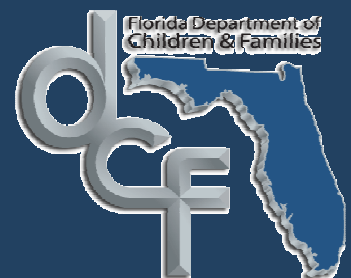


Florida Department of Children and Families

*Accomplishments
2007 and 2008*

Charlie Crist
Governor

George Sheldon
Secretary



Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Major Accomplishments in 2007 and 2008

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

DEPARTMENT-WIDE

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

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

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

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

CHILD WELFARE/ ADULT SERVICES

- Finalized 3,674 adoptions – the highest one-year total ever achieved
- Promulgated written Rights of Foster Care Children
- Implemented reforms to the Child Abuse Hotline providing priority attention to calls most likely to impact safety of children
- Continued implementation of the statewide child welfare (title IV-E) demonstration waiver and safely reduced the number of children in out-of-home care by over 25 percent (over 7,000 children)
- Implemented recommendations by the Child Protection Task Force including achieving dramatic increases in children seen monthly
- Established a Select Advisory Panel for Adult Protective Services and held the first adult services training event for over 300 staff from the Department and partner agencies
- Began the Home for the Holidays initiative

ACCESS

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

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Additional Department of Children and Families Accomplishments

Governor and Secretary Directives

1. Implemented Culture Change Initiatives:
 - (a) Secretary's Six Guiding Principles
 - (b) Common Sense / Sense of Urgency / Sense of Community
 - (c) Transparency and Open Government
 - (d) Plain Language
2. Reorganized Department:
 - (a) Established Regions and Circuit-based delivery of services
 - (b) Restructured DCF Legal Services (created Children's Legal Services as a statewide law firm)
 - (c) Added Criminal Justice Director and Region Criminal Justice Coordinators
3. Established Task Force for Child Protection:
 - (a) Published report including recommendations
 - (b) Assigned workgroups to monitor, implement, and make further recommendations
 - (c) Reconstituted task force for continuing oversight of child protection system
4. Established Adult Protective Services Advisory Panel
5. Launched *One Church One Child* pilot in Hillsborough and Duval counties to promote adoptions
6. Received access for investigators to National Crime and Information Center
7. Changed the Department's legal philosophy regarding lawsuits to resolve issues when this action is in the best interest of the State and affected individuals
8. Played an active role in the development and implementation of the Children and Youth Cabinet
9. Refocused Departmental attention on prevention of child abuse
10. Implemented "Operation Full Employment" leading to the employment by over 100 former foster youth with the Department and with partner agencies
11. Increased interaction with and involvement of advocates with Departmental initiatives
12. Launched the Department's Leadership Institute, which provides a structure for the systematic development of leadership talent and serves as a Department-wide change agent:
 - (a) Implemented the Florida Youth Leadership Academy as the result of a Child Welfare Leadership class project
 - (b) Initiated three levels of leadership development: Executive Leadership (24 participants); Managing for Excellence/Certified Public Manager (172 participants); and Supervising for Excellence (330 participants)
13. Developed "Florida Performs" Web site for the Executive Office of the Governor. This web site enhances transparency and stores agency performance data for the public to see.

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

ACCESS

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

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Substance Abuse and Mental Health

1. Collaborated with the Department's Child Welfare Program and the Department of Juvenile Justice to develop practice guidelines for addressing the needs of youth being served by both Departments
2. Continued to admit forensic individuals within 15 days of receipt of a complete commitment packet:
 - (a) Admitted forensic individuals during state FY 08/09 (through 10/30/08), within an average of five days
 - (b) Closed the South Florida Evaluation and Treatment Center/GEO - Annex on August 1, 2008, (100 beds) two months ahead of schedule, saving the Department \$1.528 million
 - (c) Increased secure forensic capacity at South Florida Evaluation and Treatment Center/GEO by 25 beds on August 1, 2008
 - (d) Increased secure forensic bed capacity at the Treasure Coast Forensic Treatment Center by 48 beds on August 1, 2008
 - (e) Contracted with GEO to designate 25 of the 223 beds at Treasure Coast Forensic Treatment Center as "flex beds," to be opened/paid for only if needed
3. Completed Robert Wood Johnson-funded Advancing Recovery initiative. The Department's and provider efforts resulted in national recognition for cutting edge efforts toward the use of Medically Assisted Treatment.
4. Initiated the Certified Peer Specialist program statewide through a contract with the Florida Certification Board to develop, create and implement the certification of mental health consumers. This new peer professional certification has resulted in more than 250 people becoming Adult and/or Family Certified Peer Specialists. Created a Recovery Support Specialist certification for substance abuse.
5. Developed legislative concept and supported implementation of the Florida Supreme Court Report: "Transforming Florida's Mental Health System"
6. Implemented with the Department of Corrections an on-line referral system to facilitate aftercare for inmates with serious mental illnesses reaching the end of their sentences
7. Completed competitive process with quality improvement enhancements for the Juvenile Incompetent to Proceed Program
8. Promulgated Comprehensive, Continuous, Integrated System of Care concept for communities and began statewide trainings
9. Mandated co-occurring services as a DCF "expectation, not exception"
10. Reduced the number of detainees in the Sexual Violent Predator Program from 301 to 267 through collaboration with Circuit Chief Judges
11. Achieved the goal of the Transformation Transfer Initiative grant to regionalize the Recovery and Resiliency Task Force, a consumer-led advisory group operating in each of the Department's regions
12. Completed an assessment of the statewide mental health crisis system to determine crisis stabilization bed capacity in response to tensions in the system
13. Funded 48 community anti-drug coalitions in 46 counties across the state. Of those, 42 coalitions have completed community substance abuse needs assessments.

