

**New York State's**  
**Child and Family Services Plan**  
**FY 2010 - 2014**  
**Annual Progress and Services Report**  
**Submitted**  
**June 2010**

**Application for Funding:**

- **Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services (CWS)...  
Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, Subpart 1**
- **Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF)...  
Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, Subpart 2**
- **Child Abuse and Treatment Act Basic State Grant (CAPTA)...**
- **Chafee Foster Care Independence (CFCIP) and Education and  
Training Vouchers (ETV) Programs ...**

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**Vision:  
Safety, Permanence, and Well-Being  
For  
New York's Children and Families**

**New York State  
Child and Family Services Plan  
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**Mission Statement**

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services.

**Agency Overview**

OCFS serves as the Title IV-B Agency for New York State. OCFS is dedicated to improving the integration of services for New York's children, youth, families and vulnerable populations; to promoting their development; and to protecting them from violence, neglect, abuse and abandonment. The agency provides a system of family support, juvenile justice, child care and child welfare services that promote the safety and well-being of children and adults.

OCFS is responsible for programs and services involving foster care, adoption and adoption assistance, child protective services including operating the Statewide Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment, preventive services for children and families, and protective programs for vulnerable adults. OCFS is also responsible for the functions performed by the State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped and coordinates state government response to the needs of Native Americans on reservations and in communities.

OCFS provides oversight and monitoring of regulated child care (family day care, group family day care, school-age child care and day care centers outside of NYC), legally exempt child care, child care subsidies, child care resource and referrals, and the Advantage After School Program, and also provides services and programs for infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, and school-age children and their families.

OCFS is responsible for all elements of the state's juvenile justice programs, administering and managing residential facilities, community-based group homes, day-placement centers, and reception center programs for juvenile delinquents and juvenile offenders placed in the custody of the OCFS Commissioner.

OCFS operates twenty-two facilities, two reception centers, one community residential home, and five day-placement centers for youth placed in the custody of OCFS by family and criminal courts. There are also twelve Community Multi-Services Offices statewide that are responsible for services to the youth and family from day one of OCFS placement. OCFS works closely with municipalities such as local social services districts

and county youth bureaus so that adequate youth development services and programs are available at the local level.

The Executive Office of OCFS, encompassing the Office of the Commissioner, the Office of the Executive Deputy Commissioner, the NYC Executive Office, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Development, and Executive Services, provides overall leadership, management, coordination, and administration of agency operation and mission-driven priorities.

OCFS divides its responsibilities into two main areas: program and support. The program divisions/offices include: Division of Child Care Services (DCCS), Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (DCWCS), Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY), and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH). The support divisions/offices include: Division of Administration (Admin), Division of Legal Affairs (Legal), Division of Information Technology (IT), Office of Communications (Communications), Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development (SPPD), and the Office of Special Investigations (SI).

OCFS maintains regional offices in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Spring Valley, Long Island, and New York City to support agency programs and partnerships with stakeholders and providers.

## **Introduction**

OCFS was established in 1998 to improve, strengthen and integrate services to the State's children, youth and other vulnerable populations. The creation of OCFS responded to a growing recognition of the complexity and interrelatedness of today's problems and solutions. All children, youth and adults require the support of their families and communities. Fundamental to securing the safety and well-being of all State residents is the ability to access supports, without regard for funding sources, service capacities, or having to reconcile differing approaches to services among providers.

In addition to directly providing services, OCFS funds and supervises local social services districts, youth bureaus, child care programs and community and voluntary agencies in directly providing or collaborating with other agencies to provide a wide range of developmental, preventive and remedial supports to New York State's citizens. To succeed, OCFS must focus on efficiently and effectively maintaining and strengthening the self-sufficiency of families.

Under the leadership of Governor David Paterson and Commissioner Gladys Carrión, OCFS invests in, develops, and monitors programs that promote the self-sufficiency of families and individuals. The Governor has reinforced an agenda that encourages cooperation and collaboration between state agencies in an effort to maximize the benefit of public funds allocated to multiple service delivery responsibilities. A main focus of this plan will be to demonstrate how those collaborations work and, more importantly, how they benefit the children and families of New York State.

OCFS continues to specify and demand that outcomes be established and met for its substantial investment in the community. The ability to measure outcomes and define success continues to be a top priority for OCFS.

OCFS participates in many exciting initiatives that are detailed in this report. They reflect the efforts of countless committed professionals, families, volunteers and the communities in which they live and work. They reflect child care, youth development, juvenile justice, adult and child welfare and other services that are the responsibility of this agency. Most importantly, however, they reflect the diverse character and needs of the vulnerable populations found within the diverse regions of New York State.

OCFS serves to improve and integrate efforts to address the needs and build on the strengths of the State's children, youth and other vulnerable populations. OCFS responds to a growing recognition of the complexity and interrelatedness of today's problems and solutions. The ability to access supports without regard for funding sources, service capacities, or having to reconcile differing approaches to services among providers is fundamental to protecting the safety and well-being of all state residents.

The OCFS mission is to “serve New York’s public by promoting the well-being, safety and permanency of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services.” This mission statement guides OCFS’ administration of public funds aimed at meeting its multiple service delivery responsibilities. OCFS is responsible for the administration and oversight of a continuum of human development, prevention, early intervention, protective, out-of-home placement and community re-integration services. State law establishes a number of mandates for OCFS, both direct responsibilities and those that the local social services districts must provide under the supervision of OCFS. Direct responsibilities include:

- Providing fiscal support, technical assistance and oversight to municipal youth bureaus for the planning, coordination and funding of youth development services for the under-21-year-old population;
- Receiving and tracking through the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment of suspected reports of child abuse and maltreatment;
- Providing fiscal support and oversight to the statewide juvenile detention system;
- Coordinating the provision of training and technical assistance to voluntary agency and local government agency staff;
- Operating and overseeing programs designed to foster independence of the blind and visually handicapped
- Licensing and supervising voluntary foster care agencies, domestic violence and child care providers;
- Operating the New York State Adoption Service including adoption subsidies, photo-listing, and administration of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children;
- Administering the federal Indian Child Welfare Act; and

- Providing for the care and treatment of youth placed by the courts in OCFS custody.

OCFS supervises local administration of child welfare and adult protective services by fifty-seven counties, New York City and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe. Services provided include child protective services, preventive services, foster care, adoption, protective services for adults, and child day care.

The following principles guide OCFS work.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE.* OCFS recognizes the importance of the stages of human development in guiding service delivery. The cognitive, emotional, physical and social skills of children, youth and adults are fundamental to their need for and ability to benefit from services. Recent studies in the separate fields of child development and youth development address the value of focusing on competencies rather than deficits. OCFS is committed to the use of strength-based approaches, with a focus on child and family strengths as opposed to problems or pathology. Building on individuals' strengths facilitates the efficacy of all services.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE FAMILY-CENTERED AND FAMILY DRIVEN.* Supporting families that foster the healthy development of their members requires serving the family as a whole, as well as individuals within the family. Research conducted on the development of children, from newborns through teens, emphasizes the crucial role of parents in the successful cognitive, emotional, physical and social development of their children. In fact, with the support of their communities, most families meet and exceed the expectations put on them. Strategies for family-centered services require family members, including youth, to participate actively with other stakeholders in identifying the design of community based family supports. OCFS is committed to the practice of planning for one child and family at a time, based on individual strengths and needs, not program categories.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE COMMUNITY-BASED.* Communities play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of their children and the self-sufficiency of their adults and families. The involvement of community-based organizations, schools, businesses, childcare providers, health care facilities, faith-based organizations, law enforcement and courts promotes culturally competent supports for children, youth, adults and their families in their neighborhoods. Development of comprehensive, collaborative, integrated, long-term community-based programs that address the full spectrum of child, youth, adult and family needs represent a wise investment of resources.

The diversity of New York State dictates that OCFS provides localities flexibility in tailoring programs to meet their unique circumstances. By supporting the provision of supports and services in family and community settings, OCFS supports the reduction of over-reliance on restrictive and expensive out-of-home placements and the reduction of

the disproportionate representation of families and children of color in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE LOCALLY RESPONSIVE.* The development of effective services and supports for individuals and families requires family and community involvement in decisions about service priorities, strategies and program interventions. OCFS is committed to delivering services that are culturally competent, recognizing that a family's cultural background might affect the determination of appropriate services. OCFS is committed to providing care that is unconditional, embracing the idea that services are provided to all in need regardless of how, when, or where they come in to the system.

The OCFS regional infrastructure offers the capacity to assist localities in tailoring local service delivery systems to community needs. Integrated local planning by local departments of social services and youth bureaus, with the involvement of community stakeholders, including families, has helped promote local public and private human services partnerships. The joint identification of local needs based on common definitions support program planning and development that addresses needs in a manner compatible with existing community resources and interests. The resulting shared outcomes and principles hold promise for effective service delivery and positive outcomes.

*SERVICES SHOULD BE EVIDENCE AND OUTCOME BASED.* The human services field has increasingly emphasized the use of outcomes for measuring program success. The move to outcome-based practice has resulted in a new series of questions about which practices most effectively produce desired outcomes. Too long guided by intuition and anecdote, human service providers and administrators now look for reliable and valid evidence to inform their service investments. OCFS specifies and demands that outcomes be established and met for its substantial investment in the community. The ability to measure outcomes and define success continues to be a top priority for OCFS as it seeks to achieve its core goals.

### SERVICE CONTINUUM

Commissioner Carrión has championed a role that challenges and encourages local providers to take the initiative by preventing, rather than reacting to, family upheavals by intervening early with activities designed to reduce the need for removal of a child, youth or adult from the household. OCFS' focus on prevention is why the Service Continuum has its broadest effects in services meant to support families and individuals in their communities. Indeed, even when such broad-based supports fail to prevent problems, early interventions should be available to individuals in the context of their families and families in the context of their communities.

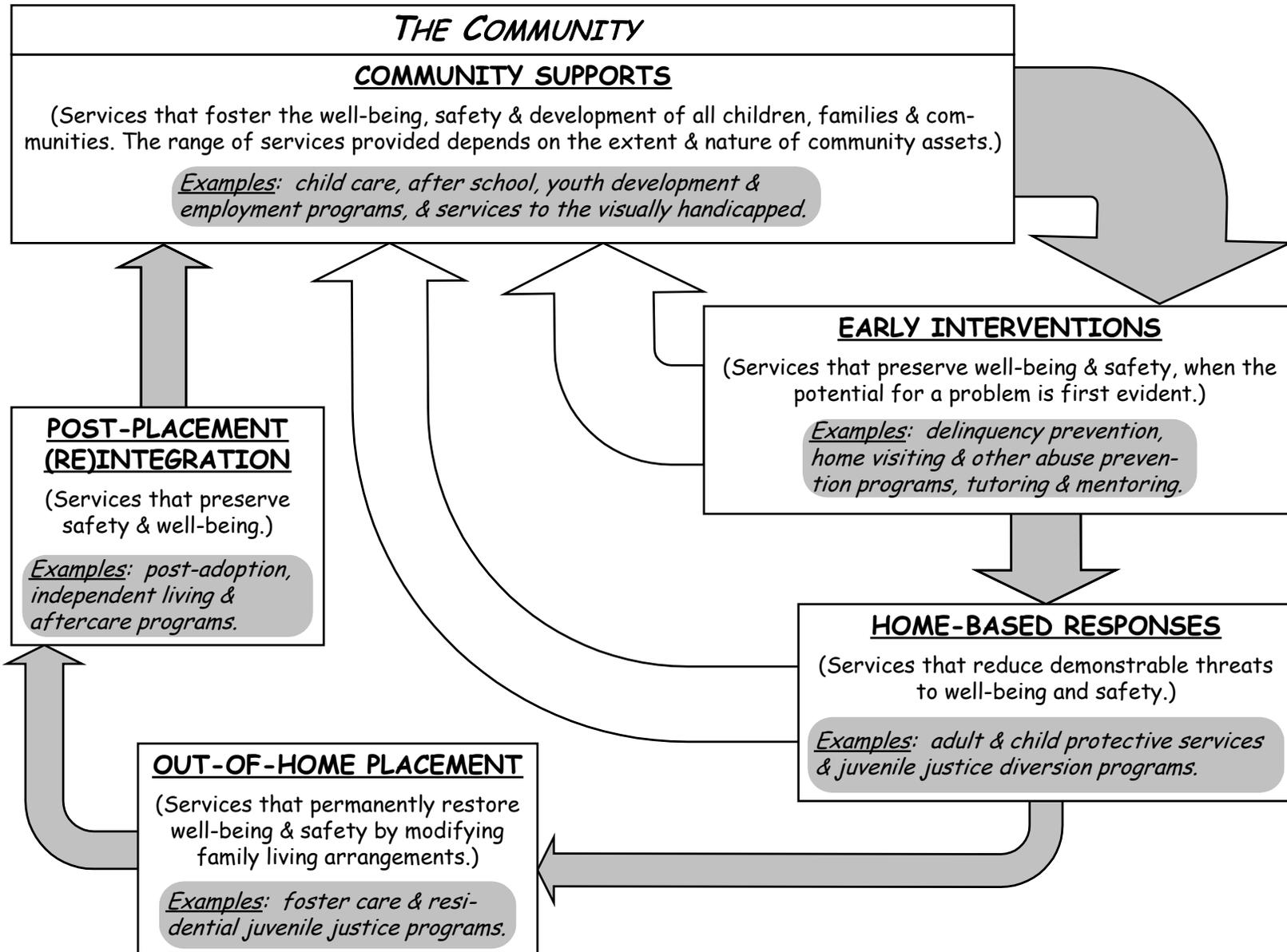
OCFS provides funds and oversees a wide range of services. One way to understand the interrelation among the totality these services is on a continuum that distinguishes them by the point of service delivery. The chart below, "The Children and Families Service Continuum," delineates some of the key features and gives examples of these services.

The ends of the continuum are connected, with the community as the beginning and end of service delivery, in recognition that the provision of effective services to children, youth, adults and families could not be separated from the community. Just as the success of efforts to prevent placement are dependent on the effectiveness of interventions offered prior to placement, successful return from out-of-home placement depends on the supports provided during and after families are reunified.

In the continuum diagram, arrow size indicates the relative number in a community moving between the five service categories. Arrow size progressively decreases for each movement away from Community Supports. This reflects the reality that almost all of a community's residents benefit from Community Supports, while increasingly smaller groups need the progressively more intensive services available through Early Interventions, and Home-based Responses. However, for a small minority, Out-of-Home Placement may be the only available solution and almost all of this group will need some sort of Post-placement Reintegration service. It should be noted that the more effectively a community can resolve problems earlier in the continuum, the smaller the population that needs to advance to the next more intensive service.

Community Supports promote and sustain the well being, safety and healthy development of all children, youth, adults and families. Community supports must be available to all community residents. However, the scope, type and nature of community supports vary widely among communities, reflecting the assets, strengths and needs of their residents. For example, communities with large proportions of preschool children should have more childcare programs than senior citizen communities that need other sorts of programs. For most community residents, these Community Supports meet their needs and obviate the need for more intensive services.

**The Children and Families Service Continuum**



Invariably, community supports do not suffice for some community residents and more targeted and intense supports are required. For individuals and families at risk of such problems, OCFS supports Early Interventions. These programs aim at preserving the well being and safety of community residents, when the potential for a problem first becomes evident. Typical of an early intervention, Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program engages at-risk expectant or new parents in a program of home visits focused on improving parent child interactions, healthy child development and self sufficiency, building on families' strengths. Similarly, successful education and support of the visually handicapped rely on early identification of visual impairments among individuals who lack sufficient supports to prepare them to achieve self-sufficiency.

For a smaller proportion of a community's individuals and families, these early interventions are not enough. For them, OCFS supports and oversees the provision of a third category of services, Home-based Responses. These aim to reduce demonstrable threats to the well being and safety of these individuals and families. Vulnerable adults, victims of domestic violence, and families working to keep their children safely at home are among those who benefit from home-based responses. Child welfare protective or preventive services signal the beginning of the permanency planning process, which emphasizes the right of children to be raised in safe and permanent homes, preferably with their birth families. Programs that divert youth, who have engaged in antisocial behaviors, from out-of-home placement by treating and supervising them in the community, represent another home-based response.

For an even smaller part of the population, whether because of abuse or neglect or for antisocial behavior and home-based responses are unable to preserve individual and/or community safety, OCFS funds, supervises and provides Out-of-Home Placement services for such circumstances. Out-of-Home Placement aims at developing a permanent outcome as expeditiously as possible. These outcomes include return home, living with a relative or other resource person, adoption and independent living.

Regardless of outcome, reestablishment of necessary community supports poses significant challenges. Furthermore, Community Supports alone often do not suffice to preserve safety and well being or to maintain the permanency of the living arrangement. Thus, Post-placement Reintegration interventions such as aftercare, post adoption and independent living services are necessary to promote individual and community safety as well as permanency for those returning from out-of-home placements.

Some programs meet needs at multiple points along the continuum of services. Childcare, for example, may function as a Community Support to enable a caretaker to enter the workforce. It is equally well suited as an Early Intervention for children requiring special attention. As a Home-based Response, it can be a valuable adjunct to other efforts to reduce risk of abuse/neglect. In Out-of-home Placement or as a Post-placement Reintegration service childcare can help promote healthy development while in foster care or during the period of reintegration with family and community. Likewise, effective parenting programs may be a valuable component in all five service categories.

In preparation for this year's submission, as done in previous years, OCFS and ACF have maintained conference calls to share information related to New York State's CFSP. These calls serve as both information sharing and plan guidance.

## **Quality Assurance and Program Support**

Quality Assurance and Accountability remains a priority. OCFS is committed to the principles of good management and accountability, both within its own operations and in those it supports. The approach must be coordinated to address the various funding mechanisms and partnerships with which OCFS is involved. The approved Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) is another process being incorporated into quality assurance activities to further strengthen the OCFS service delivery system. Guidance provided by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) confirmed that the PIP is to be incorporated in the Annual Progress Service Report (APSR) and efforts continue to fully incorporate necessary elements of the PIP into the APSR as instructed.

New York's State-supervised, locally administered system requires quality assurance efforts for the state, local government, and not-for-profit entities. OCFS's Office of Audit and Quality Control's (AQC) audit function plays a role at all levels. In addition to conducting local district audits, AQC also performs risk assessments, audits and fiscal reviews of contract agencies. Statutory and regulatory frameworks, coupled with specific contractual language, provide the standards against which performance of social services districts and contract agencies are measured. In addition, AQC coordinates the review of the audited financial statements received from local districts and sub-recipient agencies that are required by the federal Office of Management and Budget, Circular A-133. Extensive internal controls are in place to support these activities. OCFS provides oversight and accountability to the local districts in support of the CFSP, CFSR, and the PIP. OCFS monitors local districts, as well as contracted private agencies that provide services to children and families, to verify that they are meeting performance targets. OCFS has built performance expectations into its' RFP and award processes. The Contract Management System (CMS) manages fiscal, monitoring and reporting requirements consistent with the State Comptroller and State Finance Law requirements. Local district performance is specifically monitored by DCWCS and Regional Offices. Local districts report on performance via the district Child and Family Services Plan, Annual Plan Updates, and the district CFSR.

AQC performs a variety of activities which contribute to the accomplishment of OCFS's safety, permanency and well-being goals. AQC conducts the Title IV-E eligibility audits in local districts which stress the importance of identifying and achieving permanency for children in care. AQC conducts contract audits of entities involved in the provision of child welfare services throughout New York State. AQC also participates directly in annual Single State Audit activities which identify and help correct fiscal and programmatic findings of all local districts and not-for-profit agencies as needed.

In response to American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) requirements, AQC has implemented the following activities: The OCFS Internal Control Officer works with offices/divisions within OCFS to verify that all ARRA activities are identified, applicable internal control functional descriptions are created and the internal controls in place for the ARRA activities are tested as part of the Commissioner's annual internal control certification due to the NYS Division of the Budget by April 30, 2010. In addition to the internal control process, AQC staff also participates in the required quarterly ARRA reporting certification function, in which ARRA reporting templates completed by agency preparers are reviewed for compliance with established reporting standards, discrepancies are resolved and agency review attestation is completed.

AQC maintains offices in Rensselaer, Manhattan and Buffalo. AQC audit staff at those locations audit the activities of social services districts related to eligibility for Child Care Subsidy and Title IV-E Foster Care. The federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Second Primary Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review (FCER) was held the week of August 31, 2009 through September 4, 2009. OCFS is currently waiting for official notification of the results of the review.

AQC also conducted a Child Care Subsidy Improper Payments (IPP) Review during the past year. The review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the federal Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, which mandates that federal agencies review programs and activities that may be susceptible to significant improper payments. Additionally, Title 45, Parts 98 and 99 of the Code of Federal Regulations, requires states to measure, calculate and report improper payments, and identify strategies for reducing future improper payments. Based on these requirements, the Child Care Bureau of the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has directed all states to review their respective child care subsidy programs to measure improper authorizations for payment of child care subsidies. AQC's review included 276 cases from over 30 local districts.

Quality Assurance also is a priority for OCFS' Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (CWCS) (formerly the Division of Development and Prevention Services). The monitoring of social services district and contract agency compliance with program statutes, regulations and practice standards is a joint responsibility between home office in the Bureau of Program Monitoring and Performance Improvement (BMPI) and staff in the Regional Offices in the Office of Regional Operations and Practice Improvement (ROPI). As noted below, the Regional Offices and BMPI work together to plan and to conduct reviews of local child protective services programs, called On-going Monitoring and Assessments (OMAs), in upstate social services districts. Onsite case reviews focus on an assessment of the required activities during the course of a child protective investigation, including the assessment of immediate danger, initial safety and safety at investigation conclusion, safety interventions, adequacy of the investigation, determination decision-making, service provision, legal intervention, child removal, case closing decision making, and risk of future abuse or maltreatment. District-specific reports are developed as a result of these reviews that identify strengths

and areas of concern as well as required and recommended actions, if necessary. The local district then develops a corrective action plan that identifies the activities the local districts will undertake to respond to the recommendations in the final report if corrective action is warranted.

Regional Offices have developed various individualized strategies to provide technical assistance to the local districts to facilitate program improvement. Technical assistance strategies include a “life of the case” review of specific cases to determine critical decision making points from intake to case closure, focused refresher training for safety and risk assessment, facilitation of supervisory case reviews, management/organizational assessment, individualized casework review of challenging cases, checklist and other tool development to assist in managing caseloads, and review of regulations and laws as they relate to practice. Regional Offices will schedule follow-up activities as necessary and maintain regular contact with the local district supervisory and administrative staff to determine the level of program improvement. Additional case reviews may be conducted utilizing the OMA instrument to assess progress or less formalized mechanisms may be employed such as regularly scheduled on site meetings where identified program areas are discussed. The RO also utilizes data warehouse generated information on performance to help guide practice improvement discussions. Since 2000, CWCS has been monitoring social services districts’ adherence to statutory and regulatory requirements and practice standards in foster care and adoption. This Safety and Permanency Assessment (SPA) assesses social services district performance in key areas related to Title IV-E of the Social Security Act through a case review of a year of casework activity for each youth in the sample. Areas to be reviewed included safety and risk, service provision, casework contacts, visitation, service planning and service plan review, and adoption and legal activity. The protocol for this review was significantly revised in 2006 to incorporate New York State law, Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, commonly referred to as the “Permanency Law”, which increased the frequency of permanency hearings and required a detailed report of the status of every foster child’s safety, permanency and well-being. A final SPA Report is then developed with findings that include strengths and areas of concern as well as required and recommended actions. The process of providing technical assistance to the local district is the same as outlined above for the OMA, although the scope of the program areas under consideration is broader.

