

Department of Family Services

LOB #113:

PROTECTION AND FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

Purpose

The purpose of Protection and Preservation Services is to prevent child abuse and neglect and preserve families by enhancing families' ability to provide safe, stable and nurturing environments for their children.

Description

Protection and Preservation Services (PPS) was created in November 2013 to help DFS better serve families at risk for child abuse or neglect and out-of-home placement. PPS is an integral part of the child welfare system and provides clinical case management and support services to children living at home with their families. Services are provided in two types of cases:

CPS Ongoing cases

These cases are received from CPS Intake workers after a family assessment or investigation has determined that a family needs ongoing services to prevent further child abuse or neglect. They include both cases in which families work with us voluntarily and cases in which families are court-ordered to participate in services.

Families In Need of Services (FINS)

These cases are received directly from the CPS Hotline. FINS cases do not meet state criteria for a CPS response to child abuse or neglect, but do meet local FINS criteria which focus on characteristics that place families at heightened risk of child abuse or neglect.

PPS Services

All PPS services are designed to strengthen families and increase their self-sufficiency and personal accountability. Staff collaborates with partners in the community and engages families in services to achieve desired outcomes. Services to both types of cases include:

- Assessing safety and risk concerns for children;
- Assessing families' strengths and needs;
- Creating service plans with families to minimize safety and risk concerns, build on strengths, and address needs;
- Connecting families to resources and services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, domestic violence interventions, parenting education and support, income and employment assistance, and medical care; and
- Helping families identify and connect with natural supports such as extended family.

These services help to accomplish the following objectives:

- Strengthen families;
- Promote child safety, well-being, permanency and placement stability, including maintaining the child in his or her own family;
- Minimize harm to children;
- Maximize families' abilities to protect and care for their own;

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- Prevent child abuse and neglect from occurring or reoccurring; and
- Prevent out-of-home care, including foster care.

Domestic Violence Unit

PPS also houses the Domestic Violence Unit in which specialists provide education, support, court accompaniment and access to specialized domestic violence resources and services within the community. The Domestic Violence Unit serves families receiving child welfare services from other CYF programs.

Benefits

The main goals of PPS are to preserve families and prevent the occurrence and recurrence of child abuse and neglect.

During the first two years of the PPS program, staff sought to provide high quality, family-centered services that improve the caretaking and coping skills of families served. Research shows that the best place for children to grow up is in families. In FY 2015, 95 percent of families served maintained their children safely in the home. The benefits of keeping a child safely in the home as opposed to foster care are immense for the children and the community. These benefits include cost savings: in FY 2015, foster care services cost \$54,945 per *child* (not including CSA costs for some maintenance payments and services). PPS services cost a small fraction of that: approximately \$8,875 per *family*.

Additionally, front-end preventative services have long term benefits for the children and the community. Research into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has shown that children who experience abuse or neglect are at a heightened risk of serious health issues including unintended and adolescent pregnancy, heart disease, depression, substance abuse, and suicide. By mitigating the impacts of child abuse early on, and preventing future abuse, these services decrease the likelihood of these poor health outcomes and the need for treatment of these health conditions.

Mandates

Approximately two-thirds of this LOB is mandated CPS Ongoing casework as required by sections 106 and 107 of the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) and by Virginia Administrative Code 22VAC40-705-150 which states, "At the completion of a family assessment or investigation, the local department shall consult with the family to provide or arrange for necessary protective and rehabilitative services to be provided to the child and his family to the extent funding is available pursuant to subdivision A 2 of § 63.2-1505 or § 63.2-1506 of the Code of Virginia."

The work with Families In Need of Services (FINS) is not mandated by law; however, it is indispensable as a prevention service that intervenes with families at risk of child abuse or neglect before such occurs.

Trends and Challenges

One of the major challenges in PPS is the complexity of issues faced by the families. These issues include mental health concerns, substance abuse, domestic violence, intellectual delays, poverty, and immigration and language challenges.