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Substance Abuse and Mental Health - continued

14. Received a federal grant and subsequently implemented screening, intervention and brief treatment (SBRITE) services in primary care settings, directed at elders identified as needing substance abuse treatment services
15. Promoted employment through contracting for six active Mental Health Clubhouses, three of which have now secured certification from the International Center for Clubhouse Development
16. Conducted three public meetings across the state to obtain consumer and other stakeholders input into the development of managing entities
17. Funded the “Be the Wall” statewide media campaign, engaging parents in underage drinking prevention
18. Achieved national recognition for the operation of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Mental Health Program
19. Implemented an automated system to track licensing by Departmental staff of substance abuse facilities statewide
20. Aligned the Substance Abuse and Mental Health information system with updated policy and law

Domestic Violence

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

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Child Welfare

1. Finalized 3,674 adoptions – the highest one-year total ever achieved
2. Promulgated written Rights of Foster Care Children
3. Implemented reforms to the Child Abuse Hotline providing priority attention to calls most likely to impact safety of children
4. Continued implementation of the statewide child welfare (title IV-E) demonstration waiver and safely reduced the number of children in out-of-home care by over 7,000 children (over 20 percent)
5. Implemented release 1 and release 2A phases of Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN)
6. Transitioned Citrus County Child Protective Investigations to the Sheriff's Office on July 1, 2007
7. Conducted the first comprehensive survey of youth aging out of foster care in 2007 with the second annual survey scheduled for completion by the end of 2008
8. Amended childcare licensing rules
9. Began the Home for the Holidays initiative
10. Increased emphasis on CBC performance measures, outcomes, and accountability with linkage to the federal Child and Family Services Review measures
11. Began shifting the organizational culture toward keeping children in the home and on supporting families
12. Granted access to FLORIDA System to protective investigators
13. Conducted the Annual Dependency Summit in 2007 and 2008
14. Conducted a detailed review of the Courtney Clark case and implemented a number of system enhancements
15. Established housing in Broward County for youth aging-out of foster care
16. Implemented quarterly Regional Family Safety events
17. Instituted a number of CBC grant activities, such as the Department/Kids Central, Inc. Demonstration Project for Quality Assurance and Performance-Based Contracting
18. Implemented a number of mediation projects throughout the State and, at the Dependency Summit, recognized former Governor MacKay for his leadership role in these efforts
19. Selected as one of six States to participate in a National Governors' Association Policy Academy on Safely Reducing Out-of-Home Care
20. Developed "Explore Adoption" internet Web site to assist with increasing awareness on adoption in Florida with functionality to subscribe to a monthly newsletter
21. Deployed text to speech software and digital records to child protective investigators statewide in order to ease workload
22. Provided capability for judges and legal staff to view Interstate Compact Case/Home Study data via the Enterprise Client Index application
23. Redesigned caretaker background screening application
24. Incorporated document imaging workflow to Interstate Compact Placement Children application and this reduced processing time from 30 days to a few days

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Child Care

1. Developed a three-hour web-based Record Keeping course designed to assist child care professionals in the maintenance of appropriate information regarding child care activities in addition to creating and delivering the mandated child care training online for greater accessibility
2. Established 3 Regional Training Centers so that locations with low student enrollment could receive instructor – based training. This effort streamlined the delivery and is more cost effective.
3. Developed and deployed an electronic uniform system of progressive enforcement pursuant to legislation for all child care facility and home standards

Refugee Programs

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

Homelessness

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

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Adult Services

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

Information Systems

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

Children and Families: Accomplishments 2007 and 2008

Partnerships

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