The SPA case review was implemented in 2000 and all upstate Group 1 or Group 2 districts have completed at least two SPAs and continue to be reviewed on a four year monitoring cycle. During 2009, a SPA was completed in one local district, comprising a case review of 20 children and youth in foster care. For 2010, the SPA case review is being replaced by a Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) baseline case review which comprises the use of a revised CFSR assessment tool that includes nearly all of the elements on the SPA instrument with additional focus on targeted areas of foster care and preventive services provision such as family engagement practices, transition planning for youth, and sibling placement and visitation. A total of 12 local districts and the New York City boroughs are participating with a review of 240 cases. A follow-up to the baseline will be conducted in each district during 2011.

OCFS child protective services reviews are either Comprehensive reviews or smaller sample OMAs. Both include an examination of a random sample of cases to ascertain whether children are protected and whether adequate case assessments and decision-making occur during child protective investigations. All upstate districts and each New York City borough have been reviewed either through the Comprehensive or Ongoing Monitoring and Review process and continue to be reviewed on a four year monitoring cycle. The Bureau of Monitoring and Performance Improvement works with the Regional Offices to maintain an annual monitoring plan for OMA reviews. In 2009, a total of eleven OMAs were completed, comprising a review of 207 CPS investigations. For 2010, an OMA will be conducted in 15 local districts and three boroughs in New York City.

### **NYCRO and Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Monitoring and Activities**

#### **ACS Monitoring**

A Regional priority of NYCRO has been the approval and monitoring of Phase II of ACS' Improved Outcomes for Children (IOC). The Foster Care Unit is actively engaged in the development and execution of an IOC monitoring plan. IOC has ushered in major child welfare practice reforms in New York City. Two centerpieces of the reform initiative are the delegation of case management to the voluntary agencies and the institution of Family Team Conferences (FTC). With this new initiative, the ACS Commissioner has transformed the residential care system, by dramatically reducing the size of congregate care beds and announcing plans to eliminate Supervised Independent Living Programs in NYC, preferring family based care. Foster Care, in conjunction with the other program units at NYCRO, developed an IOC Monitoring Work Plan that was presented to ACS and included oversight activities, performance measures and ongoing feedback loops to ACS. The monitoring process will include quarterly meetings, observations of the FTC, information sharing, and a targeted review of 50 cases scheduled for May 2010. Foster Care, in collaboration with the Prevention, Program Assessment and Improvement Unit (PPAI), the Adoption Unit and Regional Operations staff, developed a review proposal and instrument.

The Foster Care Unit Director participated in the ACS rollout to the field of the "One Year Home" Project. The Foster Care team will emphasize the OCFS initiatives that support this project.

#### **Prevention, Program Assessment and Improvement 2009-2010 and Projections for 2010-2011**

The Prevention, Program Assessment and Improvement (PPAI) Unit at NYCRO continued to monitor the provider agencies that contract with ACS to provide preventive services in New York City. The focus in this period shifted from the site visits, which included interviews of staff and reviewing preventive cases, to providing technical assistance on areas identified during the previous year's site visits. From May 2009 to December 2009, PPAI staff conducted 99 site visits to preventive provider programs. Technical assistance was provided at these visits in the area of preventive services program eligibility and program choice.

In November and December 2009, the technical assistance regarding preventive services program eligibility and program choice was provided to all the monitoring components staff of ACS. In collaboration with ACS, additional technical assistance sessions were scheduled in April 2010 and June 2010 to provide the technical assistance to the remaining preventive services providers. The sessions were scheduled by borough with agencies from the Bronx, Manhattan, Staten Island and Brooklyn each being covered by four half day sessions over two days in April 2010. The provider agencies in Queens will receive the technical assistance in June 2010.

During the period of October 2010 to September 2011, additional technical assistance topics based on feedback obtained as a result of monitoring site visits will be developed and delivered to ACS and the preventive provider agencies.

As stated above, in 2009, NYCRO continued to monitor the implementation of the ACS Improved Outcomes for Children (IOC) initiative. PPAI staff monitored IOC through the attendance of Phase I and IA Implementation Meetings and the Borough Based Implementation Meetings that have developed since Phase II. The final two Phase I and IA Implementation Meetings were attended by PPAI staff in June and September 2009. In July 2009, all five borough based meetings were attended by PPAI staff. In the first quarter of 2010, all borough based meetings were attended.

In addition, PPAI staff monitored training provided by ACS to the Phase II preventive provider agencies in June 2009 and February 2010.

PPAI staff will again collaborate with Home Office in the OCFS 2010 IOC Preventive Services Review in April and May 2010. A total of 50 cases will be reviewed from IOC Phase I and Phase II agencies. Cases will include both preventive and protective cases and preventive services only cases. The preventive services cases will be reviewed on site at the provider agencies.

In May and June, 2010, NYCRO PPAI staff will observe IOC Family Team Conferences at the preventive provider agencies. A total of 14 conferences are planned to be observed as part of the monitoring of the implementation of IOC.

In addition to monitoring IOC, PPAI will continue to monitor the preventive provider agencies from 2010 to 2011 through site visits, targeted case record reviews and technical assistance. PPAI will also monitor the preventive services offered directly by ACS'

Family Services Units (FSU) and Family Rehabilitation Programs (FRP) through targeted reviews and technical assistance.

PPAI staff will partner with ACS' Division of Child Protection (DCP) and the Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) to conduct quality assurance activities relative to joint DQA/ DCP case reviews beginning in July 2010. The NYCRO Child Protective Services (CPS) unit will participate with PPAI in this monitoring activity.

In 2009, PPAI staff participated as the NYCRO statewide lead and co-lead in preparation for the federal Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Second Primary Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review. The Review occurred from 8/31/09 to 9/4/09. In preparation, PPAI staff assisted ACS in the preparation of the cases by printing the Foster Boarding Home Licenses. The outcome of the review was that NYC OCFS foster care program was in substantial compliance with Federal eligibility requirements for the Period Under Review (PUR).

From October 2010 to September 2011, NYCRO PPAI will continue to monitor, provide technical assistance and support ACS in compliance with Title IV-E licensing and safety requirements. NYCRO PPAI staff will support the preparation for future Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews.

### **Child Protective Services and Institutional Abuse 2009 – 2010 and Projections for 2010 - 2011**

NYCRO's Child Protective Services (CPS) staff continues to monitor ACS' CPS Program, through the investigation of 255 complaints and 298 requests received from the public and private sectors regarding ACS' investigation of SCR reports in familial, foster care and day care settings. In addition to desk reviews associated with complaints, staff made visits to four foster care agencies to follow up with issues relevant to the complaints. During the time spent in these agencies, staff provided informal technical assistance on systemic issues noted.

The CPS Unit will also be responding to requests for technical assistance from various ACS Field Offices. Thus far, the CPS Unit has two sessions scheduled for early June and mid-July. These sessions will cover Program Choice, CPS Monitoring Role, Safety and Risk Assessments; "hand offs" to preventive services; and Inter-jurisdictional issues.

A prime activity of NYCRO's CPS is the monitoring function. During the review of ACS' investigation of child fatality reports, ACS staff received ongoing technical assistance from NYCRO CPS regarding the investigation of 95 child fatality reports registered by the SCR for the period 5/1/09 to 4/22/10 and for the 21 reports registered pursuant to 06-OCFS-LCM-13 which requires reports to be issued regarding the deaths of children in Open Child Protective or Preventive Cases. The monitoring of the 95 reports also involved the review of prior history for the families named in the reports. Of the 95 reports, 80 had prior history involving one or more prior cases or preventive services.

During the same period, the CPS Unit issued 90 reports inclusive of 24 reports from 2008 and 10 reports pursuant to 06-OCFS-LCM-13. Of these 90 reports, 80 have required Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) from the NYC Administration for Children's Services. CPS monitors the CAP submission and provides technical assistance regarding the completion of the CAPs.

CPS staff participated as a panelist in the "Safe Sleeping Practices for Infants and Young Children" video conference, which was sponsored by NYS Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS). The participants provided information about fatalities involving unsafe sleeping circumstances, and discussed strategies for conveying child safety information to parents and caregivers. Staff also participates in the NYC Bureau of Infant, Maternity, and Reproductive Health Committee. Staff will continue to participate in areas where information regarding the issue of safe sleeping practices for infants will be discussed and disseminated to the general public.

The Child Protective Services Unit completed an assessment of practice in the ACS Richmond County Division of Child Protection. Thirty-five cases were reviewed. Data entry and analysis are underway in this venture. In the coming month, CPS will review thirty five cases from the ACS Office of Special Investigations. This review is scheduled to begin on May 17, 2010.

Prospectfully, the NYCRO CPS Unit will conduct targeted reviews using the Ongoing Monitoring and Assessment (OMA) Case Review tool that is being used statewide. The third of these reviews is tentatively scheduled for August 2010 and will cover the Kings County. Other reviews are scheduled for November 2010 (Bronx) February 2011 (Manhattan) and April 2011 (Queens). The review will provide information to OCFS and ACS as to the performance of ACS CPS staff on components of CPS practice, specifically safety, completeness of investigations, appropriateness of determinations, risk assessments, provision of services, court involvement, removals to foster care, case closing decisions, "hand offs"; and supervisory involvement. In addition to the aforementioned areas, the cases will be reviewed for unresolved child safety concerns, gaps in case activity and other ACS administrative issues.

In 2009, CPS staff was involved in the Title IV-E Eligibility Review and in making visits to the ACS Pre-Placement facility as scheduled. CPS will continue to assist in these areas as needed.

CPS staff participated as readers and quality controllers in the Child and Family Services (CFSR) Baseline Review of Preventive and Foster Care Cases to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families through State child welfare systems. The staff will participate in the review that is scheduled in 2011.

NYCRO CPS will be involved with the monitoring of the Improved Outcomes for Children (IOC) through assistance to other units that are directly involved with the agencies and through the analysis of data received from ACS.

CPS staff will collaborate with ACS' Division of Child Protection (DCP) and the Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) to conduct quality assurance activities relative to joint QI DCP case reviews. Currently, CPS staff is in the process of completing instruments in preparation for inter-rater reliability and will begin cases in July 2010.

CPS Unit will continue to meet with the Division of Child Care Services and NYC Department of Health periodically to review the process and implement changes to improve the intake and investigation process related to Day Care Services reports.

CPS Unit will resume quarterly meetings with ACS management regarding CPS Data Discussions. These discussions revolved around the number of workers with more than 20 open CPS investigations, timeliness of Safety Assessments and report determinations.

CPS staff has been involved with the workgroup meetings and discussions for the statewide implementation of the National Center for Child Death Review (NCCDR) Case Reporting System (CRS) in New York. Effective March 1, 2010, the CPS Unit began the utilization of the NCCDR to input all child fatalities under the purview of OCFS. The NCCDR CRS will provide comprehensive data that will assist the unit to expand its knowledge in the area of child death prevention. This system is driving a new format that the CPS Unit will use in preparing the formal fatality reports that are mandated by law. Expected date for the new format is later this year.

As direct service Specialists, NYCRO's Institutional Abuse (IAB) staff continuously monitors the congregate care and juvenile justice detention programs through on site investigations of reports of suspected abuse and maltreatment of juveniles in residential facilities. These reports are filed with the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR). For this reporting period, the IAB Unit received more than three hundred reports.

In the coming year, the NYCRO IAB staff will be engaged in updated training in areas where the subject matter has direct impact on day to day activities. Staff will also be required to attend any mandated training sessions that will be offered in the coming period. Currently, staff are scheduled to attend TCI training scheduled at NYCRO.

From 2010 to 2011, NYCRO will continue to monitor, provide technical assistance, and support ACS in compliance with Title IV-E licensing and safety requirements. NYCRO CPS staff will support the preparation for future Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Reviews.

### **ACS Initiatives**

ACS's website was redesigned to attract prospective foster and adoptive parents with videos of successful foster and adoptive families, testimonials, oral interviews, photo albums, etc. The site also features a revamped application page which captures e-mail

addresses and makes it appealing and easy for prospective families to indicate their interest in becoming a foster family.

In December 2009, ACS launched a citywide media campaign for the purposes of foster parent recruitment. Efforts included paid advertisements on various websites like Google, 1010WINS, NY1, Amsterdam News, El Diario, NY Times and UFT's "The Teacher".

ACS continues to utilize its 676-WISH Parent Recruitment Hotline. The Hotline staff provides assistance to people who are interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent. To assist those that do not speak English, the Hotline is staffed by several bilingual professionals who have access to telephone interpreters should a caller call-in and the ACS staff member does not speak their language. Written materials are also available in English and in Spanish. To date, the Parent Recruitment Hotline has over 74,699 unique callers in its database.

To assist contracted agencies with recruitment, ACS has facilitated citywide Informational Forums for prospective foster parents. These Forums are held at least monthly and are designed to share ACS' vision and mission regarding foster care and permanency and to lay out the basic requirements of becoming a foster parent. Voluntary agency staff is available at the Forums to speak directly with prospective foster parents and to help them start the certification process. In 2010, four Forums have been held between January and March. They have resulted in 235 signed Statements of Interest and subsequent referrals to agencies to begin the certification process. Spanish speaking staff is available at the Forums to assist those who do not speak English. Interpreters have also been contracted to assist other non-English speaking parents.

ACS continues to directly provide full MAPP and mini-MAPP training, both in English and in Spanish

As part of the *Faith Based Initiative*, ACS has begun a partnership with NY Theological Seminary and five churches in NYC to recruit families for foster children, particularly older youths. Plans for training foster and adoptive parents, constituents of ACS' Circles of Support (a network of neighborhood-based foster parent support groups run by foster and adoptive parent leaders), to work collaboratively with members of the Families for Teens Speaker's Bureau, in an effort to recruit foster and adoptive homes through neighborhood based network meetings and faith based organizations.

ACS continues its Recruitment Corps, a group of experienced foster and adoptive parents whose goal is to assist with recruitment of prospective foster parents.

ACS continues *Wednesday's Child*, a weekly program featuring a child or sibling group who needs an adoptive home, in partnership with the Freddie Mac Foundation and NBC4, and which was begun in April 1999. Since its beginning, Wednesday's Child has featured over 500 children.

ACS maintains the *Families for Teens Speakers Bureau*, whose mission is to challenge child welfare professionals, youth and prospective foster and adoptive parent applicants to recognize that all young people are entitled to a permanent family. The Speaker's Bureau consists of young people currently or formerly in foster care and foster/adoptive parents of teens who share their personal stories in an effort toward changing attitudes and thereby helping to find homes for teens. They participate in recruitment events, orientations and foster parent training sessions and their service is provided to ACS and all of its contracted agencies.

ACS continues to partner with the *Heart Gallery NY*. Through the efforts of the Heart Gallery, recognized professional photographers have volunteered to shoot portraits of foster children who have been freed for adoption. These photos artistically capture the individuality and spirit of each child. The Heart Gallery has been featured in numerous newspapers, magazines and other media.

The ACS Press Office regularly seeks media coverage of stories about children who need adoptive homes and families who have adopted.

ACS also continues to contract with specialized adoption recruitment agencies. These agencies are charged solely with recruiting and licensing adoptive homes for hard-to-place children, helping to make matches between prospective adoptive parents and hard-to-place children, and providing post-adoption services system-wide. Orientations and trainings for prospective adoptive parents are provided at varied times and in locations convenient for the prospective parents. Recruitment agencies provide services that are reflective of the diverse communities, children, and families they serve including, but not limited to, hiring bilingual staff. No fees of any kind are charged to prospective adoptive parents.

### **Foster Care and Domestic Violence Reviews and Program Development:**

The NYCRO FC/DV unit conducted assessments and licensing activities of domestic violence and foster care programs. The program staff completed thirteen voluntary agency reviews and recertified and reviewed fifteen domestic violence programs. The unit assisted in two joint reviews with the Administration for Children Services of foster care residential programs.

The unit processed a number of proposals to increase Domestic Violence beds throughout New York City. In 2009, the unit approved twenty-four (24) new shelter facilities representing an increased bed capacity of 147. An additional 180 bed increase has been requested by HRA for approval in October 2010 and 2011 and remains pending at this time.

The FC/DV unit approves and licenses new foster care programs. In 2009, the unit

approved a hard-to-place mother/child group home and the conversion of a program to a three-tiered hard-to-place forty-six-bed program based on the Sanctuary Model. The unit continues to process the certification and licensing of the two (2) State Education Department facilities.

The FC/DV unit processed agency requests for rate adjustments to support increases in services. Several agencies requested intensification rates for therapeutic foster boarding home programs or hard-to-place congregate care programs. In addition, we have begun working with agencies who have expressed an interest in restructuring their congregate care programs to have only six bed facilities, which offer a more home-like setting for youngsters who are in need of a higher level of care.

The FC/DV unit monitors Pre-placement Services (PPS) through monthly data review of the number of children admitted to or remaining at the Children's Center on a monthly basis. Foster care staff, along with support from NYCRO CPS/PPAI units, conducts quarterly unannounced visits to PPS. In 2009, the unit completed three (3) unannounced visits to PPS. Daily reports of the children's placement data is reviewed, analyzed, compiled and included in the Commissioners Monthly Report, and sent to ACS.

The Unit conducted a Voluntary Agency Safety and Risk Review of all Agency Operated Boarding Homes and facilities that accept the placement of OCFS youth. The reviews included a comprehensive assessment of the program, staff capacity to manage the youth and identified training needs.

### **Foster Care/Domestic Violence 2009-2010 and Projections for 2010-2011**

The FC/DV unit has engaged in activities that have focused on new Federal and State initiatives to include: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008, Kinship Guardianship, Federal Medical Assistance Percentage, Title IVB – Monthly Case Work Contacts, Permanency Panels, Adolescent Work Group Strategies/YIP and Children and Family Services Review Baseline Case Record Review and implementation of the new SILP and Transitional Plan regulations.

### **Permanency Panels**

Permanency Panels were piloted in 2009. In addition, members of the team participated in the OCFS Permanency Panel workgroup convened by Home Office (HO) to develop the panel process, guided questions that focused the discussions and survey to collect statewide and regional data for analysis of practice trends and issues. The initial pilot included cases presented by six agencies for discussion and addressed the barriers to permanency. The experience from this process helped to inform the next series of Permanency Panels that consisted of four key categories: The First Six Months of Placement, Children in Care Two or More Years, Residential Placements and Separated Siblings. A total of 20 cases, five cases in each category, were selected. The panel process identifies agency and district strengths and areas of need relative to case practice

in the areas of early and diligent search, family engagement, concurrent planning, service provision, and cross system issues. The panel members included the voluntary agencies, the Administration for Children Services, Agency Program Assistance, NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH), OMH Parent and Youth Advocates, the Adolescent Services Resource Center, and a Community Based Provider Agency.

### **Monthly Casework Contacts**

NYCRO Foster Care has partnered with the CONNECTIONS Implementation and IT Unit on the Monthly Casework Contact Project. The initial pilot case record review was conducted of the lowest performing agencies. Analysis of the findings was completed, results issued and reported to the agencies. A regional workgroup was convened to develop strategies for meeting 2009 through 2011 Federal Monthly Casework Contact Benchmarks. NYS successfully achieved the 2009 Benchmark and is monitoring agency monthly progress for Federal Fiscal Year 2010. Meetings have been held with the Council on Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) to enlist the organization and agency support, and to report on NYC progress and initiatives. The focus is on the agencies with the highest numbers of children. The Foster Care Casework Contact workgroup members also participate in meetings with the Home Office workgroup regarding the Statewide Work plan.

In conjunction with a Hunter College Graduate Intern, a Monthly Casework Contact Alert Campaign was developed to target individual caseworkers. A PowerPoint graphic with the message that Monthly Casework Contacts promote safety, well-being and permanency of children is emailed to caseworkers to promote the real value and benefits to monthly contacts with children and families.

### **Fatality Reports**

Seven fatality reports were finalized within the required timeframes. In addition, foster care worked closely with ACS to obtain all corrective action plans and provided technical assistance to the voluntary agencies. The unit collaborated with other divisions in reviewing case information and made recommendations for corrective action as necessary. Staff participated in the National Center for Child Death Review training.

### **Fire Safety**

Fire Safety staff complete inspections of all domestic violence and foster care programs. In addition, Fire Safety Representatives investigate reports of fires in congregate care facilities. Although not required to do so, Fire Safety staff also review critical incident reports related to fires in domestic violence programs. Fire Safety representatives conducted 575 inspections providing technical assistance and ensuring that programs are

operating in compliance with OCFS regulations and all other applicable state and city laws.

### **Foster and Adoption Recruitment**

The Foster Care Unit partnered with the Adoption Unit to review Comprehensive Recruitment plans from NYC Children's Services and voluntary agencies with headquarters in New York City. The Recruitment Plans are required by the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) to review and evaluate recruitment processes to determine that strategies are being utilized to generate a sufficient number of foster and adoptive families.

### **Regulatory and Policy**

The FC/DV unit works diligently with stakeholders, New York City Administration for Children's Services (Foster Care, Child Protective Services, Office of Placement Assistance units), HRA, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), and the Commissioner's Task Force on Domestic Violence to address both domestic violence and foster care services. Unit staff also works to implement new state initiatives, including: Human Trafficking, and Safe Harbor, Sanctuary Model training, and Agency Restraint Tracking System (ARTS).

FC/DV staff reviewed voluntary authorized agency applications to license and operate Supervised Independent Living Programs (SILPS). In 2009, 90% of the applicants were approved following individual visits to each of the programs by Foster Care and Fire Safety Representative.

Foster Care staff consults with OCFS' Legal and Policy relative to proposed program changes and team members provide technical assistance to agencies in revising procedures consistent with State policy, including: Xctasy Law, Criminal Background Checks, of potential Foster Care and Adoptive parents fingerprinting process and OCFS policy on mandated reporting.

### **Family Court**

In 2009, foster care staff attended Permanency Hearings at various Family Courts throughout the five boroughs. Team members completed individual reports noting their observations of the hearings, included recommendations, and noted barriers to permanency identified during the observations.

### **Adolescent Services**

The FC/DV unit participated in the adolescent Work Group Meetings and the Youth in Progress meetings throughout 2009. Staff provided comments and revisions to policies and the Transitional Planning instrument developed by the work group. The Unit also

met with staff from the Adolescent Services Resources Network (ASRN) and participated in the Summer Youth Employment Recruitment project. Staff also worked with the voluntary agencies to help establish a relationship with the SYEP contract providers to increase the number of foster care youth awarded Summer Youth Employment Opportunities.

**B2H**

Foster Care attends ACS' meetings with B2H Health Care Integration Agencies (HCIA) and also OCFS' training for New York City foster care agencies relative to B2H. Foster Care participates in meetings with ACS relative to the local district's progress in implementing B2H, as well as OCFS' monthly conference call with the B2H HCIA's.

**Sibling Visitations**

The Foster Care unit finally completed all responses to meet the corrective action plan requirements to the State Comptroller's audit of sibling placements and visitations but continues to incorporate an analysis of sibling visits as a component of the Voluntary Agency Review (VAR) and review monthly sibling visitation data compiled by IT.

**CONNECTIONS:**

In 2009, FC/DV staff attended the CONNECTIONS Bronx and Manhattan RIST meetings to provide clarification, support activities, and improvements associated with system enhancement. One staff supervisor is assigned to assist IT in the CONNECTIONS duplicate PID project.

**Title IV-E:**

Foster Care staff participated in meetings and trainings in preparation for the 2009 IV-E review. While the unit staff were ultimately not asked to participate in the final audit, staff time and workload was impacted by their participation in this activity.

**Staff Development and Training:**

The FC/DV unit developed a mechanism to track in-service training of all staff as a means of enhancing work force development among the team members. Team members attend various trainings on both domestic violence and foster care topics. While the unit is unable to assign the task of training coordinator to an individual staff, supervisors and some line staff worked to register, develop, and organize trainings during 2009 to meet the request by line staff to develop staff skills for quality work improvements.

Unit priorities for 2010 - 2011 will include implementation of a new Voluntary Agency Review process, conducting ongoing domestic violence recertification and program reviews, and execution of IOC performance monitoring work plan activities. The Permanency Panels will continue to be held and refined, monthly casework contact

compliance will continue throughout 2010 and 2011, increased involvement in Cross Systems collaborations, technical assistance to the voluntary agencies and ACS in support of new programs contract awarded through ACS' RFP process, participation in the Commissioner's 10 for 2010 initiative, monitoring compliance and providing technical assistance relative to new Federal and State regulatory standards.

