type</b> (Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children in Out-of-Home Care)					
As of:	6/30/2019	6/30/2018	6/30/2017	6/30/2016	6/30/2015
Relative/Non-relative	1,375	1,414	1,413	1,245	1,038
Foster Home	739	732	654	599	550
Group Care/ Residential Treatment Placements	230	237	238	211	204



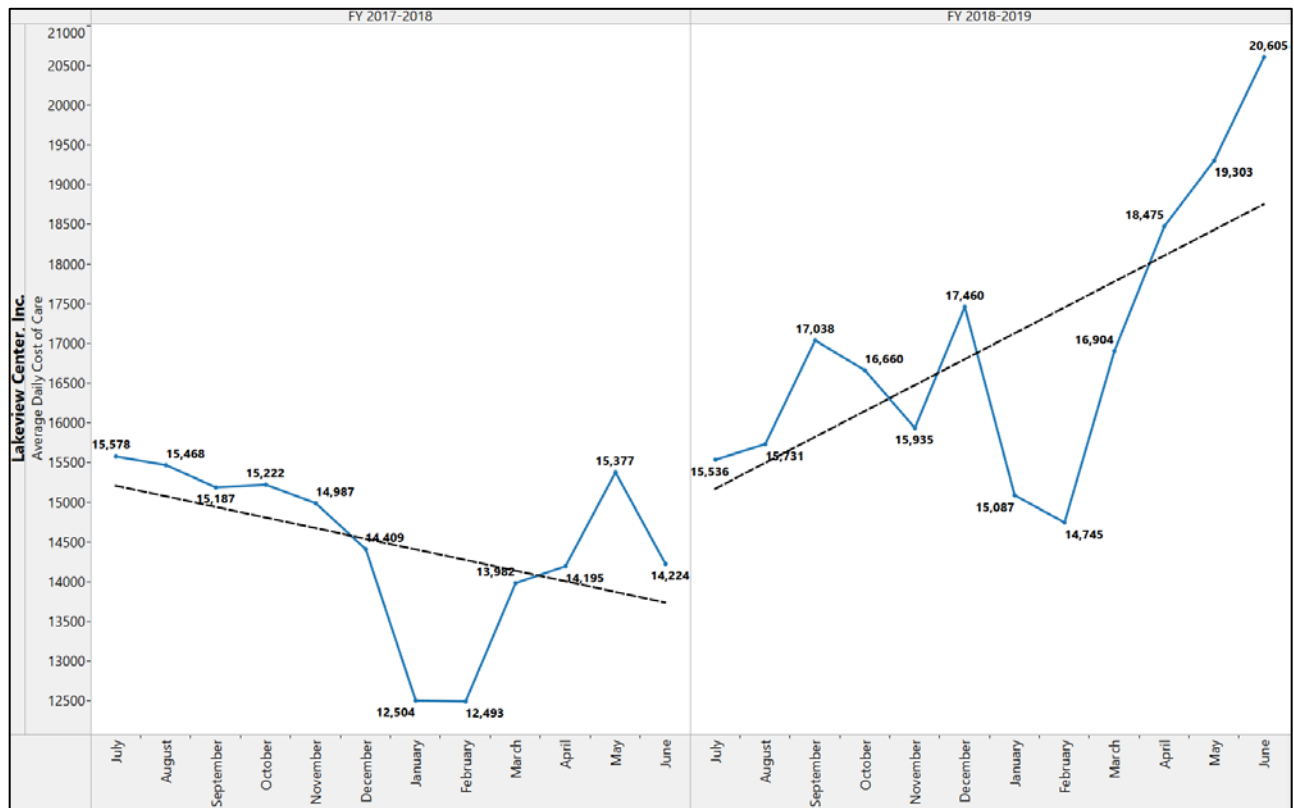
The application's statement that the number of children served in out-of-home care (OOH) in Escambia county increased from 500 to 750 is not supported by data from the Child Welfare Dashboard. Escambia had 663 children in OOH on 6/30/2018 and had 558 on 6/30/2019 so the number decreased by 105 or 16% last fiscal year. The number has increased to 633 as of 8/31/2019.



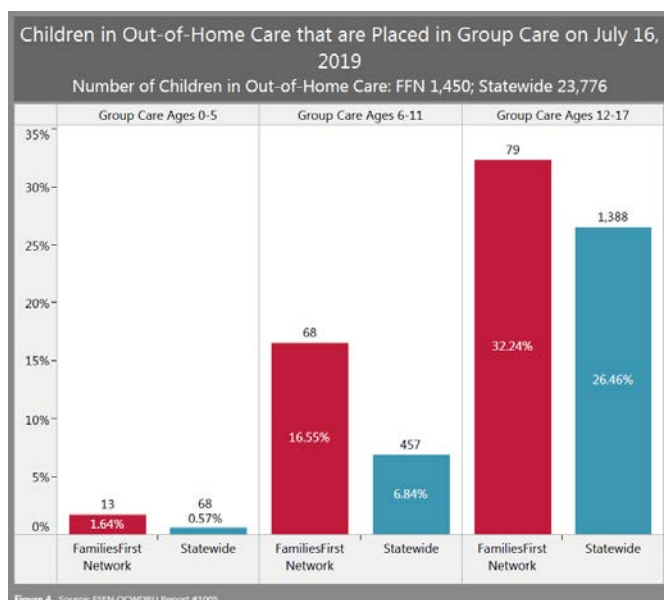
The total number of children for the entire four county area increase slightly from 1,445 to 1,450 between 6/30/2018 and 6/30/2019. The number has increased to 1,479 as of 8/31/2019.