There was a notable increase from FY 2014 to FY 2015 in the percent of families in which someone had a mental health issue: from 39 percent in July 2014 to 55 percent in June 2015. There also was a slight increase in the number of cases in which a family member struggled with substance abuse or had an intellectual difficulty during the same time period; these averaged 22 percent and 11 percent of families respectively.

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Domestic violence has also been an issue that has made cases more complex. In FY 2015, almost one-third of all PPS cases had an element of domestic violence. PPS has employed the Domestic Violence Unit in these situations to help provide specialized services. The Domestic Violence Unit provides support to programs across CYF and served 138 families and 288 children in FY 2015, representing an 11 percent increase from FY 2014.

Immigration and language issues add a layer of complexity to the cases. Families that include undocumented children and caretakers have unique challenges because many services are unavailable to them.

It has become harder to acquire services for families due to limited funding and increased demand. For example, County mental health and substance abuse treatment services target the priority populations of the most seriously ill. Adults and children who do not meet eligibility criteria must seek treatment in the community. It is often very difficult to find effective community-based providers, especially ones that take Medicaid. This gap in services is having an impact on families' ability to achieve their goals. Additionally, identifying affordable housing options for families has been a challenge. For example, the Section 8 housing waitlist has been closed since March 2007.

To help families be successful, PPS staff draws upon strong clinical skills and informal networks to connect the families to the supports they need. Staff uses Family Partnership Meetings to engage families and communities in decision-making partnerships. PPS staff participated in more than 300 Family Partnership Meetings in FY 2015. Through these professionally-facilitated meetings, PPS staff, family members and other service providers are able to come together to identify the right course of action and services necessary for a positive outcome.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #113: Protection and Family Preservation Services			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$3,682,906	\$3,845,881	\$4,314,451
Operating Expenses	247,296	292,961	361,954
Total Expenditures	\$3,930,202	\$4,138,842	\$4,676,405
General Fund Revenue	\$1,894,476	\$1,875,336	\$1,739,957
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$2,035,726	\$2,263,506	\$2,936,448
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	54 / 54	54 / 54	54 / 54
Total Positions	54 / 54	54 / 54	54 / 54

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Number of families served by PPS during the year	NA	597	624	665	665
Cost per family served by PPS	NA	\$8,858	\$8,875	\$9,615	\$9,615
Percent of family members served by PPS who meet with their social service specialist per month	NA	72%	79%	85%	90%
Percent of families served by PPS whose children remain safely in their home	NA	96%	99%	95%	95%

Summary of Key Performance Measures

The Protection and Preservation Services (PPS) LOB had \$4,676,405 in expenditures for FY 2015, offset by \$1,739,957 in revenue for a net cost to the County of \$2,936,448. These funds support 54 FTEs.

PPS served 624 families with 1,098 children in FY 2015, a 5 percent increase from the 593 families served in FY 2104, the first year for the PPS program.

The key outcome for PPS is to keep children out of foster care and safely with their families. This outcome was achieved for 99 percent of the families served in FY 2015, exceeding the target of 95percent.

Metric Discussion

Data for Protection and Preservation Services LOB is only available for the last two years. The program was founded in FY 2014 as the result of internal restructuring which involved combining and modifying the former Child Protective Services Ongoing and Family Preservation Services programs. Overall there was a nominal 5 percent increase in the number of families served by PPS from FY 2014 to FY 2015.

PPS has continued to improve the quality of services to families over the course of the last year. One quality measure is the percent of family members who received a worker visit each month. Regular monthly visits with each family member are important because they mitigate the risk of future maltreatment and facilitate progress toward case goals. This measure improved from 72 percent in FY 2014 to 79 percent in FY 2015. This improvement was the direct result of efforts to improve both practice and data entry. Activities included training to clarify expectations for staff and training on how to properly record visits so they are captured in reports. With monitoring and additional training this metric is expected to continue to improve over time. In fact, data from April through June of 2015 averaged 96 percent per month.

The primary outcome for PPS is the percentage of families in which the children are able to stay safely in their home. This metric increased from 96 percent in FY 2014 to 99 percent in FY 2015, exceeding the target of 95 percent in both years. By preventing placement into foster care, PPS saves more than \$50,000 per child per year in foster care expenses.