## **OCFS Evaluation and Research**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research designs and conducts research studies in a wide range of program areas in order to: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of policies, programs, and practices in achieving desired goals; (2) assess whether a program is consistent with best practices in the field; (3) improve understanding of the extent, nature, causes and effects of particular problems or issues; (4) measure the performance of OCFS in improving outcomes for children, youth, and families; and (5) develop and validate risk and needs assessments. The Bureau also approves outside research proposals involving children, youth, and families served by programs operated, regulated, or supervised by OCFS, and provides technical assistance on research methodology, sampling, performance measurement, and data collection and analysis to OCFS staff. Current research and evaluation in areas that support the goals and objectives articulated in this plan are presented within the goals sections.

## **Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan (CFSR PIP)**

In May 2008, OCFS participated in Round 2 of the CFSR. OCFS submitted a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address each of the outcomes and systemic factors determined through the CFSR to be out of substantial conformity. Three components of the CFSR are used to determine conformity: statewide AFCARS and NCANDS data, case record reviews, and stakeholder interviews. The PIP is required to be submitted 90 days after receipt of the CFSR Final Report from the Administration for Children, Youth and Families.

The Round 2 PIP is expected to build upon many of the Round 1 PIP initiatives, such as safety, family engagement, which includes: family meetings; family visiting, locating and engaging absent fathers, concurrent planning, and family connections; timeliness and permanency of reunification and timeliness of adoption, workforce and supervisor development, and court collaboration. Widespread input from internal and external stakeholders will be sought throughout the entire two-year PIP development and implementation phase. Information, input, and data obtained via the CFSR process provide direction and collective feedback in the development of the CFSP. OCFS continues to work toward the seamless alignment of these processes.

Based on the preliminary findings shared by ACYF, OCFS designed a draft PIP which focuses on three major themes: Safety, Permanency and Well-Being. The PIP was approved by HHS/ACYF on April 9, 2010.

Overall feedback from the field indicated that the three outcomes outlined in the PIP are the right areas to focus on over the next several years. Stakeholders noted that implementation of the PIP will require consistent and ongoing communication with all stakeholders in order for the practice strategies to take root statewide. Feedback indicated of a strong preference for face-to-face communication. This can be accomplished through the use of Regional Forums and Director of Services meetings on the state level, and supervisor to worker meetings on the local and agency level. These suggestions will be incorporated into how OCFS works with the districts and agencies during the life of the PIP. Wherever possible, the latest in technology will be explored as a possible communication tool.

OCFS will continue our collaborative relationship with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) through meetings and our participation on the OCA Court Improvement Project Advisory Board.

On March 17, 2009, the final report from HHS/ACYF was received noting strengths and areas needing improvement.

The report highlighted the following:

#### Strengths:

- Item 1, which pertains to the timeliness of investigations, was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 5, which pertains to foster care reentry, was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 10, which pertains to meeting the permanency needs of children with a case plan goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA), was rated as a Strength in both of the applicable cases.
- Item 11, which pertains to proximity of children's placements to their parents or close relatives, was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 22, which pertains to meeting children's physical health needs, was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of applicable cases.
- The State also met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to placement stability (Composite 4).
- New York was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors of Quality Assurance (QA) System and Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

#### Areas needing improvement:

- Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs) was substantially achieved in only 34.4 percent of the 64 cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 40 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.

- Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved) was substantially achieved in only 42.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.
- New York did not meet the national standards for the safety-related data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by their foster parents or facility staff members.
- New York did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the timeliness and permanency of reunification (Permanency Composite 1), the timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2), and achieving permanency for children in foster care for extended periods of time (Permanency Composite 3).
- With regard to individual items, the most critical concern identified pertained to achieving adoptions in a timely manner, which was rated as a Strength in only 18 percent of the applicable cases.
- For the following items, less than 50 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength:
  - Item 13—Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care (47 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 15—Relative placements (45 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 16—Relationship of child in foster care with parents (42 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 17—Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents (36 percent of cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 18—Child and parent involvement in case planning (43 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
  - Item 20—Caseworker visits with parents (39 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength)
- The State was not in substantial conformity on the following systemic factors: Statewide Information System; Case Review System; Training; Service Array, and Foster and Adoptive parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention. Performance on the two systemic factors of Case Review System and Training, in particular, may have critical implications for the State’s performance with regard to achieving permanency in a timely manner, promoting sufficient attention to assessing and meeting the service needs of parents and children, and involving parents and children in case planning.

To address the areas needing improvement, OCFS has structured this PIP around three key outcomes: safety, permanency and well-being. A series of practice strategies aimed at improving performance in each area were included in the PIP. Several of these practice strategies cut across more than one outcome.

The seven strategies include:

1. Infuse and implement family centered principles into casework practice that promotes family engagement across all stages of the child welfare delivery system.

2. Continue collaboration with the Office of Court Administration to enhance and promote local district and court collaborations aimed at improving timely permanency and improved well-being for children in foster care.
3. Expand trauma informed practice in congregate care.
4. Improve Service Array.
5. Redesign Statewide Information System.
6. Expand recruitment of foster and adoptive parents and clarify foster care standards for consistent implementation statewide.
7. Enhance training of local and voluntary agency staff to address the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties.

Within OCFS, the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (OCFS/CWCS) is the statewide oversight entity for the locally administered child welfare system. OCFS/CWCS provides direct oversight of local districts and licensed voluntary agencies through a regional office structure. OCFS/CWCS provides oversight and support through each of the six regions in the state – Albany, Buffalo, NYC, Rochester, Spring Valley, and Syracuse.

Districts were required to complete a local self-assessment using performance data and input from local stakeholders to assess strengths in their practice and service delivery system and areas needing improvement. Additionally, they were required to implement a program improvement plan that focused on safety and permanency and well-being. OCFS/CWCS will provide enhanced support to the thirteen districts with the highest foster care population as a means of promoting improved outcomes for the majority of the children placed in out of home care and in receipt of preventive services.

As indicated by HHS/ACFY at New York's exit conference, New York needs to focus their efforts on making sure practice initiatives are implemented statewide and drilled down to the caseworker level. This will be a key theme in New York's PIP over the next two years. To that end, New York will focus on one primary practice principle- Family Engagement.

Family engagement is both a principle of practice and a set of specific methods by which families are involved in assessing their needs, charting the pathway for meeting those needs and assessing their progress. Starting at the first point of contact and continuing throughout the life of the case, family engagement will be the guiding principle for improving or establishing practices that include involving the parents and youth (and extended family if appropriate) in the assessment of safety, risk, needs and strengths, and in the case planning process through effective use of interpersonal skills, family-friendly local polices, family meetings. Also included as part of family engagement is concurrent

planning, fostering family connections through visiting and the identification and location of all parents. This one key practice principle is the foundation upon which New York will base our practice improvement agenda.

### Practice Initiatives

#### Infuse and implement family-centered principles into casework practice that promotes family engagement across all stages of the child welfare delivery system.

In 2003, New York State developed a Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan (CFSR-PIP) which had, as its foundation, the advancement of child centered, family focused case practice. At the epicenter of this work is family engagement. National research, as well as New York State stakeholders, lead us to the conclusion that when a family is actively engaged in developing a plan to improve their family functioning, they are more likely to commit to the goals and the personal work required to achieve those goals. This year's CFSR-PIP continues New York State's commitment to family engagement as the focus of our efforts. While progress has been made toward the development of a family-led child welfare system, there is more that needs to be done to take this practice statewide.

Our decision is based on our belief that families are the experts in their own family, and best able to identify their own strengths. Solutions to family issues are most likely to be found within the context of the extended family. The nature of the casework relationship is the key to engaging families. The ability and willingness of families to participate in planning and working toward the common goals is directly related to the beliefs, values, attitudes and engagement skills of the caseworkers. The beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge and skills of caseworkers that they bring to their work with the families and children with whom they are working will determine how well the caseworker is able to reach out to families and involve them productively in planning and working together toward common goals. Caseworkers need to exhibit empathy, sincerity, respect and cultural awareness in their everyday relationship with families. These core conditions for helping, along with interpersonal, assessment, critical thinking and decision-making skills require development, and reinforcement through effective supervision.

OCFS has committed to supporting and enhancing frontline case practice of family engagement. The CFSR-PIP is targeted at capacity building at the local level, including addressing basic underlying beliefs and principles of family engagement. Developing the caseworkers' and supervisors' knowledge base and skills, supporting cultural competency of frontline casework staff, and enhancing organizational culture and infrastructure are necessary to support family engagement.

Family engagement work begins with the knock on the front door by child protective services. Child protective investigations are usually perceived by families as adversarial as there is, by definition, a questioning of a parent's ability to adequately care for their children. The caseworker needs to engage the family as partners in identifying the resources and needs of the family, and in securing the safety and well-being of the children.

From the initial contacts and through-out the life of the case, family engagement is at the core of helping a family address their children's need for safety, permanency and well-being. In addition to the casework relationship itself (including regular and consistent casework contact with the child and parent/caregiver with a focus on protecting the safety of the child) and the impact of that relationship on influencing change, stakeholders involved in developing the PIP identified several key aspects of casework where family engagement is particularly vital. Several of these began during our first program improvement plan and will continue during the current PIP.

### **Child and Family Services Plan**

The Child and Family Services Plan FYs 2010–2014 was submitted in June 2009 and included the combined Final Report FYs 2005–2009. This year's Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) is the first update to the 2010–2014 CFSP. In New York State, services are a state-supervised, locally administered service delivery system. Fifty-eight social services districts (including the five boroughs of New York City), the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, and county youth bureaus offer and fund services at the community level. A framework of regulation, policy and procedures is established by OCFS and operationalized by the 58 social services districts and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (hereinafter included in the term social services district). While OCFS has responsibility for direct oversight of some services and program development, the daily responsibility to serve the majority of clients accessing the various services available within the social services environment rests with the social services districts. Approximately one-third of New York State's counties are considered rural. OCFS works with these districts to fund and provide services and programs to address the needs of these rural populations.

Planning in New York State continues to be a joint activity, with the focus of activity occurring in the social services districts and youth bureaus. OCFS' role is to provide guidance to assist social services district planning efforts, including youth bureau involvement, to reflect the goals and performance targets established. In partnership with those social services districts, New York State continues in the direction of achieving the various outcomes established within the CFSP. This partnership between the social services districts, youth bureaus, stakeholders, state agencies and OCFS is critical to the achievement of outcomes noted in the CFSP. Described initiatives in this document include those supported with federal Child Welfare Services funds (Title IV-B, subpart 1, the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program); federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment funds (CAPTA); federal Title IV-E funds, including the application for and other information regarding the Chafee Foster Care Independent Program; Runaway Homeless Youth Act; Child Care Development Fund; and other state and federal sources. Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds, Promoting Safe and Stable Families, for providing service delivery of family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification and adoption promotion and support, as well as planning and service coordination, were requested and received by New York State. Additionally, the state does support various programs with other federal and state funds

that by definition fall under these categories. This Plan is further evidence that New York State will take every opportunity to explore whether the State is eligible to receive such funds.

The Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and subsequent Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR) will be made available to: social services districts; other state agencies involved in major joint projects with OCFS; and the Indian Tribes. OCFS will provide specific notification to related providers on the availability of the Report. In addition, the public will have access to these documents through local social service districts. Also, the Child and Family Services Plan will be made available on the OCFS website.

### **OCFS Data Warehouse**

The data warehouse initiative provides users, including local district, contract, regional, and State OCFS staff access to management reports and ad-hoc reporting on data in CONNECTIONS and legacy systems (child welfare-related data). Local districts and voluntary agencies are able to obtain summary reports at the worker, caseload, local district, regional, and state levels. The OCFS Data Warehouse provides a series of standard reports that can be produced on demand at different levels of aggregation and time-periods and tools by which local district and voluntary agency staff can produce ad-hoc reports on clients or caseloads. The end result is improved management and analytical reporting capabilities for the OCFS services system.

The OCFS Data Warehouse provides end-user access to users in a manner suitable for strategic analysis and decision support. Available pre-defined reporting areas include: CPS (Child Protective Services) Allegations, CPS Investigations, CCRS (Child Care Review Service), foster care cases and foster care homes, facilities' licensing and capacity, security, and CFSR PIP data. The OCFS Data Warehouse presents information needed by managers to monitor caseload trends and track compliance with State and Federal standards.

Because the Data Warehouse can replicate the Federal data profiles, it gives local districts the ability to view child level data for each submitted measure. The Data Warehouse is used as a data source in an increasing number of requests from districts, voluntary agencies, home office, the legislature, and general public.

Planned activities will focus on improving management reporting capabilities with CONNECTIONS. Additional users will be trained and brought into the Data Warehouse. Ongoing development efforts will continue to provide additional data tables, data marts, cubes, and reports to support state and local usage of data, particularly in the areas of Family Case and Financial Management.

OCFS continues to focus its data warehousing efforts on growing the Data Warehouse to include data not only on child welfare related individuals and cases, but on other

individuals and cases served by the agency (for example, adults receiving protective services, and juveniles receiving youth services); and on controlling the growth of the warehousing environment through strict and strategic data acquisition.

## **Title IV-E Plan**

On December 23, 2009, OCFS submitted the Title IV-E State Plan as required by Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Directive ACYF-CB-PI-09-08 that directed states to revise and submit a Title IV-E State Plan Amendment to comply with all Title IV-E statutory and legislative changes. OCFS is currently awaiting approval of that plan.

## **Child Welfare Laws, Policies, and Procedures**

The OCFS Internet provides extensive information on pertinent statutes, regulations, policies and procedures.

### **New York State Chapter Laws of 2009:**

The following Chapter Laws do not affect New York's eligibility for CAPTA. They are included for informational purposes:

CHAPTER 240 of the Laws of 2009, signed on July 28, Amends §§3216, 3221, 4235, 4304 & 4305, Insurance Law. Provides for the extension of health insurance coverage to the unmarried child of an insured through the age of 29 years.

CHAPTER 295 of the Laws of 2009, signed on August 11, amends the Domestic Relations Law and the Family Court Act. It requires the family court to review decisions in child protective proceedings, the computerized registry of orders of protection and family court arrest warrants upon the issuance of an order of custody or visitation. It also requires notification of self-represented parties and attorneys for children upon issuance of a temporary emergency order of visitation or custody; provides for the issuance of temporary emergency orders.

CHAPTER 334 of the Laws of 2009, signed on August 11, amends the Family Court Act, relating to evidence in permanency proceedings in the family court.

CHAPTER 367 of the Laws of 2009, signed on August 26, amends the Executive Law, establishing Amanda's law requiring certain residences to have installed an operable carbon monoxide detector. OCFS has notified all local social services districts and providers of foster care and child care of these requirements.

### **OCFS Policy and Procedure:**

09-OCFS-ADM 18 is an OCFS Administrative Directive to social service districts and contracted agencies. Effective October 9, 2009, all foster and adoptive parent applicants and all other household members over the age of 18 will be directed to a contractor site for the purpose of taking fingerprints using a digitized method called Live Scan. This will replace the traditional ink-and-roll process formerly used.

## Caseworker Visits

Interim data for casework contacts between October 2009 and March 2010 show New York at 65.9% for children in foster care that have been contacted every month they were in care.

Target percentages:   10/1/08  15%, reported actual 21.3%  
                              10/1/09  45%, reported actual 47.3%  
                              10/1/10  75%  
                              10/1/11  90%

In order to improve OCFS foster care contacts and reporting, OCFS created reports that support foster care reporting.

The reports enable:

- Capturing and storing Foster Care data for each month in the fiscal year
- Analysis of Foster Care performance allowing reporting for any time period in the fiscal year (i.e. Oct 2009 – Mar 2010)
- Data access and reporting by statewide, districts, and voluntary agencies

New data tables consisting of Foster Children extracted from CCRS (the ‘system of record’) was created. Monthly summary reports were developed that use these tables to produce ‘ACF’ type monthly foster care contact performance reports.

The reports enable:

- Monitoring of Foster Care contacts statewide and by district
  - Identification and remediation of underperforming districts and voluntary agencies
  - Easier and faster creation of the annual ACF report
1. Training: A Computer Based Training (CBT) for Casework Contact was professionally developed in conjunction with SUNY at Albany. As of April 2010, over 1,200 workers have completed the CBT.
  2. Technology: OCFS procured 1,510 laptops equipped with wireless service. The laptops were provided to districts and voluntary agency based on the number of foster children in their care. The laptops will enable caseworkers to enter contact information and progress notes while in the field versus having to return to the office to input the information. Furthermore, the use of laptops affords

caseworkers more time to be in the field meeting with a child and their foster family.

OCFS' on-going monitoring and quality assurance in this area includes an assessment of each local district's and voluntary agency's practices related to casework contacts. In February 2010, a quarterly letter was sent to all local district commissioners and voluntary agency directors. This letter included district and voluntary agency foster children contacts reports (described above.) Another letter, which reports data for quarters 1 and 2, was sent in early May of 2010.

In addition, OCFS has worked closely with New York City and its large contract agencies to improve foster children contacts. These agencies are responsible for providing services to a large percentage of New York State's foster children. As a result of this emphasis, foster children contacts have risen dramatically for New York City from 40.2% at the end of fiscal year 2009 to 58.9% for the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months of fiscal year 2010.

OCFS is planning on developing requirements and reports contrasting foster care discrepancies in its legacy systems: CCRS and CONNECTIONS. CCRS is the system of record for children in Foster Care. CONNECTIONS is used to enter and maintain services for children in Foster Care. Discrepancies between the systems can potentially result in inaccurate reporting of foster children.

Workgroups were convened to discuss strategies for reaching annual casework contact targets. Quarterly meetings are held with OCFS Home Office staff and OCFS Regional Office staff. Monthly meetings are held with a team comprised of staff from Legal, Budget, Child Welfare and Community Services, Strategic Planning and Policy Development, Information Technology, and DJJOY.

### **Child and Family Services Plans (formerly district consolidated service plans)**

As previously indicated, all counties in the state are required to submit a single county plan from LDSS and county Youth Bureaus. This was a culmination of the Integrated County Planning Project that was built from a pilot with sixteen counties to statewide implementation. Counties will be required to submit a new multi-year plan fall of 2011.

### **Accomplishments for 2009-2010**

- OCFS continues to enhance the infrastructure of the SharePoint site; an intranet site used to store, monitor, and access county plans and is working to provide counties access to the site.
- OCFS has taken the feedback collected from the local districts and regional offices on last year's planning cycle and is working to streamline the counties submission and reporting requirement.

- DPCA continues to jointly review and approve the PINS Diversion Component of the plan. The review and approval process was completed by way of teleconference between OCFS staff and DPCA staff allowing for shared dialogue, coordinated review/approval of plans, and direct
- OCFS is currently working on an automation system to serve Title XX reporting data that is accessible to respective state and county personnel via program permissions.
- OCFS continues to explore collaborating with OASAS, to participate in using its on-line planning system. Currently, OASAS, OMRDD, and OMH have worked together to develop a common planning methodology utilizing this Web-based application that serves both the state and county level agency service systems.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

- OCFS will continue to enhance the infrastructure of SharePoint site and will work to provide counties access to the site.
- OCFS will continue to involve local districts and regional offices in child and family services planning.
- OCFS will continue to explore collaborating with OASAS, to participate in using its on-line planning system. Currently, OASAS, OMRDD, and OMH have worked together to develop a common planning methodology utilizing this Web-based application that serves both the state and county level agency service systems.

### **Consultation, Collaboration, and Service Integration**

The creation of OCFS was accompanied by a statutorily created Children and Family Services Advisory Board comprised of 24 members. The Board's purpose is to help OCFS construct a better system of services for New York's children, families and individuals. The Governor appoints twelve members and the State Senate and Assembly appoint six each. Its duties broadly include consideration of matters relating to the improvement of children and family services, review of proposed rules and regulations of the OCFS prior to their adoption, advocacy for OCFS programs, and liaison with local stakeholders.

OCFS routinely involves a wide range of agency staff in all discussions involving aspects of the delivery of services to children, youth and families. Typically staff representing policy, legal, program operations, fiscal, and training participate, as appropriate and by expertise, give input on issues encompassing the entire range of child welfare services, i.e. child protective services, foster care, adoption, preventive services, independent living, juvenile justice, and any of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG or Title XX) services.

In addition to the broader avenues of input noted below, social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies interact with OCFS regional offices routinely for technical assistance, feedback on problem areas, and suggestions for improvement. Regional offices share those concerns/suggestions with OCFS home office on an ongoing basis. Monthly meetings provide a vehicle for advising and discussing with OCFS home office field concerns and for comparing various regional issues to determine how broad the issue may be or whether geographic location or county population is a factor.

In a similar manner, the OCFS Native American Services (NAS) unit actively interacts with the Tribes to offer general forums for discussions of issues, as well as to address specific child/family circumstances and consult with the Tribal communities. Monthly meetings with Tribal representatives provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue. As with regional office staff, the NAS unit provides feedback to OCFS home office. In addition, regional office staff and county welfare attorneys are involved and provide another conduit for feedback. The NAS unit is very active in supporting and sharing feedback from the Tribes and for facilitating meetings for direct feedback to home office.

OCFS is also committed to hearing the voice of youth impacted by service systems. To that end, OCFS has supported the development and growth of Youth in Progress (YIP), a statewide foster care youth leadership advisory board. This group of young people, accompanied by adult mentors, has provided ongoing input related to a wide range of topics that impact their experience in foster care and beyond.

OCFS seeks the input of its partners in the social services districts, youth bureaus and voluntary authorized agencies using a variety of methods. Communication occurs through state level associations - the New York Public Welfare Association (NYPWA), the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA), the Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services (Empire State Coalition), the New York State Juvenile Police Officers Association (NYSJPOA), Foster and Adoptive Parent organizations and the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus (NYSAYB). OCFS staff participates in association meetings and conferences, and frequently communicate with individual members of sub-groups as needed and appropriate.

OCFS and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Faith- and Community-Based Partnership was formed in 1998 in response to the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Charitable Choice provisions. Both agencies have expanded the opportunities for all faith- and community-based organizations to help serve families and children in need. To support this partnership, with OCFS serving as the lead coordinating agency, each agency has designated faith-based coordinators and liaisons that act as a bridge between the two agencies and the faith- and community-based organizations. This partnership builds upon long-standing faith- and community-based activities, which have been developed throughout New York State.

### **2009-2010 Accomplishments:**

The partnership assists faith-and–community-based organizations groups to become high quality human services providers by maximizing the availability of information and resources administered by OCFS and OTDA. The primary focus of this partnership is on helping small organizations gain access to any of the materials, resources, and technical assistance that may be available. A website, [www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/faith](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/faith), has been developed and is currently being re-designed. It is anticipated that the new website will be available by early fall, 2010.

Under the auspices of the partnership, a Resource Development and Grant Writing Curriculum were developed in 2005. Approximately 70 highly requested workshops, One on One private consultation and Technical Assistance sessions with faith and community organizations, some with the use of interpreters, have been successfully conducted in areas across New York State. The curriculum covers, How to become a not-for-profit incorporated organization, strategic planning, developing competitive proposals for state funding, understanding Outcomes Funding and basic information about evaluation strategies. The OCFS Liaison provides one on one consultations and technical assistance sessions allowing faith and community organizations to discuss private program development activities, specific to their church mission and needs. The Liaison has developed a strong working relationship with the Muslim community, primarily in NYC to assist them as they seek to establish partnerships with the NYC Administration for Children’s Services, on behalf of vulnerable Muslim children and families.

### **Plans for 2010-2011:**

The OCFS Statewide Liaison also serves as the New York State White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The Liaison will continue to share information regarding new federal funding opportunities, legal updates, new policy directions with faith and community-based organizations in New York State through the partnerships website and other means of communication.