## Residential Group Care

### Average Daily Cost of Residential Group Care



The average daily cost of residential group care has increased from \$12,500/day in Jan-Feb 2018 to over \$20,600/day in June 2019 which represents a 65% increase in an 18-month period. For a 30-day month, this represents an increase of \$243,150/month in total expenditures from \$375,000/month to \$618,150/month. FFN averaged \$16,963/day in FY 2018-19. If an average of \$14,000/day could be realized, this would reduce expenditures by ~\$1M.



FFN has been trending above the statewide average of the percent of children placed in group care or residential treatment. As of July 16, 2019, FFN exceed the statewide percentage in group care for all three age groups (0-5, 6-12, and 13-17); children age 6-12 was 16.55% - 142% higher than the statewide percentage of 6.84% for the same age group.

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (Contract # AJ495) Total \$ of FSN Payments to Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Ages	FY2017-2018	FY2018-2019	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
0-5	\$34,194	\$262,278	+\$228,084	+667%
6-12	\$2,147,868	\$2,680,294	\$532,426	+25%
13-17	\$3,075,241	\$3,228,277	\$153,036	+5%

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (Contract # AJ495) Total Number of Unique Clients in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Ages	FY2017-2018	FY2018-2019	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
0-5	3	22	+19	+633%
6-12	177	180	+3	+2
13-17	153	143	-10	-7

Both the total number (4%) and total expenditures (17%) increased during FY 2018-2019 for children in licensed facility-based residential group care. Based upon the payment data from the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) system, FFN continues to rely heavily on facility-based care for the younger age groups. The biggest % increase is in the 0-5 age group, with an increase of over 600% however the 6-12 age group represents a much large number and total dollars than the younger age group. FFN spent almost as much on ages 0-12 (\$2.9M) in group care than the 13-17 age group (\$3.2M).

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (Contract # AJ495) Median Daily Rate \$ in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Ages	FY2017-2018	FY2018-2019	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
0-5	\$120.00	\$160.00	+\$40.00	+33%
6-12	\$92.00	\$120.00	+\$28.00	+30%
13-17	\$175.30	\$160.00	-\$15.30	-9%

The median daily rates paid for licensed group care increased across the 0-5 and 6-12 age groups but decreased for the 13-17 age group.

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (Contract # AJ495) Total \$ of Payments by FSFN Service Type in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
FSFN Service Type	FY2017-2018	FY2018-2019	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
Group Home	\$4,817,080	\$5,779,204	\$962,125	+124%
APD Group Home	\$103,378	\$231,458	\$128,080	+20%
Residential Treatment	\$143,084	\$33,147	(\$101,892)	-77%
Shelter Facility (Res)	\$131,100	\$83,014	(\$48,086)	-37%

Source: FSFN Payments via Tableau software (OCA Disposition Dates through 8/31/2019)

FFN has reported paying less for Residential Treatment and Shelter Facility costs this year however the payments for Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Group Homes has increased though still a very small percentage of all residential facility payments.

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (Contract # AJ495) FY2018-2019 Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE) Top 6 Total \$ by Provider (50% of Total Paid in LCRGE)				
Provider	Age Groups Placed	Number of Clients per Month	Daily Rates Paid	Total Paid
Cabot Heights	6-12 13-17	2 10-14	\$150-\$185	\$729,090
Arcadia Place	13-17	3-11	\$150-\$267	\$465,896
Florida Sheriff's Boys Ranch	All age groups (ages 0-17)	(Age 0-5) 1 (Age 6-12) 6-9 (Age 13-17) 3-4	\$120-\$135	\$456,840
Little Debbie's Second Change Home (Kendall)	6-12 13-17	(Age 6-12) 1-2 (Age 13-17) 1-4	\$150-\$281	\$274,860
The Haven for Children	All age groups (ages 0-17)	(Age 0-5) 1 (Age 6-12) 6-9 (Age 13-17) 1	\$140-280	\$150,980

Choice, Inc	6-12 13-17	(Age 6-12) 2-4 (Age 13-17) 1-2	\$167-\$287	\$258,104
Total				\$2,459,260

According to the Lakeview Center website, Arcadia Place and Cabot Heights are residential facilities owned and operated by Lakeview Center under the Children's Mental Health program.

"Arcadia Place is an eight-bed Foster Group Care home that provides transitional or long-term foster care for adolescent girls age 13 – 17, who may have moderate to severe emotional/behavioral problems and placement is contingent upon court orders and family case plan goals. While at Arcadia Place the children are prepared to be reunited with their families or a more traditional foster home placement."

"Some children are better served in a group home than a traditional or therapeutic foster home. In these instances, [Families First Network \(FFN\)](#) in Circuit 1 refers boys and girls ages 13 to 17 to Cabot Heights where they can receive behavioral health services and have access to a team that encourages their strengths and abilities. These young boys are dependents of the State of Florida Child Welfare Program and are in need of a supportive environment. While with us at Cabot Heights, our team places an emphasis on helping them to achieve goals set by FFN and the court as written in their family case plans. In our transitional or long-term foster care program, we help them prepare for living in a family setting or in an independent environment."

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

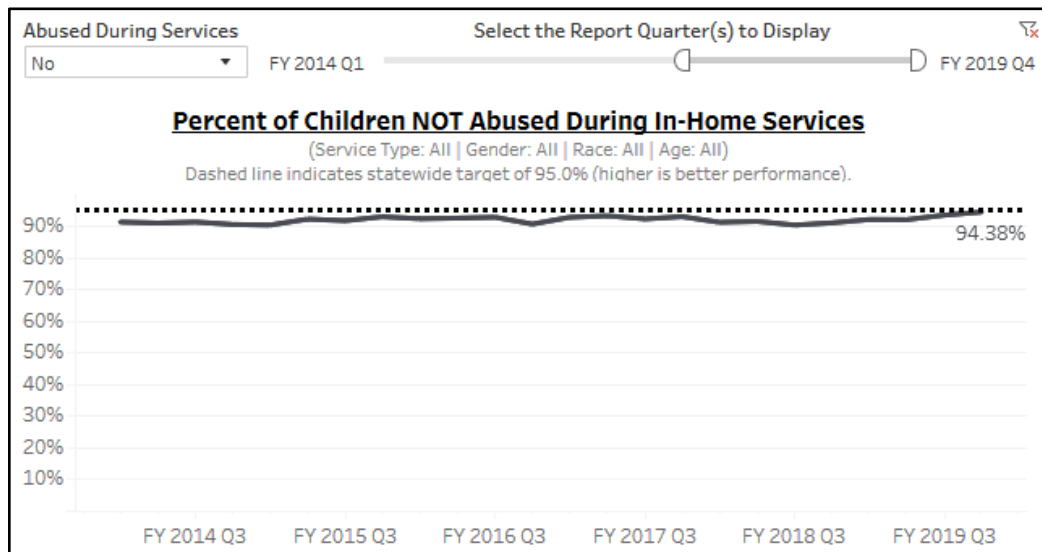
- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), Financial Viability Integrated Data Report)
- Summary below; see [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), Financial Viability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

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

During the last quarter of FY 2018-2019, FFN did not meet the established targets for:

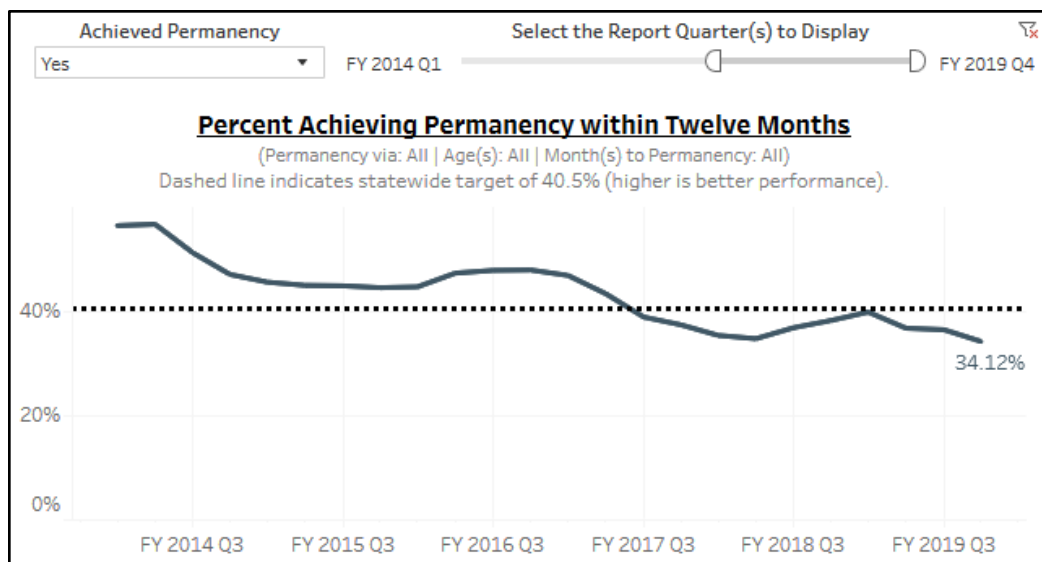
- M02: Percent of children who are not neglected or abused during in-home services
- M05: Percent of children exiting to a permanent home within 12 months of entering care
- M07: Percent of children who do not re-enter care within 12 months of moving to a permanent home
- M08: Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care
- M12: Percent of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together