Given the new and expanded focus of the new administration’s faith-based agenda, which includes building enhanced partnerships between the faith-based community and state and federal government, it is anticipated the partnerships activities will continue for the next five years or more.

### **Coordination and Service Integration Efforts**

OCFS staff is involved in several collaborative efforts related to a wide range of child, youth, and family services. OCFS is committed to working cooperatively with state agencies, community providers and advocacy groups to forge partnerships to develop and implement effective strategies to address issues that affect New Yorkers. These joint efforts may be formal interagency task forces and/or workgroups, efforts required by statute or regulation, or informal responses to an identified problem. All of these efforts have positive effects beyond the stated issues in forming working relationships and

mutual understanding of approaches to populations and problems and have the continuing effect of improving communication and problem-solving ability, thereby promoting improved service delivery.

In addition to these activities, the collaborative efforts noted below and on the following pages describe several coordination and service integration efforts that provide excellent opportunities for consultation, discussion, and input from various agencies and constituencies regarding a wide array of services to children, youth and families. The various groups, depending upon their charge, are comprised of representatives from State and local, public, and private entities.

### **Cross Systems Collaborations**

OCFS Commissioner Carrión stated in her article in the August 2007 OCFS newsletter titled, “Strengthening Partnerships”, that “...we have been diligently working to create partnerships with advocacy groups, community programs, and our sister state agencies working together to find common ground with our stakeholders and the community...the needs of our children and families call for a broader approach that includes the intervention of other state agencies.”

#### **Collaborative Accomplishments 2009-2010:**

Since December 2007, a meeting of state agency commissioners serving children is held to discuss the need for cross system collaborations for children with service needs that involve more than one service delivery system. Commissioners from the following agencies attended: OCFS, the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), the Department of Health (DOH), the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA), the State Education Department (SED), and the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (CQCAPD). The Commissioners meet quarterly to continue the discussion and to develop and implement joint solutions to improve the lives of children, youth and families.

#### **Examples of collaborations with sister state agencies and/or local districts include:**

The NYS DOH and OCFS have continued to work collaboratively to improve the collection and analysis of information available on child deaths. OCFS looks to broaden its perspective on child deaths from a view through the child welfare lens to a wide angle view that embraces a more community based and public health perspective. The purpose is to break new ground in addressing system issues to inform practice across disciplines to prevent child deaths.

A primary objective to the achievement of this goal is to create a more collaborative partnership with DOH to expand and improve child fatality review and prevention efforts at the local and state levels.

The guiding principles for partnership include the following:

- Child deaths that are unanticipated by medical history are a community responsibility;
- Child fatality review requires multidisciplinary participation;
- Comprehensive review of all child deaths will identify those that are preventable;
- Information about preventable deaths will help communities identify risk factors; and
- This information will lead to actions to prevent child deaths, illness and injury.

The partnership with the DOH provides the core strength for increased strategic action and the basis for a broader, state level, multi disciplinary child fatality reviews. DOH is expected to release a Request for Proposals (RFA) in April of 2010 to select a organization to provide technical assistance, resource information, consultation and community prevention initiatives to local Child Fatality Review Teams (CFRTs) funded by OCFS. OCFS will assist in the review and selection of the RFAs. The anticipated start date for this project will be October 12, 2010.

With support of DOH, OCFS has moved forward with implementation of the National Center for Child Death Review (NCCDR) Case Reporting System. This web based system houses information based on a public safety perspective and allows access to an even greater data pool than that afforded by NYS DOH. The system has been implemented as of March 2010 and all CFRTs and OCFS Regional Offices have begun to input key data on child deaths in New York State.

In addition, OCFS continues to actively participate on a workgroup with DOH that has been charged by the legislature to develop protocols for review of all unexpected child deaths that occur en route to hospitals in New York State, as part of the broader public health approach to review of child deaths.

Commissioners from the OTDA and OCFS have established operational work teams to address serious issues related to child care and child support, child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseloads, limited English proficiency services, adult protective services, and fatherhood initiatives.

OCFS/DJJOY has partnerships with many non-profit agencies to deliver services to court placed youth while they are in residential care and upon their return to their home communities. These partnerships include Children's Village for the provision of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST); Vera Institute for Adolescent Portable Therapy and Cayuga Homes for their Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care program. We also contract with the Children's Aid Society for their Lasting Investment in Neighborhood Connections or LINC program, a youth-development program for New York City youth.

OASAS is working in collaboration with OCFS to align the delivery of drug and alcohol services for OCFS' juvenile justice facilities and aftercare services, as well as for local districts that need access to drug and alcohol treatment services to support family functioning, such as a co-location project described elsewhere in the plan.

OCFS, along with OMRDD and OMH are working jointly to reduce the use of physical restraints in child care settings, as well as to improve service delivery to cross-systems children who need support from multiple systems.

OCFS has been working collaboratively with SED to develop bed capacity within New York State to prevent placement of children with high service needs in out-of-state residential facilities and when appropriate, return children currently in out-of-state residential programs to services that are delivered close to home within New York State.

For the past few years, OCFS has worked closely with the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) in several areas, particularly in the area of training. OPDV delivers the required two-day training on domestic violence to every CPS caseworker in New York State outside of New York City, which does the training itself. OCFS is currently working with OPDV to develop a new training curriculum for CPS supervisors on domestic violence and how to assist their caseworkers when dealing with these types of cases. The new curriculum is scheduled to be completed and the training piloted by OPDV before the end of 2010.

OCFS, OMH, OMRDD, and DOH continue to work to provide comprehensive services to children with cross-systems needs.

### Bridges to Health Home and Community Based Medicaid Services Waivers (B2H)

OCFS continues to work collaboratively with DOH on the implementation of the OCFS Bridges to Health Home and Community Based Medicaid Services Waivers (B2H) for children in foster care. B2H is a series of three separate waivers; one each serving children with B2H for children with serious emotional disturbance, B2H for children with developmental disabilities, and B2H for children with medical fragility. B2H now into its third year began serving children on January 1, 2008. This three- year waiver is currently, as of May 31, 2009, servicing over 650 enrolled children in the Rochester, Albany, New York City, Syracuse, and lower Hudson Valley areas, as well as appropriate youth referred to B2H from OCFS' Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY).

B2H services are provided for children in foster care settings whose diagnosed conditions are sufficiently severe to warrant placement in an institution were it not for the supports provided by the B2H waiver. B2H services are not provided by the foster care system and are not supported through state or federal funding available for foster care services.

OCFS and DOH are responsible for the operation and oversight of the B2H waivers. All of the B2H services are intended to serve children in a community-based setting and within their support network, as children in foster care have many people involved in

their lives- including birth families, foster and adoptive families, caregivers, local districts, providers, clinicians, courts, and advocates. Available B2H services are as follows: Health Care Integration; Planned Respite; Skill Building; Day Habilitation; Family/Caregiver Supports and Services; Prevocational Services; Intensive In-Home Supports; Supported Employment; Special Needs Community Advocacy and Support; Immediate Crisis Response Services; Crisis Avoidance, Management and Training; Adaptive and Assistive Equipment; Crisis Respite; and Accessibility Modifications. Services needs are determined pursuant to an enrolled child's Individual Health Plan.

### NYS Teaming Model

OCFS began to pilot the Teaming Model in early 2007 in an effort to provide more supports to the child welfare workforce, to counter the forces that contribute to caseworker turnover such as worker stress and isolation, and to support quality decision-making. OCFS and its training partner, the Center for Development of Human Services (CDHS), continue to adapt its Teaming Model Initiative from the casework model developed by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. Teaming transforms child welfare work from one of individualized casework practice to that of a shared workload and decision making practice. OCFS supports 17 teams in 14 counties and is expanding this initiative into 2010 by adding up to ten additional teams. Each team is invited to attend the Annual Teaming Symposium, and provided ongoing technical support by our CDHS partners in the form of onsite consultation, team building and coaching activities and guidance through the various phases of team development. To learn if Teaming increases worker and supervisor satisfaction, reduce the likelihood of isolation and turnover and support effective decision-making, OCFS contracted with the Social Work Education Consortium, University at Albany School of Social Welfare for an evaluation to collect data from participating counties. The results of this evaluation will be forthcoming once all the data has been collected and formatted into a final report.

### Office of Court Administration (OCA)

Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children (Commission): The Commission is chaired by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman. In addition to OCFS Commissioner Carrión, other members include judges, lawyers, advocates, physicians, legislators, and state and local officials.

The NYS Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CIP) began in 1994 and was administered from its inception through the fall of 2006 by the Commission. In 2006, the increased focus on court operational issues prompted the transition of the administration of the project to the Office of Court Administration's Division of Court Operations. The CIP continues to operate with the support, advice, and counsel of the Commission. OCFS and OCA have initiated a joint project to build more effective collaboration between the family courts and the social services districts with the highest foster care populations in the State. The newly formed statewide court collaboration team will design and oversee the implementation of court collaboration initiatives on the State and local levels. The project will support the development of enhanced family court practices and enhanced child welfare case work and legal practices to support the timely resolution of court cases so as to reduce children's time to permanency. The project is also

providing a process by which data maintained by both local social services districts and courts can be shared to evaluate the impact of innovations that promote improved outcomes for children.

The specific strategies to achieve these goals will differ among social services districts but the hallmark approach will be the development of collaborative, interdisciplinary stakeholder groups in each targeted district. This recognizes that system collaboration is important not only at the State level but also at the local level – district by district and family court by family court. The strategies will include cross-training so that legal, judicial, social services staff and other stakeholders are trained on each others' core values and professional guidelines. Integrated training events and, local collaborative meetings will be opportunities for family court personnel, local district staff and other stakeholders to identify barriers to effective collaboration and to design effective local change efforts and best practices.

OCFS and CWCIP have designated key staff as members of a Statewide program Improvement Plan Court Collaboration Project Team to achieve the shared goals. The strategy leads from OCFS and CWCIP will utilize the resources available through the National Resource Centers for Organizational Improvement and Legal and Judicial Issues, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, the Northeast and Caribbean Child Welfare Implementation Center and other sources to support this work to enhance permanency outcomes for the children of New York State.

The Adoption Panels were very successful in getting workers from different disciplines to work together to find solutions and help to expedite the adoption of freed children. They have also provided a wealth of information to OCFS and OCA on systemic barriers to adoption.

The Seneca Nation Peacemaker Courts Collaboration began in 2005 and includes judges and court personnel from the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, the Seneca Nation of Indians and the Peacemaker Court judges. This collaboration provides a forum to discuss practices and procedures and provides a welcome point of contact for issues including the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and the development of a tribal Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program.

Child Protective Services (CPS)/Domestic Violence (DV) Collaboration Projects: The CPS/DV collaboration projects outstation a DV advocate from a local non-for-profit DV agency in the local CPS office to participate in joint home visits, joint safety planning and interventions, consultation, case conferencing, cross-training and protocol, and team development. OCFS currently supports 11 CPS/DV projects in 5 regions: one in the Rochester region, two in the Albany region, three in the Syracuse region, four in the Spring Valley region, and one in the Buffalo region. (More information related to this project is noted in Goal 3)

In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA): In 2006, NYS was awarded an In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA) opportunity from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) following a joint application by OCFS, OASAS and OCA. The purpose of this work is to enhance collaboration to improve outcomes for families with substance abuse issues involved in the family court and child welfare system. The collaboration is called the New York State Partnership for the Family Recovery Project. The results of this work in 2009 include *Gearing Up to Improve Outcomes for Families Collaborative Guide, Publication 5073*. This document provides a framework and guidance for districts to increase local collaboration between systems, and the development and identification of cross-systems training opportunities to increase the understanding by workers in each of the systems of each other's work. Also issued in early 2009 is the Desk Aid for Child Welfare workers.

Racial Equity and Cultural Competence Initiative: In 2007, the OCFS implemented the Disproportionate Minority Representation (DMR) Initiative, which was renamed the Racial Equity and Cultural Competence (RECC) Initiative in 2009. The RECC Initiative has been developed to examine the issue of overrepresentation of Black and Latino children and their families in the state's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In addition, this initiative is examining the under representation of the same populations in necessary services that can prevent out of home placements in other systems (i.e. child care, adult services, services to the blind and visually handicapped). Each OCFS division has staff representation within this committee on behalf of the agency. OCFS has begun to engage our local partners in this effort.

In October of 2009, OCFS presented a 2 hour videoconference on DMR issues with national experts Dr. Ralph Bayard, Senior Director of Strategic Consulting Services, Casey Family Programs; Oronde Miller, formerly of Casey Family Programs (CFP); and Joyce James, a consultant from Texas who helped reform the Texas Child Protective System by systematically addressing disproportionality and disparity under a mandate from the Texas State legislature. In 2009 OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrion sent a memo to the commissioners of the local department of social services inviting them to collaborate with OCFS to safely reduce the high numbers of our of home placements by reducing and eliminating racial disparities for Black and Hispanic/Latino youth. 5 counties responded initially and one joined the initiative in March 2010. Currently there are 6 counties who are working with OCFS and CFP to reduce and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities. They have developed plans and budgets to use a small planning grant to pay for technical assistance and training. On March 22 and 23, 2010, in depth TA sessions were provided in Monroe and Westchester counties. OCFS is currently working with the pilot counties on further development and implementation of their plans.

In response to the need for detailed data on the extent and nature of disproportionality in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in New York State, OCFS' Bureau of Evaluation and Research has been analyzing OCFS child welfare data and population projection data to identify racial/ethnic disparities at different decision points in the New York State child welfare system. Similar analyses are being performed for the juvenile justice system, using data from OCFS, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS),

criminal justice agencies in New York City, and population projections. In addition, the Bureau of Evaluation and Research has conducted a comparative analysis of child welfare data disaggregated to the county level in order to determine the areas of the state where disproportionality is most evident and the demographic factors that are associated with high levels of disproportionality. County-level DMR indicators were developed and included in the data packets that are being provided to local districts as part of the federal Child and Family Services Review Performance Improvement Plan process.

### Fatherhood Initiatives

OCFS and OTDA staff continues to collaborate and meet regularly to encourage and support the development of responsible fatherhood initiatives jointly and in their respective agencies. Current fiscal circumstances have impacted on the plans that were developed for 2009 and 2010 and this update reflects changes made as a result of the new state and national fiscal reality.

### Accomplishments:

- The Perceptions of Fathers in the Media DVD, developed as an outcome of the May 5, 2008 OTDA Youth Summit was featured at the NYS Fatherhood conference, and as a result, practitioners and policy makers from across the country have requested copies of it. Dr. Janice Kelley who was instrumental in developing the DVD has worked with OTDA to develop a training curriculum that can be used to present the programs to fathers and service providers. The curriculum has been shared with OCFS staff and was available in February 2009.
- The OCFS Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth continues to develop its fatherhood initiative. The DJJOY work group meets regularly to support the work. The pilot program and focus group of young incarcerated fathers at Brookwood Secure Center met with the OTDA and OCFS staff during 2008 and 2009. The program that was implemented at MacCormick has become a model for the other DJJOY facilities. Highland Residential Center started their fathers group in late 2010 and while small, they are excited about the potential that it affords the youth. Both facilities have participated in various meetings and a videoconference to gather updates and share information.
- OCFS staff has developed a Framework document as a guide for implementing the fatherhood program in DJJOY. The document is a tool that presents a process for consideration that starts at reception and intake and informs the practice efforts through release from facility and into community service status. DJJOY administration has been reviewed the document in early February, 2009. It is being used as a guide to develop the program.
- OCFS and OTDA are entering into the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the “Dads Take Your Child to School” initiative. OTDA and OCFS continued to expand the program,

which is now active in New York City, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Spring Valley regions as well as other cities throughout the state. It is anticipated that it will include Erie County and other cities in the Capital Region in 2010. It is also our understanding that this is being considered a model for other states to consider throughout the nation.

- OCFS NYCRO staff, have worked with New York State Assemblyman Scarborough to develop a responsible fatherhood initiative in the borough of Queens. This effort will have city-wide impact with further coordination and collaboration of resources for fathers from OCFS programs and facilities who return to or already reside in New York City.
- OCFS has collaborated with Dr. Fernando Mederos, Director of Special Projects and the Fatherhood Initiative in the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, in an effort to learn from and utilize some of the experience that Dr. Mederos has in developing the fatherhood focus for the child welfare program in that state.

Ready By 21-Quality Counts Initiative: OCFS began this new initiative in September 2007 to support the work already in progress with New York State's Youth Development Team. OCFS is the lead intermediary agency working with The Forum for Youth Investment, The Center for Youth Program Quality (formerly High Scope Youth Development Group), Cornell University Assets Coming Together (ACT) for Youth Center of Excellence, and the NYS Department of Health (DOH) to improve youth development by improving program quality and changing the way we do business. Onondaga, Orange, Broome, and Rockland County are the initial counties OCFS is partnering with as this initiative began implementation. Ready by 21-Quality Counts' primary focus is to look at and improve service coordination and program quality at the point of service between the youth and family, program landscape, policy, and youth worker training.

After School RFP Taskforce: In October, 2009, OCFS partnered with public and private stakeholders involved in the development of after school programs and formed the After School Request for Proposal (RFP) Taskforce. Participants include 3 public agencies (NYS Education Department, OCFS and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development) and stakeholders from the provider community, the advocacy community, and other nonprofits working on practice and policy across the state. Through a review of RFPs, program models, evaluation processes, definitions of quality, and other parameters, the taskforce hopes to accomplish the following goals:

- Strengthen public agency RFPs and processes;
- Provide programs with RFPs that are current and coordinated to facilitate braiding, program development and reporting;
- Strengthen the coordination of the statewide system for afterschool, strengthening the link between afterschool with other youth-serving agencies and systems.

New York State After School Network (NYSAN): As a member of the New York After School Network (NYSAN) Steering, Operations, and Policy Committees, the OCFS works in collaboration with public and private stakeholders to improve the quality of after school programs. In SFY 2009 – 2010, OCFS worked with the NYSAN Quality Assurance Subcommittee to refine the Quality Self Assessment (QSA) tool, which will be implemented within the Advantage After School Program in September 2010.

## **Plans for 2010-2011**

B2H Waiver Program: During 2010, B2H services will be expanded to the Buffalo and Long Island regions, resulting in state-wide availability. By the end of 2010, a total of 3,305 B2H waiver slots will be available.

Racial Equity and Cultural Competence Initiative: In May the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped will implement a state wide initiative to train all staff in cultural competence. This is the first initiative of its kind and is being considered as a model for other divisions to consider. By July, all CBVH staff will have completed an introductory session on cultural competence with training provided by an expert from the NY City based Jewish Board of Family and Children Services.

Current OCFS data continues to show that Black and Latino children and families consistently comprise 75% of the state's foster care cases and over 80% of the juvenile justice placements. OCFS will continue to implement various activities at the state and local level to:

- assess relevant data;
- heighten public awareness of the issue of disproportionality;
- provide technical assistance and training to relevant stakeholders at the state and local level regarding RECC;
- identify strategies and funding opportunities which assist communities to address the issue; and
- identify evidence based and/or best practice strategies and/or approaches which can be replicated in New York State to respond to the issue.

## Fatherhood Initiatives:

- Continue quarterly meetings with work group to review and consider various activities and projects.
- Develop the New York State Fatherhood Advisory Committee.
- Collaborate with Faith Based Initiatives whenever possible, to include and encourage work in the responsible fatherhood and mentoring domains. This may include collaborative efforts at various activities sponsored by the Faith Based Initiative in communities across the state.
- Continue to support the development of OCFS DJJOY fatherhood program.

- Develop a process to identify fathers in Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (DCWCS) voluntary agencies

Ready By 21-Quality Counts Initiative: Year three has seen counties completing internal and external program assessments of providers utilizing the Youth Program Quality Assessment Tool, counties mapping their program and service landscape, and collaborating at the local level on their respective county plans. OCFS has developed state-wide capacity for sustaining this work by establishing a training plan through the Office of Youth Development within CWCS to have OCFS staff trained as Trainer of Trainers (TOTs) in various components of the Ready by 21 initiative in order to support counties across the state as they come on board, and allow for additional sister agencies to receive training. Currently, this initiative is not budgeted for 2011.

**Program Service Descriptions According to Goals**

GOAL #1

FAMILIES, INCLUDING NUCLEAR, EXTENDED AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND SUPPORTED IN RAISING AND NURTURING THEIR CHILDREN; IN MAINTAINING THEIR CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS TO THEIR HERITAGE; AND IN PLANNING FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

**Primary Strategy:** 1. Infuse and implement family-centered principles into casework practice that promotes family engagement across all stages of the child welfare delivery system.

National research, as well as New York State stakeholders, lead us to the conclusion that when a family is actively engaged in developing a plan to improve their family functioning, they are more likely to commit to the goals and the personal work required to achieve those goals. From the initial contacts and through-out the life of the case, family engagement is at the core of helping a family address their children’s need for safety, permanency and well-being.

**Goal:** Increase the engagement of families in the assessments of needs and strengths, case planning and positive outcomes.

**Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

1. Obtain commitment from the 13 counties with the highest foster care population to adopt and implement a Family Engagement initiative.

Benchmarks 1.1(a) Letter sent to counties identifying Family Engagement as NYS key practice and to have each district adopt it as a key strategy in their PIP (submitted in a logic model format)

- 1.1(b) Develop and distribute CFSR data relative to safety, permanency and well-being. Districts are required to complete a local self-assessment based on data and local stakeholder input that identifies any need for improvement in family engagement
- 1.1(c) Provide T/A to districts related to the understanding and use of CFSR data
- 1.1(d) Development and distribution of four sample family engagement logic model templates that assist districts in identify their needs and connect them to the strategy that best facilitates practice change
- 1.1(e) Provide T/A to districts related to the understanding and use of logic models. The needs in the area of family engagement differ by districts, therefore regional and home office support will be tailored to assist each district in selecting those strategies based on their identified needs.

- 1.2 OCFS will provide or coordinate training and technical assistance to the 13 counties in implementing family engagement strategies Benchmarks 1.2.(a) Review local district PIPs to identify the training and technical assistance to be responsive to the strengths, needs, and strategies in implementing Family Engagement
- 1.2(b) Develop and distribute electronic versions of Family Engagement Toolkits to districts and agencies
- 1.2(c) Family Engagement Specialists will provide training and coaching as needed
- 1.2(d) CPS staff in the counties participating in FAR initiative will receive training in culturally competent family engagement from AHA

- 1.3 Expansion of Family Assessment Response (FAR has been implemented in six counties, four of which are part of the 13 counties.)
- 1.3(a) FAR will be expanded to eight additional counties in Round 2. One of which is part of the 13 counties.
- 1.3(b) Applications for round 2 received and approval letters provided back to the counties
- 1.3(c) Planning calls held with round 2 counties
- 1.3(d) district specific training provided by AHA
- 1.3(e) FAR symposium held to afford knowledge exchanged between round 1 and 2 counties who are implementing
- 1.3(f) FAR evaluation completed

- 1.4 Monitor LDSS's progress in implementation of family engagement strategies
- 1.4(a) Develop and distribute quarterly reporting forms for districts to indicate the action steps they took during the quarter with respect to their Family Engagement activities.
- 1.4(b) Review, analyze and provide feedback to each of the districts on their quarterly reporting forms
- 1.4(c) Develop and administer online surveys of front line staff and supervisors to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and motivation around Family Engagement.
- 1.4(d) Complete analysis of data and write report

**Primary Strategy:** 5. Redesign of the Statewide Information System

The Statewide Assessment noted concerns regarding the accuracy and currency of information relevant to a child's goals due to challenges surrounding the timeliness of data entry into New York's statewide information system (CONNECTIONS). OCFS has proposed several ways to promote more timely data entry of permanency planning information in CONNECTIONS that will increase the accuracy of the information available to caseworkers.

**Goal:** NYS' Statewide Information System will be user-friendly and provide timely and accurate child welfare data

### **Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

5.1 Procurement and distribution of approximately 1,510 laptops to enable Foster Care workers to access CONNECTIONS to record casework contacts in a timely manner

5.2 Development and deployment of Share point technology that affords caseworkers and supervisors access to critical workload and performance measures.