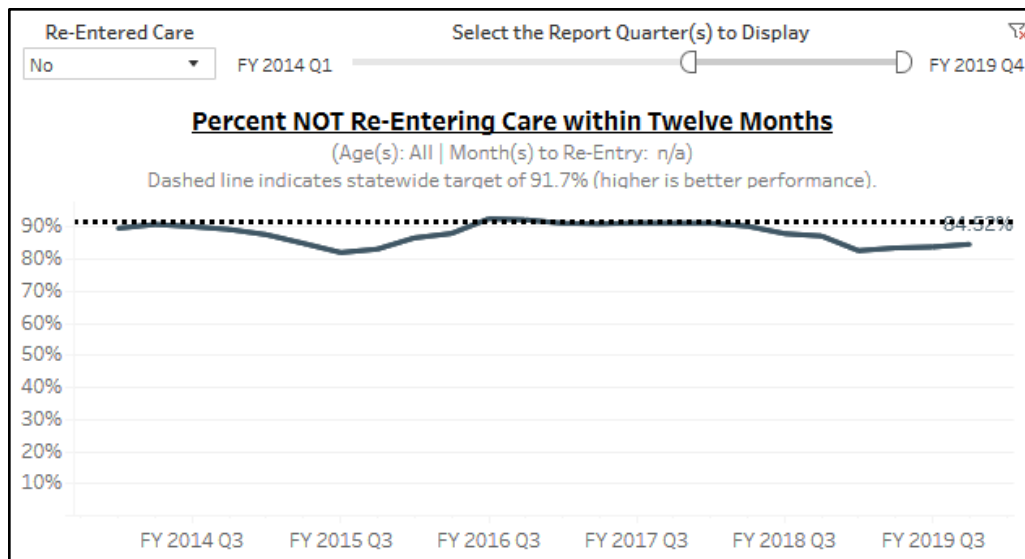


FFN has remained just below the target from a low of 90.26% in FY 2014-2015 Q1 and FY 2017-2018 Q3 to the current rate of 94.38% in FY 2018-2019 Q4.

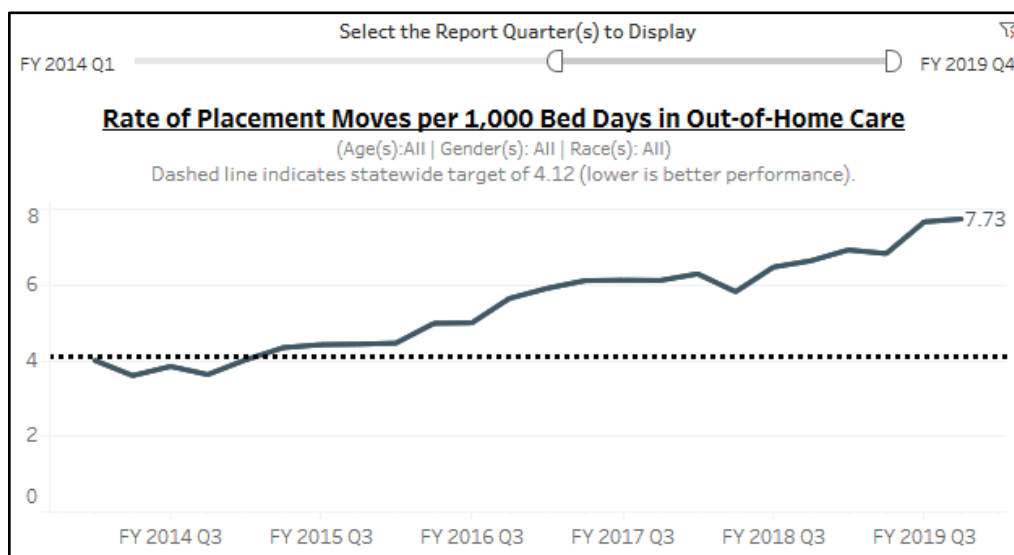
### Children Entering Care Who Achieve Permanency within 12 Months



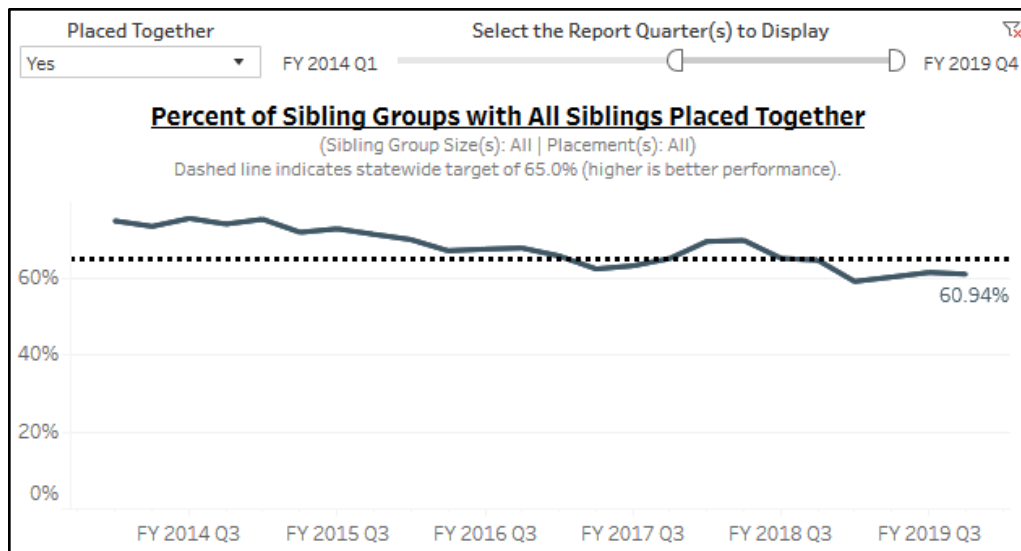
FFN has seen a steady decline in children achieving permanency within 12 months from a high of 56.58% in FY 2013-2014 Q1 to the current rate of 34.12% in FY 2018-2019 Q4.



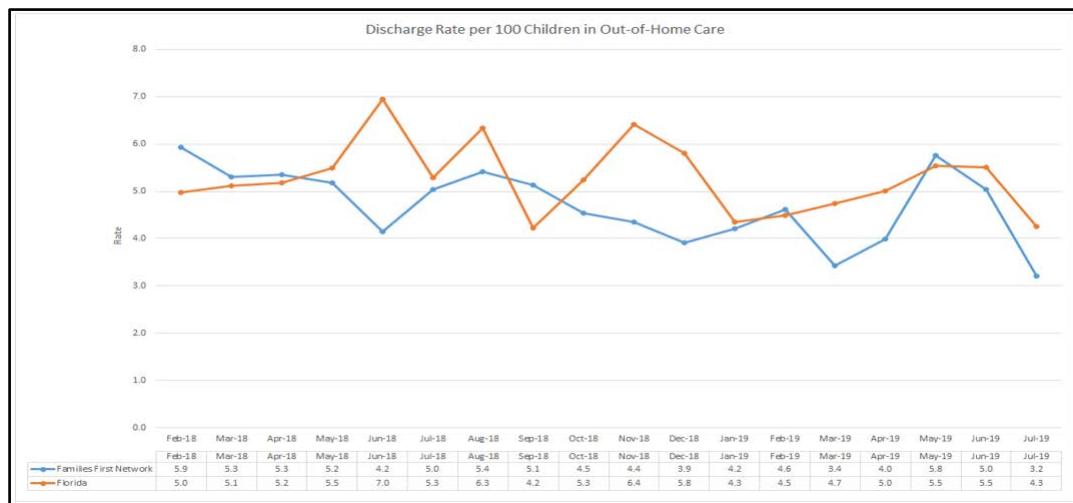
FFN has seen a decline in children not re-entering care within 12 months since the high of 94.08% in FY 2015-2016 Q3 to the current rate of 84.52% in FY 2018-2019 Q4. FFN has been on a Corrective Action Plan for this measure since June 2019.



FFN has seen a steady increase in the rate of placement moves per 1,000 bed days in out-of-home care since the low of 3.59 in FY 2013-2014 Q2 to the current rate of 7.73 in FY 2018-2019 Q4. FFN has been on a Corrective Action Plan for this measure since FY 2017-2018.



FFN had performed above the target from FY 2013-2014 Q1 through FY 2015-2016 Q4. FFN began to trend downward in FY 2014-2015 Q3, had a bubble of improvement from FY 2016-2017 Q3 through FY 2017-2018 Q2, and then re-trended downward to a low of 59.03 in FY 2018-2019 Q1. FFN has had a slight improvement to the current rate of 60.94% in FY 2018-2019 Q4. FFN has been on a Corrective Action Plan for this measure since May 2019.



FFN has been below the statewide discharge rate for 12 of 18 months February 2018 through July 2019 and is trending in the wrong direction.

An initiative was started in April 2017 to address the problem of lingering adoption cases due to absent or incomplete home studies. The goal of the initiative was to complete 90 home studies within 90 days. Over two and a half years have passed since the initiative began and numerous home studies remain incomplete, resulting in adoption cases lingering unnecessarily.

FFN has been working with the Casey Family Programs on this issue. In addition, there is a Green Belt project underway that will help identify the reason Circuit 1 has a high number of children not reunified and a high number of Adoptions. FFN is also

adding an additional Family Finders Unit to complete adoption home studies. The unit will cover the east side of the circuit. FFN held an accelerated Quality Parenting Training class to bring in more families to meet the needs of children specifically for the purpose of Adoption. Twenty-four people attended the 3-day, 8 hours per day class. Prospective families included single individuals and couples. FFN remains on a corrective action plan for this measure.

As of September 25, 2019, FFN had 352 children with a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) and had identified placements; 188 (53.4%) of those children are six or more months post TPR.

## **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 CBC managed these changes? What adjustments to the available array of services have been made?* (For service array response see section1)
- 5.2. How has any changes to core services funding contributed to any projected deficits for FY 2018-2019?*
- 5.3. In what ways are funding dynamics in the CBC unique or atypical of funding in other CBCs?*
- 5.4. What is the amount of the anticipated deficit for the current year? How reliable and valid are these projections?*
- 5.5. Are there options other than Risk Pool funding available to reduce the deficit?*
- 5.6. 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?*
- 5.7. Are there fiscal practices that could be completed with greater efficiency in order to reduce the projected deficit?* (None were identified.)
- 5.8. 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)	FY14-15	FY15-16	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20
Core Services Funding	\$31,282,380	\$32,783,970	\$34,221,547	\$34,623,974	\$34,807,617	\$36,503,213
Risk Pool Funding	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$664,252	\$0
CBC Operations "Back of the Bill" Funding	\$0	\$0	\$1,310,473	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Amendments to Initial Allocations	\$1,110	\$77,044	\$23,137	\$119,774	\$193,421	\$217,483
<b>Amended Core Services Funding</b>	<b>\$31,283,490</b>	<b>\$32,861,014</b>	<b>\$35,555,157</b>	<b>\$34,743,748</b>	<b>\$35,665,290</b>	<b>\$36,720,696</b>
Funding not defined as Core Services Funding						
Independent Living (IL and Extended Foster Care)	\$889,196	\$889,196	\$889,196	\$1,365,673	\$1,822,671	\$1,871,539
Children's Mental Health Services (Cat 100800/100806)	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106
PI Training, Casey Foundation or other non-core svcs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Safety Management Services (Nonrecurring)	\$0	\$0	\$462,805	\$0	\$462,805	\$462,805
<b>Total at Year End</b>	<b>\$32,462,792</b>	<b>\$34,040,316</b>	<b>\$37,197,264</b>	<b>\$36,399,527</b>	<b>\$38,240,872</b>	<b>\$39,345,146</b>
Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS)	\$9,274,087	\$10,090,921	\$11,035,777	\$12,328,714	\$13,597,396	\$14,232,059
Guardianship Assistance Payments (GAP)						\$57,652
MAS Prior Year Deficit		-\$77,180				
Carry Forward Balance from Previous Years	\$3,007,831	\$2,920,860	\$106,138	-\$335,810	\$2,667	-\$964,500
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$44,744,710</b>	<b>\$46,974,917</b>	<b>\$48,339,179</b>	<b>\$48,392,431</b>	<b>\$51,840,935</b>	<b>\$52,670,357</b>