5.2(a) Provide LDSS and VA users with training on Share Point technology.

5.3 Deployment of a new dot.net style of architecture that will allow caseworkers to easily navigate in and out of their workload, organize critical tasks, and maximize use of pre-fill options which will assist in the improving timeliness and accuracy of data

5.3(a) Provide LDSS and VA users with training on new transformation technology.

5.4 Develop and implement an enhanced dynamic Permanency Hearing Report

5.4 (a) Provide training to LDSS and VA users on the new Permanency Hearing Report

**Primary Strategy:** 7. Enhance training of voluntary agency staff participating in the Improved Outcomes for Children as initiated by the Administration for Children's Services.

OCFS will review and provide guidance related to the training and technical assistance offered by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to voluntary agency staff, who through the Improved Outcomes for Children initiative will be responsible for the case planning and management of child welfare cases (preventive and foster care). ACS's training and technical assistance will focus on Family Team Conferencing facilitation training. Refresher days will also be included.

**Goal:** Training will be provided to voluntary agency staff participating in ACS' Improve Outcomes for Children initiative.

### **Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

7.1 Review and Monitor ACS’ training to IOC agencies on Family Team Conference facilitation skills. [Pasted]

**ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

Between 1998 and 2005 admissions to foster care declined steadily. This trend changed in 2006, when there was a 26.7 % increase in admissions. In 2007, admissions were down 4.1 % from the previous year. In 2008 admissions went up slightly 1.1 %. For 2009 admissions declined 5.1 %. The number of care days in foster care in 2009 also declined 3.6 % compared to 2008.

An analysis of foster care admission data reveals that the two age cohorts most highly represented in the current foster care admission population are children under the age of two and children age 14 -17. This reflects the same age cohorts as 2008: Children under the age of two (22.5%) and children age 14-17 (32.2%). The percentage for admissions for the age group 2-5 years, 6-9 years and 10-13 years was unchanged. The older age group is most likely to come into care after contact with the juvenile justice system.

The percentage of foster care readmissions as a function of all admissions remained stable. In the year 2004, readmissions were 14.4% of admissions. Since that year, the percentage has declined. For 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 readmissions were 13.7%, 11.8%, 11.9% and 14.0%. For the year 2009 readmissions declined to 13.3%.

**PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

Recurrence of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (CAM)

A state meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect in the first six months of the reporting period, 6.1% or fewer children had another substantiated or indicated report within six months.

NEW YORK STATE PERFORMANCE:	2004	14.0%
	2005	12.7%
	2006	13.7%
	2007	12.3%
	2008	12.1%
	2009	12.2%

When the performance target is not met (on a local district level), there is a recommended 10% performance improvement target. New York State meets the performance improvement target.

Data Source: OCFS DATA WAREHOUSE

## STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

### Prevention Services Program

Communities throughout the State often lack resources to develop sufficient local prevention programs and permanency planning services. As a result, the OCFS Prevention Program was created to support community-based efforts that implement a wide range of primary and secondary prevention and permanency planning services.

The State budget appropriated federal TANF funding for the development of prevention services. During the 2009-2010 State fiscal year, TANF funds supported 53 preventive services programs statewide. Approximately \$16 million from SFY 09/10 supports the 53 programs. Prevention services programs are distributed throughout the State and serve one or more counties. Grants are awarded through competitive bidding and applicants must collaborate with other stakeholders in their community and align proposed services with service needs identified for their community by public data and demographics.

The target population includes young children, adolescents, parents and caretakers with a child at risk of child abuse or foster care, or in foster care but for whom program services will shorten placement and facilitate reunification or some other permanency option. There is no requirement that there be an open preventive or protective case. Programs work with families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system as well as families already involved in the child welfare system. Some programs specialize in working with families with substance use disorders. Families must meet TANF income eligibility guidelines (income below 200% poverty level).

Prevention Services are funded as part of a 5 year contract shell with an expiration of 2010 or early 2011. Annual funding is contingent upon the availability of funding in the State's budget.

Prevention services outcomes include:

- Prevention of placement in foster care
- Prevention of the return to foster care placement or other out-of-home setting
- Prevention of child abuse and neglect
- Acceleration of family reunification after foster care, other out-of-home placement

Community-based prevention programs deliver a wide range of services. These services include but are not limited to:

- Advocacy
- Information and Referral
- Family Support Centers

- Parent Education
- Parent and Child Support Groups
- Aftercare Services
- Case Planning
- Respite Care
- Crisis Phone Lines
- Therapeutic Support Groups
- Intensive Case Management For Families Affected by Alcohol and Substance Abuse
- Functional Family Therapy
- Clinical Services
- Parent Aide and Skill Training

Performance Measures/Local Collaboration

## **2009-2010 Accomplishments**

Funded agencies were provided with core performance targets tied to the above-mentioned outcomes. An additional performance measure was added to have programs describe how their staff will be made aware of the child welfare strategies and priorities for each of the counties they serve; how their program is designed to meet child welfare needs of families and how the program collaborates and coordinates with the local department of social services in terms of program design, enhancement and evaluation.

## **Plans for 2010-2011**

A “Lessons Learned” report will be developed and issued by mid summer. The report will include a review of performance, challenges, unmet needs and promising practices/lessons learned. The report will be distributed to a variety of stakeholders.

Plans are also being developed to hold regional meetings with prevention programs and other stakeholders to develop an action plan to address challenges identified in the “Lessons Learned” report and to share promising practices.

## **Healthy Families New York (HFNY)**

Based on the national Healthy Families America (HFA) model, Healthy Families New York (HFNY) is a community-based prevention program that seeks to improve the health and well-being of children at risk for abuse and neglect through the provision of intensive home visitation services. HFNY offers systematic assessment of pregnant women and new parents for risks that may lead to child abuse and poor health/ development outcomes. Specially trained paraprofessionals, who typically share the same language and cultural background as participating families, deliver home visitation services to families identified as being at high risk until the child reaches five or is enrolled in Head Start or kindergarten.

Home visitors provide families with support, education, and linkages to community services aimed at addressing the following goals: 1) to promote positive parenting skills and parent-child interaction; 2) to prevent child abuse and neglect; 3) to ensure optimal prenatal care and child health and development; and 4) to increase parents' self-sufficiency. Home visits are scheduled biweekly during pregnancy and weekly during the first six months or so of the child's life. As families progress through the service levels based on their needs, the frequency of home visits declines, from biweekly, to monthly, and then quarterly.

HFNY is administered by OCFS in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse New York (PCANY) and the Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) at SUNY Albany. The initiative is modeled after Healthy Families America (HFA), the most widely disseminated home visitation program in the nation. New York is one of a handful of states to have earned a HFA multi-site certification in a very rigorous credentialing process.

All of the programs are located in high need areas. Between 4/1/09 and 3/31/10, 4131 families were assessed and 6034 families received 79,707 home visits. Since the HFNY program began in 1995, 24,532 families have been served and 730,760 home visits have been provided.

### **Accomplishments 2009-2010**

The State Budget for 2009-2010 included \$21,742,072 million dollars. Accomplishments include continuation and exploration of additional funding streams for the HFNY Program. The programs will continue to add families as they serve their current caseload.

HFNY has developed specific data forms to collect information on the activities of Fatherhood advocates in our program and the work they do with fathers to see if specific outcomes can be measured. A grant was applied for to assist in these efforts, however OCFS was informed that although OCFS' proposal was strong it was not one of the proposals funded. OCFS staff provides onsite and regional technical assistance and monitoring to the sites. During 2009, monitoring visits were conducted to all 38 programs. OCFS staff focused their visits on the management of the program, community relationships, and ability of sites to meet HFA standards for providing quality home visits. OCFS staff reviews all of the sites' policy manuals and practices to determine if policies and practices are in compliance with New York State and HFA standards.

Over the past year, the Schuyler Center for Advocacy and Analysis has continued to bring together a group of OCFS, DOH, and local county health departments and provider agencies to work towards developing a coordinated system of home visiting. It supports the idea that all new families in New York State should receive assistance from a system of support and services that promotes optimal health, mental health, family functioning and self-sufficiency. Work has focused on coordination of existing services and

exploration of increased funding to expand services including HFNY funding, Medicaid funding, TANF Block grant and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) funding. OCFS will continue to work collaboratively with DOH to coordinate and expand home visiting services and assist localities to develop coordinated systems of care. The HFNY evaluation points to many positive health outcomes for participants including reduction of the incidence of low birth weight and increase in access to health care for both the mothers and infants. OCFS staff will continue to inform social services districts about the benefits of home visiting and available funding options.

**Plans for 2010-2011**

Currently, OCFS is unsure what its budget amount will be for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The program has experienced budget reductions due the current economic crisis facing our state. As a result OCFS closed one program and substantially reduced 3 others. Although the near future does not look robust with regards to funding, OCFS programs continue to be focused on the provision of quality services to families in New York.

HFNY administrative staff is also working with our Maternal and Child Health Grant recipients on preparing the Needs Assessment required for the federally mandated funding dedicated for prevention to support home visitation services through provisions in the health care free form legislation, the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

HFNY has been contacted by the Developmentally Disabled Planning Council and a proposal has been drafted for a demonstration project for HFNY's programs to work with the Developmentally Disabled population and their parenting needs so that they become more productive parents and are responsible for raising their own children. OCFS looks forward to future developments on this proposal.

**Evaluation of HFNY:**

To assess the impacts of HFNY on parenting, child health and development, and parental life course development, in 2000, OCFS' Bureau of Evaluation & Research in collaboration with the Center for Human Services Research at the University at Albany initiated an evaluation of HFNY utilizing a randomized controlled trial in three counties with established home visitation programs (Erie, Rensselaer, and Ulster). The randomized trial includes 1,173 women who met the eligibility criteria for HFNY and were randomly assigned to either an intervention group (n=579) that was offered HFNY services or a control group (n=594) that was given information and referrals to other appropriate services. Mothers were interviewed in their homes at intake into the study and again at the time of the child's birth, and first, second, and third birthdays. The Year 3 follow-up also included videotaped observations of a subsample of 522 mothers interacting with their three-year-old children during a series of structured situations that imposed varying demands on mother and child. To minimize the potential for biased measurement, interviewers were independent of the HFNY program and were kept blind to the participant's group assignment. The rate of retention in the study was high, with

91% of the study participants who were interviewed at baseline re-interviewed at Year 1, and 85% re-interviewed at Year 2. In addition, data on reports of child abuse and neglect involving families participating in the study were collected through a review of Child Protective Services (CPS) records.

In fall 2006, OCFS was awarded grants totaling more than \$1.2 million from the National Institute of Justice and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to extend the HFNY randomized trial from three years to seven years in order to test the program's long-term effectiveness in preventing child abuse and neglect. Mothers in both the intervention and control groups were reinterviewed at the time of the target child's seventh birthday, and for the first time, the target children were interviewed. In addition, videotaped observations of parent-child interactions were performed for a subset of the study's families. Data collection for the Year 7 follow-up study was completed in April 2009. Interviews were conducted with 942 mothers (81%) and 800 children, and 419 videotapes were completed. The research team is in the process of analyzing the data to examine the extent to which 1) HFNY prevents and/or reduces abuse and neglect of school-age children; 2) the program's effects on child maltreatment can be explained by its success in changing early parenting attitudes and behaviors and improving access to health care; 3) HFNY reduces precursors of juvenile delinquency, such as aggression, poor impulse control, compromised health and cognitive disabilities, among target children; and 4) the long-term benefits of HFNY outweigh its costs. In addition, the research team has conducted analyses on the entire data set to explore factors that may protect against or trigger the initiation and recurrence of child maltreatment, which, in turn, may lead to the development of more effective interventions to prevent child abuse and neglect.

In March 2010, the Pew Center on the States awarded OCFS \$112,000 to expand the scope of its RCT to further evaluate the effectiveness of home visiting services. Capitalizing on existing data from earlier waves of HFNY's RCT, the study will answer three important policy questions regarding home visiting services. First, is home visiting an effective strategy for promoting children's academic and behavioral adjustment immediately following their transition to school? Second, how do variations in the content, intensity, and duration of home visiting services relate to child outcomes? Third, are there conditions under which home visitation is particularly effective in improving children's adjustment at home and school? Funds from Pew will support the collection and analysis of first grade school reports, which will offer information about an area where there is limited evidence, and generate an objective measure of children's academic performance and behavior at school. Using data on children's behavior from school records, mother's reports, and self-reports, researchers in the Bureau of Evaluation and Research will examine children's level of adjustment at home, in school, and with peers at age seven, to identify the most successful and poorest performing groups, and HFNY's relationship to these groups.

### **Key Evaluation Findings**

A recently published article prepared by the HFNY research team found that Healthy Families New York (HFNY) cut the rate of low birth weight (LBW) babies born to low income women in half [Lee, E., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Lowenfels, A., Greene, R., Dorabawila, V., & DuMont, K. (2009). Reducing low birth weight through home visitation: A randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 36(2), 154-160]. This finding is especially important given the negative consequences that can result from LBW, such as elevated risk for child maltreatment, foster care placement, developmental delays, health problems, and early mortality. Specific findings were as follows:

- Of the mothers who entered the randomized trial at 30 weeks of pregnancy or less, those who were offered HFNY were half as likely to have low birth weight babies as control group mothers (5.1% vs. 9.8%).
- The rate of LBW for mothers receiving HFNY met the goal of 5% set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in its Healthy Families 2010 initiative, despite the fact that HFNY targets communities with high rates of late or no prenatal care, infant mortality, poverty, and teenage pregnancy.
- HFNY was particularly effective in reducing LBW among black and Hispanic mothers—groups that persistently experience high levels of poor birth outcomes. For example, black mothers who were assigned to home visiting group were 70 percent less likely than black mothers in the control group to deliver LBW babies (3.1% vs. 10.2%).
- The earlier in their pregnancies that women were offered HFNY, the greater the impact of the program on LBW. For example, among women who entered the study at a gestational age of 16 weeks or less, women in the HFNY group were nearly 75 percent less likely to deliver low weight babies than women in the control group (3.6% versus 14.1%).

An article published in March 2008 examined HFNY's effectiveness in reducing child abuse and neglect during the first two years of life, using data drawn from CPS records and mothers' responses to a standardized questionnaire that asked about the frequency with which they engaged in specific parenting behaviors in the past year and past week [DuMont, K., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Greene, R., Lee, E., Lowenfels, A., Rodriguez, M., & Dorabawila, V. (2008). Healthy Families New York (HFNY) randomized trial: Effects on early child abuse and neglect. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 32, 295-315]. The principal findings were:

*HFNY mothers self reported less child abuse and neglect and negative parenting practices than control mothers.*

- HFNY mothers reported marginally less neglect at Age 1 and 2.
- HFNY mothers reported engaging in fewer incidents of very serious physical abuse, minor physical aggression, psychological aggression, and harsh parenting at Age 1.
- HFNY mothers reported committing only one-quarter as many acts of serious physical abuse at Age 2 as mothers in the control group.

*HFNY worked especially well in reducing child abuse and neglect and negative parenting practices for “psychologically vulnerable” mothers and young, first-time mothers who enrolled in the study during pregnancy.*

- Mothers in the HFNY group who had marked depressive symptoms and/or a limited sense of control over their lives were only about a quarter as likely to report committing acts of serious abuse or neglect as similar mothers in the control group (5% vs. 19%).
- Compared to their counterparts in the control group, first-time mothers under age 19 who were offered HFNY early in pregnancy were markedly less likely to report engaging in minor physical aggression (51% vs. 70%) and harsh parenting (41% vs. 62%) at Age 2.

In July 2008, the research team prepared a working paper examining the effectiveness of HFNY in enhancing parenting competencies and preventing maladaptive parenting behaviors, based on data gathered from in-depth observational assessments of mothers interacting with their three-year-old children in a series of structured tasks [DuMont, K., Rodriguez, M., Mitchell-Herzfeld, S., Walden, N., Kirkland, K., Greene, R., Lee, E. (2008). *Effects of Healthy Families New York on maternal behaviors: Observational assessments of positive and negative parenting*. Rensselaer, NY: New York State Office of Children and Family Services (available at <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/reports/>)]. A condensed version of this paper was submitted to the journal *Child Abuse & Neglect* and is currently in revision. The key findings were:

- HFNY promoted the use of positive parenting skills that support and encourage children’s cognitive and social development. Mothers assigned to the HFNY group were more likely than those in the control group to be observed using parenting strategies that stimulated the child’s cognitive skills and were sensitive and responsive to the child’s needs and affective cues.
- Replicating the findings from Age 2, the observational assessments at Age 3 showed that HFNY was particularly effective in reducing harsh parenting practices for young, first-time mothers who were randomized during pregnancy. First-time mothers under age 19 who were offered HFNY early in pregnancy were considerably less likely than similar mothers in the control group to engage in harsh parenting behaviors while interacting with their children during the structured tasks.

HFNY has also been shown to increase access to health care (New York State Office of Children and Family Services (2006). *Healthy Families New York: Early findings from the second year of the evaluation*. Rensselaer, New York: Author):

- At age 2, 10% more of the HFNY mothers had a primary care provider and 5% more of the HFNY mothers had health insurance than mothers in the control group;
- Twice as many children in the control group went without needed medical care during their second year of life as compared to children in the HFNY group.

Based on the evaluation's rigorous random assignment design and program's significant and positive effects on a range of outcomes, HFNY was designated as a "proven program" by RAND's Promising Practice network and an effective program by both Child Trends and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

## **Family Assessment Response (FAR) Demonstration**

### **Accomplishments 2009-2010**

The New York State Legislature passed legislation in 2007, Chapter 452 of the Laws of 2007 authorizing OCFS to conduct a four-year demonstration project to test the feasibility of establishing an alternative child protective response system for cases involving allegations of maltreatment in family settings. The statute permits each county to establish its own criteria for selecting cases for the Family Assessment Response (FAR) system. Cases that are assigned to FAR are not subject to the usual requirements concerning investigation of reports of suspected abuse and maltreatment of children, including notification requirements. However, the county continues to be responsible for commencing an initial safety assessment within twenty-four hours of the receipt of the report, and for completing the safety assessment within seven days to determine whether all children in the home are safe in the home and to identify service needs and family issues that should be addressed. Where a county determines that a case is appropriate to be included in FAR, the county is required to conduct an assessment of the family's strengths, concerns and needs; offer assistance to stabilize the family; plan for and offer services responsive to the service needs of the family; and conduct an ongoing assessment of the family's progress.

OCFS began working with six local districts to develop and implement differential response pilots in each of those districts. OCFS entered into a contract with the American Humane Association to provide training in differential response and family engagement to these pilot counties.

An additional six to nine counties are expected to begin development and implementation of a pilot program.

### **Evaluation of FAR:**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research designed and is carrying out an evaluation encompassing a process study that will examine the implementation of the FAR Demonstration and an impact study that will analyze its effects on families. The process study will include all of the counties participating in the FAR Demonstration, and will address the following questions:

- What organizational, staffing and practice changes were made in order to implement FAR?

- How were cases identified and screened for assignment to the Family Assessment track?
- What were the characteristics, child welfare histories, needs, and strengths of the families assigned to the Family Assessment track, and how did they compare to families continuing on the investigation track?
- What types of services did caseworkers arrange for families on the Family Assessment track, and how closely did they match family needs and preferences?
- How did families assigned to the Family Assessment track perceive the way they were treated by caseworkers and how satisfied were they with the help they received?
- What were caseworkers' attitudes toward and satisfaction with FAR?
- What percentage of families assigned to the Family Assessment track were re-reported for child abuse and neglect and what were the allegations?

The impact study will assess whether the FAR Demonstration is effective at the following:

- Reducing the prevalence of subsequent reports of child abuse and neglect; and
- Reducing the severity of child abuse and neglect alleged in subsequent reports.

The impact study will be limited to two counties. One county has agreed to participate in a randomized controlled trial, in which families that meet the criteria for FAR established by the county will be randomly assigned to either the Family Assessment track or the Investigation track. A quasi-experimental design involving the selection of an historical comparison group will be utilized in the other county. The outcomes for the treatment and control groups will be tracked for a minimum of one year from the date of their random assignment. The impacts of FAR will be determined by comparing the outcomes for the treatment group to those for the control group.

### **Advantage After School Program**

New York State created the Advantage After School Program (AASP) in 2000, to provide quality youth development programming to school-age children and youth during the after school hours. AASP programs must offer a broad range of educational, recreational and cultural age-appropriate activities that integrate what happens in the school day. Each program represents a partnership between a community-based organization and a school.

The Advantage After School Programs are designed around four program outcomes, three performance targets, and established Program Standards of Excellence. The Advantage After School Program Outcomes are:

- To improve the social, emotional, academic and vocational competencies of school-age children;
- To prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancies;

- To reduce other negative behaviors such as violence and crime; tobacco, alcohol and substance abuse; disengagement from school; school suspension; and truancy and health-compromising behaviors; and
- To provide parents with a safe after school environment for their children.

Advantage After School Programs have three performance target areas that relate to the achievement of these four program outcomes. The three performance target areas for all programs are:

- Child Performance – a measurement of how children that regularly attend the after school program will enhance their academic achievement
- Youth Involvement/Attendance - a measurement of program quality as demonstrated by the consistency of attendance by the children enrolled in the after school program.
- Parental/Guardian Involvement – a measurement of program quality as demonstrated by parent satisfaction and participation

### **2009 – 2010 Accomplishments**

In May 2009, a Request for Proposal was released for the development of Advantage After School Programs. Of the 270 applications received, 78 were funded for a total of \$11 million. The total Advantage After School Program appropriation for SFY 2009-2010 was \$28.2 million which supported approximately 26,000 students at 225 Advantage After School Programs across New York State.

### **Family Unification Program Demonstration (Department of Housing and Urban Development)**

The Family Unification Program (FUP) is a federal initiative under the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which provides limited Section 8 assisted housing to families whose children are at risk of foster care placement or whose return to the family is delayed primarily due to a lack of adequate housing. Families must be certified as eligible for the service through the public child welfare agency, which in New York is the local department of social services. Eligibility in New York State parallels eligibility for mandated preventive services. HUD program rules require that the program include both public housing authority and public child welfare agency participation for locating, identifying and assisting eligible families. In New York State this involves the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and its Section 8 Local Administrators and OCFS and its social services districts.

### **Accomplishments in 2009-2010**

On September 30, 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development invited public housing authorities nationwide to apply for \$15 million for new Section 8 vouchers to provide permanent housing and services to families who are separated from their children because of homelessness or inadequate housing. OCFS and DHCR, along with several social service districts cooperated on submitted a joint application for this funding opportunity December 2009, and are still awaiting notification of awards.

OCFS continues to concentrate upon improving the usage rate of existing FUP vouchers. As a result of the ongoing collaboration between OCFS and DHCR, the usage rate of available vouchers remains very high. The effort to involve additional districts as FUP participants continues, as does ongoing technical assistance to participating entities.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

Currently FUP is unfunded; awaiting awards notification. OCFS will apply for new funding opportunities as they become available.

### **Training 2009-2010**

OCFS will continue the process of restructuring its training system for child welfare. OCFS has worked with the Child Welfare Institute, social services districts, and its university-training partners to implement a system of training that supports the development of outcome-focused practice skills. OCFS continues in the process of converting all of its child welfare training to be outcome-based. Training has been reorganized to provide all staff with a set of fundamental skills that are necessary to protect children and to develop families that are able to provide for children's safety, well-being, and permanency.

The Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Caseworker Common Core is the foundation component for line staff. Based on input from OCFS's Advisory Group, the Common Core program was redesigned beginning in 2008 and rolled out in 2009. The Supervisory Core was implemented in 1999, and was revised in 2007. Additional revisions will be made to better support supervisors in the transfer of learning and in their role as coach and mentor. This program is the foundation for training supervisory staff. The Child Protective Services Response Specialty Component was implemented in 2001 and was redesigned in 2009. The Adolescent Services Resource Network, designed to prepare youth for self-sufficiency, has been available since 2000. The Adoption Specialty "Best Practices in Achieving Permanency through Surrenders and Termination of Parental Rights" was piloted in 2005 and 2006 and implemented in 2007. During 2009, OCFS worked with the National Resource Center for Adoption to adapt the Adoption Competency Curriculum for use in New York State. The NCWRC for Adoption conducted a series of train the trainer program across the state to prepare voluntary agency trainers to deliver the program to their organizations. The rollout of the Family Preservation/Reunification Specialty training began in 2005. These trainings are designed to provide non-CPS child welfare caseworkers with the knowledge and skill to

achieve expected outcomes. The Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers Specialty, developed specifically for experienced caseworkers, was fully implemented in 2002 in all regions of the state. This eight-day residential program is designed to build practice skills in more experienced staff. This program will be revised to mirror the Common Core changes.

The Outcome-Based Training (OBT) System includes an on-the-job training component. This on-the-job component facilitates the transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace and contributes to building a mutual commitment to clear, focused practice between supervisors and caseworkers. The OBT training system is building a set of interpersonal helping skills, assessment, planning, intervention skills and decision-making skills that will allow caseworkers and supervisors to address competently the unique needs of each family. OCFS believes that this combination of casework skills, applied in a context of a shared framework of practice among social services districts and voluntary agencies, will make a significant contribution toward the achievement of OCFS's goals and the federal outcomes. OCFS has made significant changes to the on-the-job (OJT) training component. Changes include a 360 review of trainee progress in the classroom and in OJT, as well as a self-assessment and expanded OJT activities.

The child welfare-training program continues in transition as OCFS refines it's training to align with on national best practice standards and evolving child welfare policy . OCFS is continuously exploring ways to expand the use of computer and distance-based learning technologies to enhance accessibility to child welfare staff.

Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2009-2010

- **Casework Documentation Training**

This training program prepares caseworkers to effectively document on-going case activities, decisions and milestones with families and children in a manner consistent with the practice framework, policy, and procedures of NYS. The program provides a structure for the management of the case through assessment, service planning, implementation, and evaluation. One component of this project focuses on Family Assessment and Service Planning (FASP). A FASP Manual is under development. Another component focuses on Progress Notes. This project supports the implementation of CONNECTIONS Case Management Electronic Case Recording System.

3883 trainees  
306 training days

- **Working with Substance Abusing Families -- Training For Child Welfare Staff**

This training program builds the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, assess, and plan with families affected by alcohol and substance abuse. Local district and voluntary agency child welfare caseworkers and supervisors develop competencies in recognizing the natural resilience of families, in utilizing strengths to motivate and facilitate change, and in supporting families throughout a member's treatment and recovery.

224 trainees

10 offerings  
33 training days

- **Sexual Abuse Dynamics and Intervention Training – for Child Welfare Staff**

This statewide training is provided for caseworkers in all child welfare services program areas on the dynamics of sexual abuse as well as the treatment modalities currently utilized to protect and support victims and to treat and support the family. The program builds the knowledge base that caseworkers need to identify the presence of intra-familial sexual abuse, to make accurate and effective safety assessments, interventions, risk assessments and service plans to keep children safe and reduce the risk of future harm. This course is provided to a combined audience of Child Protective and other Child Welfare caseworkers.

499 trainees  
20 offerings  
60 training days

- **Training for Experienced CPS Caseworkers**

This is advanced level training for child protective service caseworkers who have completed basic training. These trainings enable experienced caseworkers to strategically apply the skills they acquired in foundation training in a variety of critical areas of practice. The topics include Legal Issues, Medical Issues, Professional Development and Forensic Interviewing Best Practices training. For those acting in an On-Call capacity, an online Learn-Linc class is offered.

3270 trainees  
79 offerings  
4 Teleconferences  
128 training days

- **Child Protective Services Response Training**

This course completes the mandated core training for child protective staff. The course builds on a set of interpersonal engagement, assessment, and decision making skills and values learned in the Common Core and apply them to the CPS role and responsibilities in the context of the CPS Response. This course focuses on the principles and techniques of investigations, relationships with other investigative bodies, legal issues in child protection, and methods of remediation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention

518 trainees  
24 offerings  
200 training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Common Core**

The current program is required for all new CPS caseworkers and strongly recommended for all new caseworkers. The objective of the training is to equip new workers with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to practice effectively. The training provides caseworkers with opportunities to practice using a set of skills that research and best practice standards have shown to positively impact the achievement of child safety, permanency, and child and family well being outcomes. The program was redesigned beginning in late 2008 and rolled out in summer 2009. Sixteen days of classroom training are provided for practice on assessment, safety, risk and abuse maltreatment, professional casework relationships, decision making, case management, and legal skills. There is one day of integrated CONNECTIONS Systems training, for a total of 17 classroom days. The program also includes synchronous and asynchronous computer-based training and on-the-job training to impart knowledge on policies, procedures, and casework practices that will prepare trainees for the skills based classroom portion of the training.

407 trainees  
24 offerings  
591 total training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Supervisory Core**

Supervisory Core is composed of two components: Module I Foundations, a five-day course for all supervisors that focuses on leadership, supervisory effectiveness behaviors, and generic supervision; and Module II A, the Child Protective Services Specialty, a six-day course for CPS supervisors, focusing on supervising the child protective response.

Module I  
76 trainees  
6 offerings  
30 training days

Module II A  
70 trainees  
4 offerings  
24 training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers**

This training program is designed for staff having one or more years of direct child welfare experience who did not attend the Common Core Training. The program provides experienced staff with a framework for their practice that defines workers as agents of change who use a professional helping relationship to engage families in the assessment, service planning, and change process to achieve child welfare goals of safety

permanency, and well being. This 8-day program builds skills consistent with those presented in the Common Core training and will be revised to mirror changes in the Common Core program. This program also includes a 1 day ‘engagement’ skills clinic for supervisors.

209 trainees  
15 offerings  
118 training days

- **Outcome-Based Training and Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance is delivered in groups or on a one-on-one basis. Supervisors and caseworkers receive technical assistance to plan, implement and make operational the Outcome-Based Training system in their local districts. This includes pre, mid and post core conferences with caseworkers, supervisors and staff development coordinators to assess training skills learned in the classroom and on-the-job training components and to develop a plan to meet ongoing training needs. Technical Assistance can also include training of trainer activities follow-up training to large local districts that provide their own Core training. In 2009-2010, technical assistance resources were redirected to extensive curriculum revision.

47 days of technical assistance  
1336 pre, mid and post core conferences

- **Family Preservation/Reunification**

This is an 8-day specialty course for Preventive, Foster Care and Adoption staff. It follows the CWS/CPS Common Core and is presented in two modules. This program builds upon the generic caseworker skills and abilities developed by trainees during their participation in the Common Core training. It focuses on the strategic use of interpersonal helping, assessment and service planning skills to work with families to promote children’s safety and to achieve rapid permanency. Module I is designed for Preventive, Adoption, and Foster Care caseworkers, and is a prerequisite for Module II. Module II is designed for Adoption and Foster Care caseworkers. In 2009, resources were diverted to other priorities, especially redesigning the Common Core curriculum.

Module I  
34 trainees  
3 offerings  
15 training days

Module II  
39 trainees  
3 offerings  
9 training days

- **Training and Technical Assistance to Support Local District/Voluntary Agency Implementation of Family Meetings and Family Engagement Strategies**

The focus of the training and TA is on the individual, unit and organizational practices that directly strengthen family involvement in assessment, service planning and plan implementation/family change efforts. The six Family Engagement Specialists develop and deliver a set of tool kits designed to promote family engagement, including engaging fathers, using visitation to promote permanency, concurrent planning training and technical assistance, along with district/agency specific training on family meetings and a wide range of other activities. This work with local districts is on-going.

- **Directors of Services Leadership Institute**

OCFS introduced the Directors of Services Leadership Institute (formerly the Local District Directors of Services Forum) in 2006. This is an annual two-day event (delivered in half day/full day/half day format) intended to provide local district Directors of Services with the knowledge and skills necessary to apply generic and program-specific management principles and skills to Child Welfare (Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Foster Care, and Adoption Services). (This accomplishment also applies to Goal 2.)

51 trainees  
1 offering  
2 training days

- **Child Welfare Eligibility Training**

The purpose of this project is to provide social services districts with training so that staff will have the knowledge and skill needed to accurately, effectively, and efficiently determine eligibility for federal funding of child welfare and Medicaid programs. Topics include the history and rationale of federal funding streams, how to define and understand the distinct use of each category of eligibility, the use of the Welfare Management System (WMS) and how to identify and access the resources available to help accomplish these objectives.

570 trainees  
51 offerings

- **Training for OCFS and Local Social Services Districts' Attorneys**

This project provides legal training for OCFS, Social Services Districts' attorneys, and Family Court personnel to assist them in the understanding of technical and strategic aspects of child welfare and social service law and to manage legal actions on behalf of the children and families they serve.

Component I  
 283 trainees  
 7.5 training days  
 7.5 offerings

Component II  
 25 trainees  
 2 training days  
 1 offering

Component III  
 404 trainees  
 N/A training days  
 8 offerings

### **Training Planned For Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

Nearly all of the training programs provided in 2009-2010, as described in Goal 1 of the APSR, will be offered again in the coming year.

- Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Common Core provides outcome-based training for all new child welfare services and child protective services caseworkers. It focuses on building skills that are most likely to lead to positive outcomes for clients and the achievement of program objectives. The training uses a variety of methodologies, including self-instructional materials, to impart knowledge on policies, procedures and practice concepts. A redesign of the program was begun in late 2008 and was rolled out in 2009. In the new program, sixteen days of classroom training are provided for practice of assessment, safety, risk, abuse and maltreatment, the professional casework relationship, decision-making and case management skills. An enhanced on-the-job training component is conducted by social services districts and authorized voluntary agencies to reinforce and integrate the knowledge and skills portions of the training with the realities of the job. The redesigned Common Core training also includes a supervisors guide to the Common Core and OJT, synchronous and asynchronous on-line computer-based components. CONNECTIONS and legal training are integrated into the program.

An additional feature of the core training is an enhanced trainee evaluation process. OCFS developed a feedback loop between core trainers and trainee supervisors to provide a developmental feedback on the trainees' participation in and progress through core. A midpoint and final conference will be conducted. Developmental progress will also be assessed through embedded evaluation instruments, which will help trainees, trainers and supervisors assess trainees' grasp of concepts and skills during training. A written assessment tool was developed in 2007 and was piloted and implemented in 2008.

572 trainees  
 22 offerings

352 training days

- Child Welfare Supervisory Core provides outcome-based training for new and existing child welfare and child protective services supervisors. The Supervisory Core has two components: Module I Foundations, a five-day course for all supervisors (preceded by two LearnLinc sessions); and Module II A, the Child Protective Services Specialty, a six-day course for CPS supervisors. These courses focus on building skills in leadership and the supervision of CWS/CPS casework practice. Training will also be provided to supervisors and program managers statewide on their role in developing and assessing new staff through the on-the-job training component of the new caseworker and supervisor core program.

#### Module I, Foundations

80 trainees  
4 offerings  
20 training days

#### Module II A, CPS Specialty

120 trainees  
3 offerings  
15 training days

- Training Support will be delivered to groups or on a one-on-one basis and will supplement training on the Common Core, Supervisory Core, Core Essentials Skills, Family Preservation/Reunification, and Best Practices in Achieving Permanency through Surrenders and Termination of Parental Rights. Supervisors and caseworkers will receive training support to maintain the Outcome-Based Training system in their local districts. This includes pre, mid and post core conferences with supervisors and caseworkers to assess training skills learned in the classroom and on-the-job training components, and to develop a plan for ongoing training needs. Training Support may also include training of trainer activities and providing training and follow-up training to large local districts that provide their own Core training.

50 Days of Training Support  
2276 Pre, mid, and post-core Conferences

- **Child Welfare Casework Documentation Training**

This program continues to reflect and support CONNECTIONS. Through a process of guided self-instruction, classroom training, and small group workings, caseworkers will learn how to use case documentation to facilitate their case practice and meet requirements of child welfare legislation and regulation. The training will continue to incorporate modifications to reflect further development of CONNECTIONS as needed. At the direction of OCFS, case reviews will be conducted. These case reviews will provide for an evaluative approach to support the training and assess the transfer of

learning. Training will continue on both Progress Notes and the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP). This training is delivered in collaboration with trainers who teach the navigation component. The purpose of the collaboration is to provide trainees with strategies to navigate efficiently through the CONNECTIONS Case Record.

3270 trainees  
300 training days

- **Family Preservation /Reunification**

This program provides specialized training for Foster Care, Adoption, and Preventive Workers. The training will build upon the generic caseworker skills and abilities developed by trainees during their participation in the CWS/CPS Common Core training. As a result of the Specialty training, Foster Care, Adoption, and Preventive Workers will acquire the competencies, knowledge and skills specific to their program areas. The content includes training on supporting families to make change, addressing the issues that led to placement or the risk of foster care and achieving permanency within Title IV-E timeframes. There are two components to this training: Module I is for Foster Care, Adoption, and Preventive Services caseworkers, and is five days in length. Module II is for Foster Care and Adoption caseworkers, and is three days in length.

Module I  
100 Trainees  
5 Offerings  
25 Training Days

Module II  
60 Trainees  
4 Offerings  
12 Training Days

- **Adoption and Adoption Specialty Training**

This project currently consists of one course, “Best Practices in Achieving Permanency through Surrenders and Termination of Parental Rights.” During 2009 Office worked with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption to adapt their Adoption Competency Curriculum for use in NYS. Both courses are for adoption and foster care caseworkers and supervisors. This training will provide participants with the basic knowledge and skills to assess the effectiveness of diligent efforts; determine the appropriateness of setting a goal of adoption; prepare children for adoption; use the legal process to free children for adoption and to comply with Title IV-E and State statutes. This training will also include training delivered by an attorney on diligent efforts, how to obtain a TPR and take a voluntary surrender. Portions of the program may be delivered through LearnLinc or comparable technology.

## Best Practices in Achieving Permanency through Surrenders and Termination of Parental Rights

100 Trainees  
5 Offerings  
30 Training Days

- **Child Protective Services Response Training**

This course completes the mandated core training for child protective staff by building upon a set of interpersonal engagement, assessment, and decision making skills and values learned in the Common Core and applying them to the CPS role and responsibilities in the context of the CPS Response. This course focuses on the principles and techniques of investigations, relationships with other investigative bodies, legal issues in child protection, and methods of remediation, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

450 trainees  
15 Offerings  
105 Training Days

- **Training for Experienced Child Welfare CPS Caseworkers**

Advanced level training for child welfare caseworkers who have already completed basic training. These trainings enable experienced caseworkers to strategically apply the skills they acquired in foundation training in a variety of critical areas of practice. The topics include Legal Issues, Medical Issues, Speakers Bureau and Forensic Interviewing Best Practices. For those acting in an On-Call capacity, an online learn-linc class is offered.

2536 trainees  
82 offerings  
2 Teleconferences  
114 training days

- **Sexual Abuse Dynamics and Intervention Training for Child Welfare Staff**

Statewide training provided to child welfare staff on the dynamics of sexual abuse as well as on the treatment modalities currently utilized to protect and support victims, and to treat and support the family. This course will be provided to a combined audience of Child Protective and other Child Welfare caseworkers.

400 trainees  
16 offerings  
48 training days

- **Working with Substance Abusing Families -- Training For Child Welfare Staff**

This training program builds the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, assess, and plan with families affected by alcohol and substance abuse. Local district and voluntary agency child welfare caseworkers and supervisors develop competencies in recognizing the natural resilience of families, in utilizing strengths to motivate and facilitate change, and in supporting families throughout a member's treatment and recovery.

550 trainees  
22 offerings  
66 training days

- **Foster/Adoptive Parent Training**

Foster/Adoptive Parent Training, in the year 2009-10, consists of an integrated, comprehensive series of training courses that will be available to foster and adoptive parents from pre-placement of a child to their permanency goal. This project begins with training that prepares agency staff and foster parent teams to deliver a 10-week mutual Group Preparation and Selection (GPS) training program for prospective foster and adoptive parents. It also includes COMPASS training, an in-service foster-adoptive parent-training program that supports the GPS program, and continues with the provision of specialized training through the Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home training project. Foster/Adoptive Parent training also consists of modules that respond to the needs of foster/adoptive parents. Child development, communication, interpersonal helping skills and many other related topics are addressed in this program. In response to popular reception, the distance learning format i-Linc will be featured as a way to reach foster/adoptive parents in their homes via their own personal computers at times they are available for training.

701 offerings  
7394 trainees  
817 training days

- **Child Welfare/Child Protective Services Core Essential Skills for Experienced Caseworkers**

Provide training for experienced Child Welfare and Child Protective Services caseworkers. The training focuses on building skills most likely to result in positive outcomes for clients and the achievement of child welfare outcomes. This 8-day program builds core skills for experienced staff that are consistent with skills presented in the Common Core training, supporting staff's ability to achieve safety and permanency for children and will be revised to reflect the changes in the Common Core program. There will also be up to 15 one-day "Engagement for Supervisors" Skills Clinics. Other Skills Clinics will be developed as needed.

300 Trainees

15 Offerings  
120 Training Days

- **Training and Consultation to Support Local District/Voluntary Agency Implementation of Family Meetings and Family Engagement Strategies**

This component will provide training and consultation to local social services districts and voluntary agencies in support of their program improvement plans. The focus of the training and TA will be on the individual, unit, and organizational practices that directly strengthen family involvement in assessment, service planning, and plan implementation/family change efforts.

This component has two segments:

Segment 1 – Child-centered, Family-focused Practice: Training and Consultation

Segment 2 – Family Meetings: Training and Consultation

Bobby, I'm asking the Bureau of Training to take another look at this. The Family Engagement Specialists offer Tool Kit training that is not reflected here – it should be.

- **Directors of Services Leadership Institute**

This component, introduced in 2006, is a two-day event (delivered in half day/full day/half day format) intended to provide local district Directors of Services with the knowledge and skills necessary to apply generic and program-specific management principles and skills to Child Welfare (Child Protective Services, Preventive Services, Foster Care and Adoption Services). (This component also applies to Goal 2.)

Possible topics may include, but not be limited to, measuring outcomes; how to assess the NYS Improving Child Welfare Outcomes initiative; use of service plan reviews; visitation; coaching; strengths-based child-centered, family-focused practice; how the case management model supports good practice; the Data Warehouse.

75 trainees  
1 offering  
2 training days

- **Training and Technical Assistance for Child Welfare Teams**

OCFS is piloting a model of service delivery by casework teams with 14 local districts. The project is designed to support local districts to provide effective and efficient protective, preventive or foster care services by assigning casework teams instead of individuals. Training and technical assistance include team building, the process of group supervision and case conference facilitation, family engagement skills, and other strategies as identified by the individual pilot districts. At least one new district will be added in 2010-2011 along with team expansion in 9 districts already having one team or more.

- **Family Assessment Response Training**

In response to legislation enabling NYS to pilot an alternative response to CPS investigations, OCFS began working with six local districts to develop and implement alternate response pilots in each of those districts. In 2009 an additional 8 counties began development and implementation of a pilot program. In 2010 additional units within these counties are expected to begin delivering FAR services, and an additional 5 counties will begin implementation. Training and technical assistance will be provided to district administrators, managers, supervisors, and caseworkers so that pilot staff has the knowledge and skills necessary to implement an alternative protective response.

- **Child Welfare Eligibility Training**

The purpose of this project is to provide social services districts with training so that staff will have the knowledge and skill needed to accurately, effectively, and efficiently determine eligibility for federal funding of child welfare and Medicaid programs. Topics include the history and rationale of federal funding streams, how to define and understand the distinct use of each category of funding eligibility: Title IV-E; TANF-EAF; Title XX below 200%, Non-Reimbursable Payments; and Candidacy in Foster Care. The focus is how to determine and document each category of eligibility, the use of the Welfare Management System (WMS) and how to identify and access the resources available to help accomplish these objectives.

990 Trainees  
110 Offerings

- **Training for OCFS and Local Social Services Districts' Attorneys**

This project provides legal training for OCFS, local social services districts' attorneys, and Family Court personnel to assist them in the understanding of technical and strategic aspects of child welfare and social service law and to manage legal actions on behalf of the children and families they serve.

Component I  
180 Trainees  
6 Training Days  
6 Offerings

Component II  
25 Trainees  
1 Offering  
2 Training Days

Component III  
148 Trainees  
8 Offerings

## GOAL #2

CHILDREN WHO ARE REMOVED FROM THEIR BIRTH FAMILIES  
WILL BE AFFORDED STABILITY, CONTINUITY AND AN ENVIRONMENT  
THAT SUPPORTS ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT

**Primary Strategy:** 2. Continue collaboration with the Office of Court Administration to enhance court practice and share data.

OCFS and the Office of Court Administration (OCA) are committed to improving permanency outcomes for children in New York State. OCFS and the OCA Child Welfare Court Improvement Project (CWCIP) will work together to build effective collaboration between the Family Court and the social services districts with the highest foster care populations in the State. OCFS will support the development of enhanced court practices in the Family Courts and provide a process by which certain data maintained by both local departments of social services and Family Courts can be shared to evaluate the impact of innovations to promote improved outcomes for children.

**Goal:** Improve timeliness of adoptions and permanency for children in out-of-home placements.

**Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

2.1 Enhance and or implement a court and local districts (LDSS) collaborative in each of the 12 counties, (one of the 13 already exists) aimed at improving the timeliness of adjudications and dispositions for both abuse and neglect and TPR petitions.

2.1(a) Form a statewide OCFS/OCA workgroup to oversee the enhancement and implementation of local court and LDSS collaborative.

2.1(b) Disseminate resource materials to local courts and districts that supports local collaborative.

2.1(c) Share and provide technical assistance to the 13 Family Courts, relative to the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project Data Measures.

2.1(d) Support statewide “kickoff” conference on court and LDSS collaboratives. Topics will include role of courts and districts in improving outcomes related to child permanency and well-being.

2.1(e) Provide technical assistance to each of the local court and LDSS collaborative.

2.1(f) Provide training to each of the local court and LDSS collaboratives on child welfare related topics.

2.2 Monitor the implementation of the Local court and LDSS collaborative.

2.2(a) Development and dissemination of local court and LDSS collaborative reporting template.

2.3. Pilot the integration the NYS Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services and local treatment providers into the local court and LDSS collaboration process to support integrated planning in all cases involving the misuse of alcohol or other drugs.

2.3(a) Develop and pilot in three counties protocols for handling cases that intersect the family court, child welfare and substance abuse treatment systems.

**Primary Strategy:** 3. Expand trauma informed practice in congregate care  
New York is committed to the continued expansion of trauma informed practice as a means to reduce and prevent abuse or maltreatment, as well as to reduce physical restraints in residential foster care settings.

**Goal:** Reduce the occurrence of abuse and maltreatment in foster care.

**Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

3.1 Six additional voluntary agencies will begin training on the Sanctuary Model in 2010. (Ten agencies have already completed training. Three have achieved certification in the model and the others are moving towards certification in the Sanctuary Model)

3.1(a) Agencies complete self-readiness assessments and forward to OCFS for review and selection.

3.1(b) Training provided by Andrus Sanctuary Leadership Development Institute to each of the agency's Leadership teams. The five day training was delivered in February of 2010.

3.1(c) TA provided by Andrus

3.1(d) Participation in consortium conference calls

3.2 Evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of the Sanctuary Model in the five (Parsons, Baker Victory Svs, House of Good Shepherd, Green Chimney, and Children's Home of Poughkeepsie) Cohort two agencies.