FFN received "back of the bill" funding for operating deficits related to FY 2016-2017 and received Risk Pool Funding in FY 2018-2019 in the amount of \$664,252.

The increase from \$51.8M to \$52.6M in total funding for FY 2019-2020 includes increases for the following:

FY 2019-2020 Increases to Funding		
Core Services (increase)	Core Services	\$666,214
Core Services (increase)	Annualization of Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) licensing positions	\$ 462,474
Core Services (new)	Level 1 Licensed Foster Homes	\$566,908
MAS (increase)	Maintenance Adoption Subsidies	\$634,663
IL/EFC (increase)	Independent Living / Extended Foster Care	\$48,868
GAP program (new)	Guardianship Assistance Payments	\$57,652
Excess Earnings (increase)	Prior Year Excess Earnings (non-recurring)	\$217,483
	Total	\$2,654,262

Since FFN received \$664,252 from risk pool, \$193,421 from FY 2017-2018 excess earnings, \$2,667 from a FY 2017-2018 carry forward but carried forward a deficit of (\$964,500) FY 2018-2019, the net increase is offset but these amounts. The increase to core service funding offsets the risk pool funding allocated last fiscal year.

FFN's projections include the following assumptions:

1. The projected expenditures include an increase equal to the additional funding provided for # 2 through #6 in the above table.
2. A 2% cost of living increase for all FFN staff effective January 2020 for a total six month increase of \$203,700.
3. A \$70,671 or 11% increase in Foster Home Development.
4. Despite adding the increase for Level 1 Licensed Care payments, the total Foster Care Subsidies line of the budget only increased by \$350,844 in total more than actual expenditures in FY 2018-2019.
5. Despite the plan to reduce the total Shelter and Residential line by \$1,092,194 in the application, this line only decreased by \$633,276 less than actual expenditures in FY 2018-2019.

### **Projected Deficit**

The due date for risk pool applications for FY 2019-2020 from CBCs to the department was mid-September which was before the final FY 2018-2019 expenditure reconciliations were completed. Therefore, applicant CBCs had to make some assumptions about their FY 2018-2019 carry forward surplus or deficit and any excess federal earnings as part of their revenue projections.

In their risk pool application, FFN requested \$950,000. They stated in the application that the any funds received would be used to implement a process to identify gaps in prevention and diversion services and continue their foster home recruitment initiative.

FFN projects a total deficit of \$1,003,724. This projection appears to primarily be a carryforward deficit from FY 2018-2019 of \$922,067.

## **SFY 2019-20 Financial Viability Plan**

In the design and instruction for the Financial Viability Plan (FVP) templates, the department 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

FFN's FVP does contain actions to address the three primary cost drivers affecting their financial position. The actions include:

### **Factors related to entries into care**

- o Maximize utilization of Safety Management Service (SMS)/In-Home/Non-Judicial (IHNJ) model to reduce removals. Success measured by increasing the percentage of children served in-home from 37% to 43% by June 2020.
- o Increase utilization of available services for safe but high or very high-risk families. Success measured by reducing the rate of removals per 100 alleged victims from removals to 4.3 removals by June 2020.

The projected cost savings for these two actions was estimated at \$882,464.

### **Factors related to the cost of children while in care**

- o Continue to utilize Caregiver and Resource Entry Support (CARES) Team designed to search for relatives and support caregivers from removal to case transfer. Success measured by increasing the percentage of children in out-of-home care (OHC) in Relative/Non-Relative placements from 55% to 65% by June 2020.
- o Increase foster home capacity by modernizing the application and licensing process. Success measured by licensing a total of 275 new foster home beds.
- o Increase foster home capacity through faith-based recruitment and retention. Success measured by licensing a total of 275 new foster home beds.
- o Continue high utilizer staffing process to review high cost placements. Success measured by reducing the number of children on High Utilizer status (greater than \$150 per day) from 75 to 60.
- o Work with the GAL and judiciary as well as Children's Legal Services on a Home for the Holidays project in order to expedite permanency wherever possible through Wraparound Services. Success is measured by reducing the average length of stay from 14 months to 12 months by June 2020.

The projected cost savings for these three actions was estimated at \$1,317,524.

**Factors related to exits from care**

- o Continue to utilize the single case manager / secondary Adoption Specialist model to increase timely adoptions.
- o Increase adoption finalizations by utilizing a similar method of the Rapid Permanency Review (NPR)/Cadence of Accountability approach during 9-month Permanency Staffings.