3.2(a) Data comparing the number of IAB reports and restraints will be tracked prior to the implementation of the Sanctuary Model and post implementation

**Primary Strategy:** 4. Improve Service Array.

Meeting the mental health needs of children in out-of-home care is critical to promoting their well-being and permanency. The Bridges to Health (B2H) Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver Program is designed specifically for children in foster care with significant mental health needs, developmental disabilities or who are medically fragile. With approval from the Department of Health and Human Services, B2H offers 14 uniquely designed services not otherwise available in the community to children with these complex medical conditions, and does so in the context of their often complicated family and caregiver network.

**Goal:** Children have access to an array of services.

**Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

4.1 Expand B2H services into the Buffalo and Long Island regions, bringing B2H statewide (currently in those parts of the state supervised by OCFS RRO, SRO, ARO, SVRO and NYCRO).

4.1(a) Provide training to counties on B2H services and enrollment process.

4.1(b) Provide training to qualified service providers.

4.1(c) Local district referral and enrollment begins.

4.2 Enrollment slots expanded across New York State.

4.3 Ongoing Support and Quality Assurance to Counties and HCIA's.

4.3(a) Quarterly Forums conducted in 2010. Upon full implementation, forums will be held semi annually with counties, HCIA, and other stakeholders.

4.3(b) Hold conference calls with HCIA's to share information and to resolve barriers.

4.3(c) Quality review of cases to determine timeliness and appropriateness of services.

4.4 Evaluation of implementation and outcomes of B2H.

4.5 Participate in joint state initiatives, which includes – Children's Cabinet on Disconnected Youth; and the Commissioners Committee on Cross Systems - OMH Children's Plan aimed at improving accessibility and availability of resources.

**Primary Strategy:** 6. Expand recruitment of foster and adoptive parents.

Foster and adoptive parents play a critical role in providing permanency and well being for children entrusted to their care. Local districts and agencies should establish and maintain a pool of qualified, ethnically and racially diverse foster/adoptive parents. To assist local districts and agencies with the challenges of recruitment, OCFS has a training contract that provides foster/adoptive family recruitment and retention technical assistance, consultation, and materials development to local districts and agencies. This contract is designed to support the on-going recruitment and retention of ethnically, racially, and culturally competent foster and adoptive parents.

**Goal:** There will be sufficient numbers of foster and adoptive parents that can care for sibling groups, adolescents and that reflect the race and ethnicity of the children coming into care.

### **Action Steps and Benchmarks:**

6.1 Work with training contractor to identify and share with districts the latest recruitment tools that address recruitment of foster and adoptive parents for sibling groups and adolescents, and that reflect the race and ethnicity of the children coming into care.

6.2 Review of data of the 13 districts determine difference in the race and ethnicity of foster/adoptive parents as compared to the children in care, siblings separated at placement and the number of youth not placed in foster boarding homes.

- 6.3 Training and support provided to home finders and recruiters as identified by the RO.
- 6.4 Recruitment Plans that are MEPA compliant of 13 districts will be reviewed for appropriateness.
- 6.5 Hold conference call with Local District and Voluntary agency Home Finders to determine areas of confusion or where clarification is needed related to regulations and practice of licensing foster boarding homes.
- 6.6 Updates and changes to Licensing of Foster Boarding Home handbook made, if needed.
- 6.7 Regional Training of Home Finders held to go over areas of confusion and to clarify misunderstandings; updated handbook shared.

### **ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

On December 31, 2009, there were 24,620 children in foster care. This was a 3.5% decrease from the census of 25,510 children in foster care on December 31, 2008.

As of December 31, 2009, 79.0% of children in care statewide were in foster family care, including approved relative foster homes.

In 2009, the population of foster children in approved relatives' foster homes was 6,080. This reflects an upward trend from 2005 when there were 5,440 children in approved relative's homes.

In 2009, there were 11,557 children in care within New York State who were part of a sibling group, a decrease from 12,099 in 2008. Of these children 48.1% (5,494) were separated from at least one other sibling in care. As of December 31, 2009, 20.0% (4,902) of the children in care were in a placement outside of their county and 2.2% (543) were in a placement outside of New York State. Of these, kinship placements accounted for 9.4% of the out-of-county placements and 50.5% of the out-of-state placements.

Of the children in care on December 31, 2009, 53.5% had a Permanency Planning Goal of return to parent or guardian.

There were 2,197 children discharged to adoption in calendar year 2009, a percentage decrease of 7.5% from 2007 to 2008 when 2,346 children were discharged to adoption.

Of all children in care on December 31, 2009, 27.2% had a Permanency Planning Goal (PPG) of Adoption. This is a slight increase from last year.

There were 6,548 children in care on December 31, 2009, with the goal of adoption.

Of adoptions finalized during 2009, 72.9% of the children for whom ethnicity was known were minority children. This is the same as last year.

Of children discharged to adoption in 2009, 96.9% received an adoption subsidy.

Of all children with a goal of adoption on December 31, 2009, 59.5% were not freed after 12 months of having the goal.

Of all freed children, 75.5% were not placed within 12 months of being freed.

Of all placed children, 43.2% had not had their adoptions finalized after one year.

For children under eight years of age, discharged to adoption in 2009, the length of time from the establishment of the goal of adoption to discharge, was less than two years for 61.4% of the children, between two and three years for 24.6%, and over three years for 14.0%.

For children over the age of eight, the time between goal setting and discharge was less than two years for 36.5% of the children, two to three years for 24.9% and over three years for 38.7%.

**PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

<b>Permanency Outcome 1: Placement Stability</b>	
National Standard	101.5
Performance as Measured in Final Report/Source Data Period	108.1
Performance as Measured in Baseline/Source Data Period	109.7

- New York State has achieved this outcome. New York State’s target will be to maintain or better the national standard of 101.5.

**STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

The diversity of the situations and needs that have brought children into care requires a system of care that is both intricate and flexible. New York State led the nation in reforming the foster care system of decades past into a community-linked resource driven by permanency planning for each child. However, while the goals set in the 1970's have not changed, the stresses placed on the system by increasingly troubled families and children has required even greater energy and innovation.

**Kinship Care**

A central strategy for maintaining family and community ties for children requiring out-of-home care due to a lack of safety in their own homes is to promote the use of relatives

as placement resources. New York State statute requires that judges direct social services districts to consider the availability of relatives as a placement resource, either as a direct custodian or foster parents, prior to placing a child in need of care in foster care with a non-relative.

The federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) that amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act authorized the exemption of children placed in foster care with relatives from the requirement that there must be a petition to terminate their parents' parental rights if they have remained in care for fifteen of the most recent twenty-two months. This is a recognition that children placed with their relatives may be in circumstances where legally freeing them may not be in their best interests. New York state regulations allow documenting that a child is in a kinship foster home as a justifiable reason for not filing a termination petition against the child's parents. However, case planners in New York are advised that a social services district is not precluded from filing a petition to terminate parental rights solely because the child is placed with a relative.

In kinship foster care situations where it is determined that children are unlikely to be returned home, exploration of the relative's willingness to adopt is generally the next best alternative. However, there are other times when a relative is not interested in adopting her/his kin where the child may remain with the relative in foster care for a more extended period. While social services districts have had increasing success in decreasing lengths of stay for these kinship foster children, their lengths of stay in foster care remain higher, on average, than that of other foster children. Children residing in kinship foster care are increased in real numbers, and as a percent of the total foster care population for the first time in a number of years. More than 6,200 foster children are currently placed in foster care with a relative, which represents approximately 25% of the total foster care population. New York State is working toward a subsidized kinship guardianship program as an alternative for children who cannot safely return to their birthparents, but who do not wish to be adopted, or whose committed caretaker relatives do not wish to adopt (see Plans for 2010-2014). However, under Article 6 of the Family Court Act, relative custody or guardianship is an option.

Approved relative and certified foster homes are governed by the same standards, except that there is the authority to waive a non-safety standard for an approved relative home, while there is no comparable provision for certified homes. The regulations allow approving relative homes on an emergency basis. Thus, the maximum period of time when a home can be in this status is 90 days (although no Title IV-E funds are claimed during the "emergency" period until full approval). This regulatory provision allows for a single placement for a child when a relative is available at the time of an emergency child protective services removal, is able to provide safe care to the child, and can continue to provide care until the child can safely be returned home or another permanency outcome can be achieved. Additionally, the regulations permit more distant relatives, godparents or other persons with a positive pre-existing relationship with the family to be used as an emergency placement resource if such a home meets the regulatory requirements that exist for relatives (again, no Title IV-E is claimed until full certification is completed).

In 2006, the OCFS created the *New York State Kinship Caregiver Program* to assist persons caring for related children. A statewide network of supportive programs is used as an alternative to placing children in unfamiliar foster homes by promoting household stability and permanency through services for kinship caregivers and their kin.

Utilizing approximately \$2.17 million in state and TANF funds, the *New York State Kinship Caregiver Program* allows programs to deliver a wide range of services that address the multiple needs of caregivers and the children in their care including:

Counseling	Legal Information	Support Groups
Respite	Parenting Skills	Education Advocacy
Housing	Case Management	Referrals

Twenty one community-based organizations deliver these services to caregivers in 30 counties. Families in “informal” kinship care as well as those that are in kinship foster care are eligible for services. It is estimated that over 1,500 caregivers as well as 4,000 children have been served since the program’s inception. An additional 8 new kinship programs have begun on 12/1/09 and are projected to serve an additional 800 children and have a presence in 10 additional counties.

The New York State Kinship Navigator Program is among the kinship-related programs funded through OCFS. Developed jointly by OCFS and lead agency Rochester Catholic Family Center, the program is designed to creatively assist kinship caregivers and the children in their care in all counties in gaining access to information and community support services. Any caregiver residing in any part of the State is able to utilize a toll-free phone line or website to identify kinship care related services in their home locale. In addition, kinship specialists are available to assess caregiver needs and develop a plan of action. In 2009, the *NYS Kinship Navigator Program* served 35,319 individuals on their web site along with 2,460 caregivers on their phone line where more detailed kinship services were provided.

Training and technical assistance was provided by OCFS to promote quality programs. In addition, steps have been taken to collaborate with state agencies, kinship care coalitions, the legal community and other stakeholders such as AARP to help develop coherent policies and coordinated services for kinship caregivers throughout New York.

As a joint project of the OCFS and OTDA, a new publication is now available entitled “Having a Voice and a Choice: New York State Handbook for Relatives Raising Children.”

The handbook covers a range of subjects including

- how a child may come into a relative’s care;
- the role of the Department of Social Services;
- legal arrangements, such as informal care, direct placement, legal custody, temporary or permanent guardianship, foster care and adoption;
- the types of financial assistance available to relatives;
- health care provision and coverage for children in a relative’s care; and
- the child’s education.

A list of local, state, and national resources and websites is included.

This handbook was written for relatives who are raising, or considering raising, children in need of a stable home because their parents are unable to take care of them. Whether a child needs a placement outside the home because of safety concerns or because of individual circumstances in the family, the handbook provides information on the various options available to relatives so that relatives can make the best decision for their own situation.

### **Accomplishments 2009-2010**

In May 2009, OCFS partnered with OCA to convene a Subsidized Kinship Guardianship Roundtable. About 80 attendees heard presentations from national experts on subsidized kinship guardianship, received information on the provisions of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, other states' experiences with subsidized guardianship, background on federal and state funding, and data pertaining to New York's foster children currently in foster care with relatives. The invitees included local social services districts, judges, program and legal advocates, and budget staff. After hearing the presentations, attendees were divided into smaller groups to have in depth discussions on aspects of a prospective New York subsidized kinship guardianship program. The intent of the event was to try and develop as much consensus as possible about what the State's program ought to include.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

The primary undertaking over the next year will be centered on developing consensus that a state subsidized kinship guardianship program is a valuable addition to the state's child welfare permanency program, pursuit of legislation to create such an option, and developing plans to implement any new legislation. Should such a program come to fruition, policy guidance and training for child welfare practitioners will be necessary

Among other possible initiatives for the upcoming year and beyond include expanding the scope of the existing kinship navigator program and continued emphasis on making sure that relatives of children who need out of home placement and care are aware of the options that may be available to such relatives in terms of legal statuses, financial assistance and available services.

### **Bridges to Health (B2H) Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waiver**

The B2H Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waiver Program provides expanded and enhanced services to children in foster care settings whose diagnosed conditions are sufficiently severe to warrant placement in an institution were it not for the supports provided by the B2H waiver. B2H serves three eligibility groups of children in foster care—children with serious emotional disturbance, children with development

disabilities, and children who are medically fragile—so that cross-systems issues can be better integrated. The program also serves their families; including birth parents, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and siblings. Once children are enrolled in the program, they may be eligible for services until they are 21 years old.

All of the B2H services are intended to serve children in a community-based setting and within their support network, as children in foster care have many people involved in their lives- including birth families, foster and adoptive families, caregivers, social service districts, providers, clinicians, courts, and advocates. B2H services are not provided by the foster care system and are not supported through state or federal funding available for foster care services. Available B2H services are as follows: Health Care Integration; Planned Respite; Skill Building; Day Habilitation; Family/Caregiver Supports and Services; Prevocational Services; Intensive In-Home Supports; Supported Employment; Special Needs Community Advocacy and Support; Immediate Crisis Response Services; Crisis Avoidance, Management and Training; Adaptive and Assistive Equipment; Crisis Respite; and Accessibility Modifications. Services needs are determined pursuant to an enrolled child's Individual Health Plan.

### **Accomplishments 2009-2010**

OCFS continued to implement the Bridges to Health for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbance (B2H SED), Bridges to Health for Children with Developmental Disabilities (B2H DD) and Bridges to Health for Children with Medical Fragility (B2H MedF) Waivers in five OCFS Regions. B2H enrolled children beginning in 2008 in New York City, Albany and Rochester regions, continuing with those regions in 2009, while adding the Syracuse and Lower Hudson valley regions. This was accomplished through a network of 17 Health Care Integration Agencies and 84 Waiver Service Providers along with our partners in 49 social services districts, as well as the OCFS Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth. Together, 1,200 children were enrolled in B2H and served in their homes and communities along with their birth families, foster families and siblings. B2H is the first program in the nation to use Home and Community Based Medicaid Waivers to exclusively serve children in the child welfare system along with their caregiver network and does so within the federal principles of freedom of choice, strength based approach, person-centered and family focused service planning and delivery.

Quality Management is an integral component for the successful implementation of B2H. OCFS has implemented a multi-pronged approach of continuous quality management activities. The OCFS B2H Quality Management Strategy consists of the following: Team Meeting Reviews; Case Record Reviews; Administrative Site Visit Reviews; Quarterly Regional Forums; Monthly Conference Calls; a Quality Advisory Board; LDSS Meetings; Satisfaction Surveys; and Audit and Quality Control reviews. These strategies are implemented in conjunction with central office staff and the regional Quality Management Specialists.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

OCFS, on behalf of the DOH, submitted the Bridges to Health Home and Community Based Services Waiver Quality Reviews to the DHHS Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in October 2009. This extensive review of the implementation status of B2H after 18 months of operation is the initial step towards waiver reauthorization. Federal approval of B2H was for an initial three years, from January 1, 2008-December 31, 2010. Thereafter, reauthorizations are approved for an additional five year period. The three B2H waiver reauthorization applications are due to CMS on October 1, 2010. BWM has developed a plan to meet this deadline that includes extensive stakeholder input and OCFS internal review. In addition, OCFS will also continue engaging in Quality Management activities as B2H is implemented statewide.

### **Statewide Foster Care and Adoption Recruitment and Retention Activities**

Throughout New York State, OCFS conducts and supports a variety of programs and initiatives to improve and expand the recruitment and retention of foster care and adoptive families. Much of this work is spearheaded by the six OCFS Regional Offices. Many of the most successful activities occur in most all of the Regions. A summary of these activities include:

#### Heart Gallery:

Heart Gallery is a traveling exhibit featuring portraits of foster children in need of adoption. Photographers donate their time and talent to create high quality portraits of children which are displayed in prominent venues to raise awareness about the hundreds of children available for adoption.

#### “Reel” Kids:

“Reel” Kids is a travelling exhibit featuring brief video clips of children sharing their thoughts about the hope of finding an adoptive family. Video clips are assembled by case work staff or by professionals who donate their time, resources, and expertise. Where “Reel” Kids exhibits are developed, they are combined with Heart Gallery exhibits at the same adoption event.

#### Permanency Panel Reviews:

These reviews target children that are in need of specific adoption recruitment efforts. Staff from local districts, courts, and voluntary agencies is often involved in these collaborative activities. Barriers facing these children are discussed and frequently individual adoption plans are developed for the child. This approach has resulted in permanency plans for many children.

#### Adoption Day, Week or Month Celebrations:

Celebrations associated with successful adoption activities occur throughout New York State. They provide an opportunity to highlight the collaborative work and supports

needed to achieve adoption children with special needs and generate positive publicity for ongoing adoption efforts. The OCFS website continues to feature videos of children available for adoption. In 2009, a statewide Heart Gallery was opened at the Amtrak train station in Rensselaer, NY during adoption month and remained on display until January. Regional Heart Galleries held openings and ceremonies in a variety of venues across the state.

### Adoption Exchanges:

Adoption Exchanges provide a networking opportunity for adoption staff to share with each other and to exchange information about waiting children with prospective adoptive families.

### Training:

Training activities include specific topics such as the impacts of legislative and regulatory changes, targeted recruitment strategies, and techniques to utilize foster parents as recruiters. Additionally, training initiatives occur in each Region which addresses issues that are identified at the regional level. Sessions of the National Child Welfare Resource Center's Adoption Competency Curriculum Train the Trainer (TOT) were held or are scheduled to be held soon in each region of the state. The TOT is designed to improve foster care and adoption casework skills by training local district and voluntary staff as trainers in this curriculum.

### Publicity:

In conjunction with various media many programs and initiatives have been developed to inform the public of the number of children in New York State awaiting adoption. Many local television stations produce weekly segments highlighting children who wish to be adopted. Feature articles or series are found in many newspapers which not only identify children awaiting adoption but provide viewers and readers with resources if they wish additional information.

OCFS has been working with the National Resource Center for the Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents at AdoptUSKids to assist OCFS with providing technical assistance to districts and voluntary agencies on recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents. In February 2010, AdoptUSKids met with OCFS' subcontractor SUNY Professional Development Program (Recruitment Specialists) to discuss the latest strategies and tools in recruitment and retention efforts. The Recruitment Specialists work directly with OCFS Regional Office staff in providing technical assistance to local districts and agencies on recruitment and retention. These efforts will also help address New York State need to address recruitment and retention efforts as required by the CFSR.

As part of the New York State CFSR PIP, all local districts and authorized voluntary agencies having a purchase of services contract with a local district for the operation of an adoption or foster boarding home program, are required to update their Recruitment and Retention Plans focusing on compliance with the federal Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA). A template was provided that outlined the key components of a plan.

Additionally, OCFS will be presenting two satellite broadcasts with the National Resource Center for the Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Parents at AdoptUSKids, and SUNY Professional Development Program. The first broadcast will be on June 8, 2010, from 1:30 to 3:30. It will address the elements of a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan that is MEPA compliant and strategies and tools that may be useful in implementing an agency plan. The second satellite broadcast will be aired in August and will focus on MEPA requirements and targeted community recruitment efforts based on the race and ethnicity of the children coming into care.

Other state effort examples by region include:

### **NYCRO Recruitment & Retention Activities 2009-2010**

The Adoption Unit conducted permanency reviews of children in the NYC Administration for Children Services' Specialized and Direct Care units. The reviews addressed permanency planning and provided technical assistance to the unit staff around the necessity and benefits of permanency through adoption for these children. Thirty-six children were identified needing permanency/adoption resources. The OCFS federal grant has the potential to be a critical tool expanding permanency options for these youth.

The Adoption Unit began the bi-annual Adoption Comprehensive Recruitment Plan review process. The 2010 Recruitment plans have been requested from ACS and the NYC voluntary agencies and will be reviewed and approved in cooperation with the NYCRO Foster Care Unit. The plans address foster care and adoption agency recruitment and placement practices to determine compliance with OCFS statute and regulations related to the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) and planning to address agency specific needs. The periodic review and evaluation of the agency strategies and initiatives helps keep agency emphasis on achieving timely and appropriate placements for waiting children.

The Adoption Unit participated in the ACS meeting with provider agency recruitment staff. The meeting was held as a component of the ACS initiative to "step-down" youth from residential and diagnostic facilities to family based settings in which permanency options including adoption can be explored. ACS asked recruiters for their ideas and experience about how to best target their recruitment efforts to most effectively reach resource families for these youth. The meeting provided a vehicle for exchanges between ACS and the recruiters to identify realistic expectations for the proposed recruitment efforts.

Two series of New York City Adoption Panel Reviews were held between May 2009 and April 2010. The first series were held in September 2009 and the second series in March 2010. In the past, ACS managed the reviews, but with the economic challenges faced by the district, the NYCRO Adoption Unit, at the request of the district, assumed the additional responsibilities of coordination and implementation. The panel of reviewers included representatives from ACS Children's Services' Office of Expedited Permanency and Agency Program Assistance, the recruitment agencies funded by ACS, NYCRO Adoption staff and NYC Family Court staff. Agencies presented the adoption

permanency progress on each freed child with a permanency goal of adoption and a portion of all other children with a permanency goal of adoption, but not yet freed. The panel reviews provided an opportunity to address issues around required documentation, service needs of children and families, availability of post adoption services and specialized recruitment efforts. The reviews continued to document that adolescents and children with severe mental health and behavioral issues are among the most challenging populations for achieving permanency and the value of the B2H initiative in supporting adoption as a permanency option for these youth. In total, approximately 4150 children with a permanency goal of adoption were reviewed, representing the local district and 26 provider agencies.

The Adoption Unit facilitated and participated in three training sessions of the National Child Welfare Resource Center's Adoption Competency Train the Trainer (TOT Curriculum) held in NYC. With many new and inexperienced staff having responsibility for adoption services, there has been a longstanding need for adoption training. Trainees included foster care and adoption workers, supervisors and directors of services who were asked to make a commitment to providing training on the full curriculum to the staff from their agencies. The primary goal of the training was to support adoption competency for agency staff.

One training goal was to familiarize local district and voluntary agency staff with the curriculum which was designed to improve foster care and adoption casework skills. Sixty-six staff from 21 voluntary agencies, local departments of social services, the Center for Development of Human Services and the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies attended the training. The participants were enthusiastic about the training and felt that it would help to improve skills of their staff. Some of the initial post training feedback informs us that some trainees have begun to use the training and/or have developed plans about how they will use it in their agencies. A brainstorming meeting of trainees was held to identify ways to support implementation of the training.

The NYCRO Adoption Team also held a TOT work group session to facilitate and support implementation of the Adoption Competency Curriculum training. The twenty one foster care and adoption staff attending the training have committed to using the curriculum to provide training and information using the tools and DVD's from the curriculum to improve the casework skills of staff within their respective agencies.

The Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA), in cooperation with one voluntary agency, conducted training of three of the four modules presented, and plans to conduct additional trainings throughout 2010. Three additional voluntary agencies are currently working in cooperation with NYCRO to deliver components of the training.

Adoption Team members served on the Child and Family Services Review's Permanency Panel Workgroup to develop standard instruments to be used state-wide to facilitate and support permanency planning for youth in foster care. The instruments are being used state-wide to capture current practice trends and challenges. Adoption Team members, in cooperation with other NYCRO staff developed those instruments addressing separated

siblings, residential placements, cross ethnic placements and children in care four or more years.

Guided questions and survey dropdowns were created to help reviewers at the panels capture particular issues related to the practice area being explored during the review. The Adoption Unit also used the Adoption Panel Review process to complete the statewide survey for 'children freed for adoption, but not placed in adoptive homes'. Surveys were completed on all children reviewed that fell in this category

The Adoption Unit also provided Adoption Album training for ACS's Specialized Care Unit. Training on photo listing with the Adoption Album is important to ensure that every child who is free and in need of an adoptive family has benefit of this statewide and national recruitment resource.