Success measured for both actions reducing the % of children in OHC greater than 18 months from 31% to 25% by June 2020.

- o Continue to increase adoption finalization/reduction of Length of Stay by ensuring items/tasks needed for finalization are completed timely through secondary case assignment, review of cases pre-TPR during permanency staffings, family match. Success is measured by increasing the number of adoptions finalized within 5 months of TPR from 63 to 69 by June 2020.

The projected cost savings for these three actions was estimated at \$362,196 which was mostly in the last quarter.

**Total of all projected savings is \$2,562,184.**

FFN factored these cost savings in their projected budget.

No findings were identified in the most recent CPA audit of September 30, 2018.

**6. Findings related to overall management.**

- Sources: ([CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), Financial Viability Plan)
- Summary below; see [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 CBC, the Sheriff (if applicable), case management organizations, and other key community partners?**
- 6.2. How actively and effectively does the CBC management track programmatic performance and fiscal performance?**
- 6.3. What actions have been taken by the Region and/or the CBC to resolve the fiscal issues without accessing the Risk Pool? What further actions are planned?**

According to CBC monitoring, FFN and DCF region staff work collaboratively to achieve goals and improve outcomes in Circuit 1. In Santa Rosa County, case management, investigations and Children's Legal Services (CLS) staff work harmoniously toward shared goals. However, overall, greater efforts to improve communication between case management and investigations staff and between case management and CLS staff are warranted with a focus on Walton County (note: CPI activities in Walton County have since transitioned to the sheriff's office, so this may no longer be an issue).



FFN's quality management team is experienced and innovative and a clear strength of FFN's system of care. Monthly Support, Highlight, Improve, Note and Excel (SHINE) focused case reviews provide ongoing feedback to staff regarding performance in critical areas. Abundant data reports are generated by the FFN Data team but are not distributed to front line supervisory staff with a frequency and consistency that would result in impactful change. This is an area that FFN is actively working to enhance. Additionally, data sharing with the Quality Management and Training teams, to identify areas of deficiency supported by data, would result in more proactive training topics and focus SHINE reviews to areas most needing improvement.

Although FFN applied for, and was provided with, Risk Pool funding in FY 2016-2017 and applied but not approved in FY 2017-2018 (due to their low ranking on the prioritization by percent change in removals), Lakeview and Baptist Healthcare provide financial sustainability that is not available to all CBCs. The CEO and Executive Leadership have developed a culture that is committed to staff recognition and retention as well as quality, trauma informed casework. While FFN has developed support mechanisms for foster parents, continued efforts to utilize and support relatives and non-relative caregivers are needed.

FFN continued to work on recommendations from the FY 2018-2019 Risk Pool. See below for status:

Recommendation	Actions
Risk Pool funding provides a stopgap (non-recurring) resource intended to mitigate unanticipated changes in the number of clients and/or services needed for clients; it is not designed to annualize expenses. With this being FFN's third risk pool application, the agency should develop a plan to meet existing and trending client needs while reducing costs more in-line with their recurring core services funding allocation in anticipation of being financially viable next fiscal year.	FFN understands that the Risk Pool funding is a stop gap resource to mitigate unanticipated changes in the number of clients served. As noted earlier, FFN Leadership is working with community partners in order to maximize front end service options and is also working with GAL and judiciary partners in order to increase timely permanency for children in our care. These efforts are meant to "right size the organization." The goal is to decrease out of home care by 15% within 12 months as well as to reduce children in licensed group care by 50%. FFN believes that this "right sizing" will allow the organization to be financially viable in the upcoming fiscal year.
Decision Support Team (DST) staffings appear to have reduced entries which spiked when the DSTs were suspended. FFN has implemented the Family Assessment Support Team (FAST) model used by Family Support Services of North Florida. Implementation should be monitored to determine if FAST is effective and CPIs are using the program.	Safety Management Services (SMS) are intended to manage safety threats and reduce risk of child maltreatments identified by the CPI by locating formal safety supports. SMS are available for investigations prior to the completion of an Investigative Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) and up to 30 days with a focus that child safety is nonnegotiable, but the paths chosen to reach the safety goal are many and unique to the individual family dynamics.

	<p>FFN In-Home Non-Judicial (IHNJ), structured after the FAST model utilized by Family Support Services of North Florida, provides services when a family has consented to accept intensive supervision and services aimed at stabilizing the family home. The purpose of IHNJ services is to ensure the protection of unsafe children who have experienced abuse or neglect so that they can safely remain in the home. The program provides services for 6-12 months depending on the service needs of the family. Initially FFN started with one unit per service area except for Navarre and Walton County. Due to growth in 2019, we added a second fully staffed unit in Escambia County as well as a unit in Walton County. In September 2019 there are 6 units serving 441 children with in-home safety plans compared to 3 units serving 202 children in September 2017.</p>
FFN should continue efforts to reduce the number of children in RGC, especially those under the age of 13.	See above regarding Faith Based initiative. Children will be stepped out of residential group care with an initial focus on children twelve and under.
FFN should analyze the issues surrounding high placement moves as this speaks to placement stability. Questions such as who is initiating the change and drilling down to the root cause of the high rate of placement moves should help develop countermeasures. The COU on-site monitoring report references insights that may be helpful on this item.	<p>FFN has a high percentage of placement moves which is influencing performance and permanency for children. There appears to be two drivers contributing to this challenge. The first driver is the lack of an assessment center where children can be placed on a short-term basis in order to receive trauma focused interventions as well as to establish a functional assessment to determine the best long-term placement options for each child. FFN Leadership is working with Lakeview Behavioral Health Leadership to open an assessment center in the near future. The center will allow us to make the best placement the first time and will reduce placement disruptions in the future. The second driver as noted above is placement capacity. We anticipate being able to overcome this challenge through the Faith Based Initiative noted above. We will begin in Escambia County which demonstrates the highest need for foster homes at this time.</p>
FFN should place a stronger emphasis on prevention/diversion, decreasing use of RGC,	FFN Leadership is working to fortify prevention/diversion services in all four counties. As reported earlier, they are also working to increase traditional foster care

increasing use of relative/non-relatives, foster home recruitment, and use of foster homes.	options to decrease children in residential group care. FFN has established a solid foundation with its Kinship Care Program which will allow us the opportunity to utilize Kinship as a viable option to reduce the number of children going into licensed care.
FFN should develop a plan to improve permanency; this should include reunification, adoptions, and exits overall.	FFN Leadership is working with the judiciary and other community partners to establish efficiencies in the dependency process to decrease length of stay in foster care. One such example noted above is the partnership with the GAL and CLS called "Home for the Holidays". FFN is also looking at the array of after care services post reunification to reduce the rate of re-abuse seen after re-unification. FFN is currently working with the local DCF leadership to assist with moving the adoption process along in a timelier manner. DCF Interim Regional Managing Director, Courtney Stanford, has offered help to FFN to assist in moving cases that are pending adoption to finalization. Currently there are about 100 children in this status that need to be finalized.

### Summary of Findings:

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

- SFY 2014-2015 was the year with the highest number of removals. The total number of removals has decreased every year since then with the exception of SFY 2017-2018 which did have a slight increase; however, SFY 2018-2019 was the lowest number of removals since SFY 2013-2014. The removal rates per 100 alleged victims for investigations closed have been at or below the statewide average.
- FFN discharges had been relatively flat the last four years. The total number of discharges have not kept up with the declining number of removals. The Discharge rate per 100 children in out-of-home care has been at or below the statewide average.
- FFN has increased both the number and percentage of children served in-home in SFY 2018-2019 and exceeds the statewide average.
- FFN case manager caseload and turnover has improved from March 2019 but could improve further.
- FFN continues to place a high number and percentage of children in group care; especially those in the 6-12 age group. FFN spent about \$2.7M for this age group in SFY 2018-2019. A significant reduction in group home placements especially from this age group would significantly improve their financial viability.
- FFN continues to struggle with children who have been TPR'd, have placements identified, and are six or more months post TPR.

- Improvement in permanency measures would reduce caseloads and costs improving their financial viability.

### **Recommendations:**

The Peer Review Committee found that FFN does not qualify for risk pool funding at this time due to decreases in entries into care and factors within their control such as whether to approve across the board cost of living salary increases of \$203,700. They also have not made improvements on getting children in adoptive placements and getting those cases closed out to permanency. Despite decreases in entries into out-of-home care, FFN has not been able to increase their number of exits from out-of-home to reduce their overall caseload. FFN also has a historical over reliance on residential group care for children ages 0-12. FFN could significantly affect their overall financial viability by aggressively following their financial viability plan and the recommendations in this report as listed below.

1. FFN 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, discharges to permanency, placement stability and reduce time to adoption and the number of children ages 0-12 in licensed residential group care (RGC).
2. Risk Pool funding provides a stopgap (non-recurring) resource intended to mitigate unanticipated changes in the number of clients and/or services needed for clients; it is not designed to annualize expenses. With this being FFN's fourth risk pool application, the agency should develop a plan to meet existing and trending client needs while reducing costs more in-line with their recurring core services funding allocation in anticipation of being financially viable by the end of the fiscal year.
3. FFN must continue efforts to reduce the number of children in RGC, especially those under the age of 13. By safely placing almost all of these children from these age groups in licensed foster homes, FFN could reduce their total licensed care expenditures by at least \$2M annually and reduce the need for additional funding.
4. FFN should analyze the issues surrounding high placement moves as this speaks to placement stability. Questions such as who is initiating the change and drilling down to the root cause of the high rate of placement moves should help develop countermeasures. The COU on-site monitoring report references insights that may be helpful on this item.
5. FFN should continue to place a strong emphasis on prevention/diversion, decreasing use of RGC, increasing use of relative/non-relatives, foster home recruitment, and use of foster homes.
6. FFN should identify a new cohort of Rapid Permanency Reviews for the 188 children in pre-adoptive placements longer than six months (53.4% of children who have been TPR'd). Lessons learned from this new cohort of Rapid Permanency Reviews should be incorporated for all children who are TPR'd in the future and placed for adoption to ensure barriers are identified and actively addressed. These placements are costing FFN an average of \$90,973 per month based upon FFN's average foster home board rate of \$16.13/day. Reducing this number will help improve performance measures around permanency and reduce costs to core

services. FFN has been on a Corrective Action Plan for this measure since FY 2017-2018.

7. FFN should develop a plan to improve permanency which should include reunification, guardianship and adoptions to increase exits from out-of-home care overall.