An Adoption Team member coordinated, facilitated, and implemented the 2009 Permanency Hearing Observation Project which makes possible observation of permanency hearings in all five boroughs in the City of New York by NYCRO and ACS staff. The primary goal of the project is to capture data on agency compliance with permanency hearing statutes and regulations, particularly attendance by agency caseworkers at permanency hearings, the ability of agency staff to provide comprehensive information both written and verbal, timely service of permanency reports and the ability of the judge/referee to make an affirmative reasonable effort determination.

A final report was completed on the 2009 Permanency Hearing Observation Project. A presentation was made to ACS Family Court Legal Services to discuss the findings and ways they are currently being addressed as well as collaborative possibilities on systemic issues.

The Adoption Legal Specialist co-facilitated a discussion on post adoption services to a provider agency support group. The session was very informative to the group, but an important learning point from the session was the limited information adoptive families have regarding their authority as a parent once the child is adopted and the ways to address the behavioral challenges many older youth present.

The Adoption Team conducted a presentation, in the Bronx, to the Highbridge Community Partnership Program initiative on post adoption services and the importance of neighborhood based service providers being adoption knowledgeable. It has been recognized that services need to be delivered by providers who are sensitive to the unique issues and needs of adoptive families and are essential. The presentation was well received and served to raise the initiative's awareness that adoptive families need and benefit from preventive services, as well as, birth families being served to prevent placements of their children into foster care. Approximately 30 service providers participated in the meeting. Post adoption services are an important support to adoptive families and should be available in their communities. Additional presentations were held in the Brooklyn and Queens Community Partnership Programs.

Adoption Team members met with the Regional Director and the Hunter College School of Social Work to discuss ways to enhance the adoption competency training program currently funded by OCFS. The primary goal was to increase registration of ACS and voluntary agency social workers.

In recognition of November as Adoption Month, The Adoption Team collaborated with the New York City Family Courts to purchase and distribute Life Books during adoption finalization proceedings in the five boroughs of NYC. Adoption Week in the NYC Family Courts was held November 16th through November 20th and Team members attended the recognition programs and adoption finalizations in each of the borough family courts. Life Books were presented to each child who had an adoption finalized during the week. Each court featured adoption finalizations on a specific day of Adoption Week; Bronx on Monday, New York on Tuesday, Kings on Wednesday, Queens on Thursday and Richmond on Friday. One hundred and twelve (112) children had their adoptions finalized during the week. This particular initiative grew out of the Team's continuing efforts to support agencies' use of the life books as a tool for preparing children for permanency. The courts were impressed with the Life Books and enthusiastically presented them to the children and their families.

Adoption Unit coordinated the review and revision of New York State's 'Adoption Services Guide for Caseworkers' by the regional office Adoption and Legal Specialists. Comments made on the proposed document generated by a consultant are collected, coordinated and submitted to Home Office to facilitate completion of the guide. The Guide will be a valuable resource to supervisors and caseworkers providing adoption services.

The Adoption Team held the first collaborative meeting with ACS Agency Program Assistance staff (APA). Quarterly meetings are planned. APA plays a critical role in the ACS IOC initiative and has primary responsibility for assessment and technical assistance of ACS provider agency adoption programs. The meeting agenda included sharing the findings from the adoption panel reviews held in September and March and a discussion for increased understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of NYCRO adoption staff and APA. As a result of the meeting, Adoption and APA will share agency staff assignments and confirm a procedure for ongoing contacts between Adoption and APA staff. The meeting was viewed as informative by all.

Team members served in the statewide CFSR baseline case review as case record reviewers. In this role, members reviewed foster care and adoption cases to assess strengths and areas needing improvement in the areas of safety, permanency and well being. Supportive services to foster parents adopting was a key component of this review.

Team members also supported the Bureau of Program and Community Development's meeting with TANF funded NYC post adoption agencies to review the issues, concerns

and challenges to adoptive families experienced by these agencies and to begin to identify strategies and supports to be provided by OCFS.

The Adoption Legal Specialist provided training to the staff of the ACS Family Court Legal Services (FCLS) in Richmond and Kings Counties on barriers to adoption. The goal of the training was for FCLS staff to be better informed on issues that delay filings and finalizations of agency adoptions in Freed Child Permanency Hearings. The training was well received.

Adoption Team members served on the Adoption Forum Planning Committee of the Adoption Action Network (AAN). The AAN sponsors an annual adoption forum. This year it was entitled, "Critical Decision Making in Child Welfare" in April. It was held at the Hunter College School of Social Work and well received by the attendees.

Adoption Team members provided training on the Comprehensive Adoption Report (CAR). Training on the CAR continues to support use of this format which provides extensive and detailed information, which if not provided to the court could delay adoption finalizations while the court requests additional information.

Adoption Team members met with the ACS Specialized Care Unit to enhance the potential involvement of the unit's freed children in the Parent for Every Child Adoption Opportunities grant project and to support the collaboration of ACS clinical staff regarding implementation of the grant objectives.

The Adoption Unit participated in meetings of the ACS Directors of Homefinding meetings held by the NYC Administration for Children's Services. These meetings continue to provide generalized information on ACS's program areas and policies, and technical information in the areas of recruitment, retention and training. Members also participated in the NYC Recruiters Network meetings. They are facilitated by senior staff from the Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment and Retention Program at SUNY Albany and focus on information sharing and transfer of knowledge among the NYC agency recruitment staff.

At the NYC Adoption Exchange Meetings, Adoption staff present new and current information from OCFS to keep agencies and local departments of social services current on compliance with regulation issues and updates.

During this period, the Adoption Unit held 145 site visits to the NYC Administration for Children's Services and voluntary agencies; completed 12 program reviews of new and existing authorized adoption agencies; and addressed over 95 complaints and requests for information, referral and technical assistance from individuals and organizations.

### **Buffalo Regional Office (BRO)**

The Buffalo Regional Office partnered with the Rochester Regional Office scheduling four Adoption Exchanges during 2009. The Exchanges offer opportunities for district and agency caseworkers and home finders to share information about waiting children as well as present approved adoptive families. Attendance at the Adoption Exchanges ranged from 40 to 75 participants. Additionally, training is offered on a variety of topics impacting the recruitment and retention of adoptive families.

The Western New York Heart Gallery was on display in various locations in the Buffalo Region in 2009. The Heart Gallery features portraits of approximately 25 freed children, as well as portraits of families created through adoption. The Gallery was featured at the Burchfield Penney Art Center at Buffalo State College, the gallery at the Buffalo-Niagara International Airport as well as local banks, community events and activities. The Heart Gallery offers an opportunity to recruit families for specific children as well as educating the public on foster care and adoption. The Heart Gallery is operated by the Coalition of Adoption and Foster Family Agencies (CAFFA).

BRO hosted two Family Fests in Buffalo and in the Southern Tier in 2009. The Family Fests are planned by members of CAFFA and offer opportunities for approved adoptive families to meet and interact with children waiting for an adoptive placement. While the Fests are not a matching event, it provides a safe, fun environment for youth and an opportunity for adults to understand the population of youth in need of a forever family.

The Buffalo Region participated in the Train-the-Trainer program for the National Resource Center's Adoption Competency Curriculum. As a result, a regional training team was developed to implement adoption training in the Buffalo Region beginning in 2010. The curriculum focuses on practice, including assessing and preparing children and families for adoption.

### **Rochester Regional Office (RRO)**

Adoption panel reviews were replaced with a Permanency panel review process in the Rochester Region during 2009. The panel process reviewed 15 cases of children in foster care with a focus on casework practice with emphasis on family engagement noting strengths in the practice as well as barriers to permanency. Participants on the panels included representatives from the local DSS, Family Court, voluntary agency if applicable, and RRO.

Four adoption exchanges were held in Batavia, NY in conjunction with the Buffalo Regional Office. These exchanges allow districts and voluntary agencies to share information regarding children awaiting an adoptive home along with adoptive homes waiting for children. Prospective adoptive parents who have completed the home study process also attend these exchanges for the purpose of introducing themselves and the personal resources they have to offer a child. In addition, every exchange includes a component, which allows the participants an opportunity to learn and build their skills around recruitment and retention. The four exchanges referenced above included the following:

- 1) “Adoption Legal Training- what’s new in Adoption” featured a presentation from Margaret Burt
- 2) “NYSAS and Subsidy”. Staff from NYSAS provided a workshop for staff on the subsidy application process.
- 3) “Teens and Adoption” featured a presentation from “You Gotta Believe” CEO Pat Obrian.
- 4) “Trauma’s impact on children in foster care” presented by R. Tito Del Pilar. The presentation focused on understanding the dynamics of placement, and trauma’s impact on the adoption process.

Rochester Region local districts, in collaboration with the RRO, sponsored a variety of events in conjunction with November as Adoption Month. Participants in all the events included district staff, adoptive families, general public, potential adoption resources, adoption agency staff, and in several cases, staff representing Family Court and OCFS. Some of the events celebrating adoption included the following:

- 1) Chemung County had adoption ceremonies in the courtroom followed by lunch and refreshments.
- 2) Ontario County sponsored an event at the court house celebrating finalizations that occurred during National Adoption Day
- 3) Monroe County sponsored an event that included finalization ceremonies of several adoptions. Numerous judges were in attendance along with dignitaries such as the Mayor of Rochester, the Monroe County Social Services Commissioner and local television personalities. There were several speeches regarding adoption including one particularly heart felt address spoken by an adoptive mother who had the adoption of her child finalized that day along with a poem written and shared by the adoptive child.

The Adoption Resource Network Inc. (ARNI), part of Hillside Family of Agencies, sponsored several events relating to recruitment and retention of families. ARNI sponsored a full day conference, which offered professional development and training regarding transitioning children from foster care to adoption.

Hillside Children’s Center, through the Post Adoption TANF programs, continues to sponsor on-going support groups, respite, counseling for adoptive parents. In addition to support, these groups provide an opportunity for education and skill building regarding topics such as parenting difficult children and dealing with emotional trauma.

In collaboration with the RRO, Children Awaiting Parents Organization (CAP), LDSS and Voluntary Agencies sponsored the HEART GALLERY of Rochester and the Southern Tier. The Heart Gallery displayed photos of children awaiting adoption. The Heart Gallery was on exhibit at the Rochester National Museum of Play during the month of November.

Twenty-five staff from the Rochester and Buffalo Regions participated in a two day Train the Trainer in the Adoption Competency Curriculum offered by the Spaulding National Resource Center on Adoption.

The RRO Adoption Specialist attends the quarterly Adoption Specialist meetings.

There were three FAN (Foster/Adoptive Network) collaborative meetings/workshops in 2009. The workshops support the recruitment and retention foster care initiative for staff from social services districts and voluntary agencies. The first workshop presented focused on retention with the topic of "Handling Diverse Behaviors in Foster/Adoptive Children." The second workshop focused on recruitment with an emphasis on adolescents, "Homes for Teens - Recruitment Strategies and Tools." The third workshop presented a new ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) training to support the recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive parents for the Indian child.

### **Syracuse Regional Office (SRO)**

The CNY Heart Gallery, a child specific and general foster/adoptive parent recruitment project, was on display in eight venues during 2009. The exhibit includes portraits of over 40 waiting children, general information about foster care and adoption, contact information and inquiry log. Publicity for the exhibit may include newspaper announcements, television coverage, information on the venue's website, and informational sessions with agency staff.

The tenth annual Adoption Festival was held in the summer of 2009 and involved 11 families and 20 Waiting Children. The festival is a child specific adoptive parent recruitment event for waiting children in the Syracuse region. The festival includes an opportunity for prospective adoptive families and waiting children to interact in a safe, fun, and engaging environment. The event helps prospective families understand the population of waiting children, dispell myths, and find a positive connection with the participation children. Another postive outcome is the identification of an adult resource or mentor for a child without any adult resources or connections.

A local videographer produced child specific recruitment videos of ten Waiting Children. The videos involved the child sharing thoughts about adoption, families and themselves. The videos were produced for agencies to show use for both child specific and general recruitment for foster/adoptive families. Videos are placed into the NYS Adoption Album website for public viewing.

A regional training titled "A Family for Every Teen", delivered by You Gotta Believe Adoption Agency. The participants included social services districts and voluntary agency foster and adoption caseworkers, supervisors, staff development, and foster/adoptive parents. The training included discussion around techniques for working with youth to identify permanency resources and ways to recruit adoptive families for them.

Additional information on recruitment and retention activities for foster care and adoptive families is available at the OCFS Internet site.

### **Adoption Opportunity Grant Award**

In October 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded OCFS a five-year Adoption Opportunities grant totaling 2.2 million dollars to support an initiative entitled “A Parent for Every Child” that is designed to promote the diligent recruitment of permanent families for freed children in foster care. This project will find permanent families for at least 50 youth who are legally freed because their parents’ rights have been severed and who reside in a facility licensed or operated by the Office of Mental Health or Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, or in OCFS juvenile justice facilities. In addition, the target group includes youth residing in child welfare residential (congregate) care who are legally freed, and have a permanency goal other than adoption. The project will recruit a pool of families willing to adopt youth with special needs and will provide training to assist parents with special parenting requirements to meet the needs of these youth. Year one of the grant was a planning year, however by the end of 2009 significant progress on grant activities had begun. The permanency staff were hired and trained, surveys for a barrier study were disseminated and collected and the children for the intervention and control group were identified. Permanency Specialists received their assigned case loads and had begun case reviews. The project Advisory Board consisting of state, regional, local district, private agency representatives, parents and youth has held two statewide meetings. The Oversight Board, which will assist with cross systems issues, had also been identified.

### **Evaluation of Parent for Every Child Project:**

The OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research developed an evaluation design for the project that calls for a randomized controlled trial to be conducted in each of the three project sites, and has contracted with the Chapin Hall Center for Children to assist in conducting the evaluation. Approximately 175 children who meet the eligibility criteria for the project will be randomly assigned to either an intervention group that will receive services under the initiative or to a control group that will receive services as usual. The randomized trial will address the question: “Do freed children with serious mental health, mental retardation, or criminal justice histories who receive the specialized permanency intervention program achieve permanency at higher rates and sooner than other children with the same characteristics who do not receive the specialized services?” The evaluation will also assess the relative effectiveness of the various program strategies; alone, in combination, and for various subgroups of the target population. Lessons learned from this project will be disseminated to other states so that agencies across the country can benefit from the practices developed for waiting children within the mental health, developmental disability and juvenile justice systems of care.

### **Post Adoption Services**

The continued encouragement of timely adoptions of foster children has resulted in increased attention to the need for services following the adoption. Adoptive parents, service providers and advocates have underscored the importance of a broad range of services provided by specially trained professionals which recognize the unique needs of adoptive families.

In addition, social service districts provide preventive services to those adoptive families experiencing turmoil that threatens to result in placement of their child (ren). Two factors curtailed expansive and effective provision of these post-adoptive services: (1) lack of service providers with expertise to serve adoptive families and (2) reliance on social services districts to routinely develop and deliver (either directly or through purchase) specialized services.

Refinement of our understanding of the unmet service needs of adoptive families is important to OCFS and social service districts for developing programs to deliver services. The availability of uncapped 98% of 65% state reimbursements to social service districts for this purpose allows for targeted district investments in filling gaps in services.

On-going demand for post adoption services promise to distinguish for the state and its social services districts which services must be tailored to the unique circumstances of adoptive parents to achieve a suitable level of efficacy. For example, must a respite program incorporate information on adoption and its impact on family relationships to be effective? This question could be repeated for a wide range of health, mental health, educational and social services. The more information that is garnered through studies, demonstrations and research, the more programs can be provided to facilitate the ongoing success of adoptions.

The Child Welfare Finance Legislation, Chapters 53 and 83 of the Laws of 2002, enacted for a five year period, was extended by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007 to June 30, 2009 and by Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2009 to June 30, 2012. This provides local districts uncapped state matching reimbursement for local spending on protective, preventive, aftercare, independent living and adoption services. OCFS has conducted regional training to train on the implementation of this spending. Among other things, the uncapped reimbursement allows districts to consider expansion of existing services or use of innovative strategies for supporting adoptive families.

### **The Adoption Album**

The Adoption Album is a web-based system which caseworkers throughout New York are using to photo-list children on the Internet, and register and photo-list potential adoptive families. In 2008, OCFS deployed a newly designed Adoption Album which interfaces with CONNECTIONS. In 2009 distance learning iLinc trainings continued on an ongoing basis to introduce new caseworkers to the Adoption Album and provide instruction on navigating the system. One-on-one training is available as needed by phone. OCFS Regional Office Adoption Specialists are also available to provide training and technical assistance.

The Adoption Album allows caseworkers and photo listing contacts to continue the critically important recruitment work of photo listing children freed for adoption and registering families who have expressed an interest in adopting these children. The Adoption Album has always been a valuable resource as a first step in matching children with families and this redesign will encourage greater use of this valuable tool. The time required to photo list a child has been significantly reduced from weeks to, in most cases, the same day as referral to OCFS and workers are now able to upload digital photos. Additionally, New York State families with a completed and approved adoption home study can now register via the internet in the same manner out-of-state families can register. New York State families and out-of-state families interested in registering on New York State's Family Adoption Registry must: (a) complete the form online; and (b) submit the form to New York State Adoption Services (NYSAS) with the appropriate verification identifying that they have an approved home study. NYSAS reviews the registration and the supporting documentation and, if all materials are acceptable, the family is then placed into the Family Adoption Registry. This online form allows an out-of-state family to complete the registration online and electronically submit the information to NYSAS. The family will then mail the appropriate verification to NYSAS. Families can also digitally upload a photo that can also be placed on the Family Photolisting Registry. Once NYSAS receives and reviews the family's information, the family can be registered. The family will receive an e-mail message with notification that their family has been registered. Implementing the online registration eliminates the need for NYSAS to data enter the family's information into the Family Registry and helps to expedite the process of registration. The Adoption Album continues to be an invaluable recruitment tool for providing prospective adoptive parents the ability to view New York State children available for adoption online. The Album provides general information on the individual needs of each child. The internet version of the Adoption Album provides the name and phone number of each child's photo-listing contact on line. This provides prospective adoptive parents the information they need to make an initial inquiry of a child.

There are currently 295 prospective adoptive families registered in the Family Registry. A total of 202 children were adoptively placed since deployment of the new Adoption Album and 285 children were photo listed and 101 photo listings were updated.

### **“Adoption Now” Workgroup**

New York's “Adoption Now” was a collaborative initiative among OCFS, OCA, ACS and, ultimately, all social services districts to hasten the achievement of a safe and permanent home for the children in New York freed for adoption but not yet adopted. By working together to influence the respective systems, barriers that can delay or prevent adoption finalizations were identified in each system and strategies were developed to address them.

In addition, various activities focus on moving children to permanency through adoption. For example, in November of each year, during National Adoption Month, “National

Adoption Day” is held. The Chief Judge and the Commissioners of both OCFS and ACS participate in the festivities honoring that success.

A major accomplishment of Adoption Now was the creation of panels consisting of representatives from OCFS, the Court and ACS to review the status of adoption-ready children on a case-by-case basis. This is a very powerful and effective model that serves many purposes. It helps in the analysis of the children and families awaiting the completion of their adoptions; demonstrates to adoption agencies that all stakeholders are in this together and want to support their efforts to provide permanence through adoption, especially in these very difficult financial times; and helps the collaboration develop strategies focused upon ‘real time’ issues with achievable goals.

Adoption Now reviewed the functioning of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), the Adoption Subsidy Program, Criminal History Record Checks and the SCR. The initial findings suggest that the effective and timely provision of each of these services is dependent upon other sources. The ICPC depends significantly upon the cooperation of other states; the SCR requires local districts to provide case records to help them expedite their processes, etc.

In 2009 the name of the workgroup was changed to Permanency Now to reflect a broadening of focus. The Lawyers’ Guide to Adoption was completed with trainings on the guide scheduled to begin in 2010. Discussions broadened to include adolescent issues such as youth transitioning from care and crossover youth. These issues are largely the work of the Adolescent Strategy Workgroup but Permanency Now was interested in supporting that work if needed. Review of the Court Improvement Project’s assessment of ICPC issues was also shared with the group as was the development of an electronic permanency hearing report.

### **State Central Register Database Checks**

Expediting processes for adoption-related cases for database checks against the SCR and for administrative reviews of cases involving indicated reports of child abuse or maltreatment. Additional training in search techniques is being provided to local districts.

### **Adoption Services**

Development continues on the comprehensive Adoption Discovery Project, a web based system designed to allow data sharing with many stakeholders. Additional enhancements to be accomplished include new functionality to comply with new ICPC provisions, information sharing with other state ICPC offices, management reports and analytical tools. Additional enhancements to the current Adoption Album include development of an integration system for audio and videos of photo listed children. A Memorandum of Understanding was executed by OCFS and the Office of Court Administration to allow family courts direct electronic access to the information maintained by the Putative Father Registry in order for courts to complete searches for registered fathers.

## Adoption Subsidy

Improvements in delivery of adoption assistance continue and include new provisions to provide adoption assistance to adoptive parents prior to finalization, changes to the statutory provisions of continuance of adoption subsidy in the event of the adoptive parent(s) death and recent progress on moving toward delivery of adoption subsidy payments by direct deposit and debit card methods . In July of 2009, Administrative Directive 09-OCFS-ADM-14 Changes in Adoption Subsidy: Medicaid under the Provisions of COBRA, Subsidy Eligibility, and the Review and Approval of the Subsidy Agreement was issued. The purpose of this ADM was to clarify State policy regarding non-Title IV-E subsidy eligible children who may qualify for Medicaid under the provisions of the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1985. This release also implemented the provisions of Chapter 469 of the Laws of 2007 that in certain situations allow adoption subsidy for a child freed for adoption subsequent to his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; and for adoption subsidy to continue to the guardian or custodian of an adopted child whose parent(s) die prior to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Also addressed in this release were the provisions of Chapter 518 of the Laws of 2006 that provide for the continuation of adoption subsidy payments for an adopted child between the ages of 18 to 21 to a legal guardian, or the adopted child, or to a representative payee, if the adopted parent(s) die after the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Although the provisions of Chapter 518 of the Laws of 2006 were previously presented in 06-OCFS-ADM-07, *2006 State Adoption, Termination of Parental Rights and Surrender Legislation*, the procedures needed to fully implement the statutory provisions are presented in this release. This release also implemented changes that streamline the adoption subsidy approval process. Trainings were conducted in all regions of the state with district and authorized agency staff to promote the timely implementation of the provisions of the policy directive.

Development and implementation of a web-based adoption subsidy database began at the end of 2009. This database allows for the electronic completion and submission of adoption subsidy applications from local district and voluntary agencies to OCFS. By eliminating mailing time and the necessity for agencies to submit multiple hardcopies, agencies will realize a cost benefit as well as increased efficiency in submissions as the database will reduce the ability to submit an incomplete application to OCFS. Supporting documentation can be scanned and uploaded to the appropriate subsidy application allowing districts and agencies to approve and submit the entire application with the click of a button. Adoption subsidies could potentially be approved the same day as received by OCFS thereby supporting more timely adoptions. Subsidy applications will be stored within the system allowing for easy access to copies of the application in the future. One of the major barriers to completing Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) requests for children moving out of New York State has been the difficulty adoptive parents face in locating a copy of their child's subsidy. Applications that are created electronically will be accessible to districts, agencies and OCFS as needed to support more timely submissions of amendments, upgrades and ICAMA requests. Training on the new database is provided through distance learning iLinc offerings and will be ongoing as the database is introduced to new users across the state.

**Criminal History Review**

OCFS has expedited processes for criminal history background checks for adoption-related cases. Rapid turnaround of requests for current documentation is being provided as cases are identified through the case review process.

In addition to making improvements in its operational systems, OCFS is bringing additional supports to this effort.

**Mediation**

New York's Quality Enhancement Funds are being invested in mediation programs to help move children through to permanency more quickly.

**TPR Barriers**

A work group including attorneys, judges, social workers and OCFS convened from 2004 to 2008 to explore barriers surrounding the Termination of Parental Rights. This group identified one barrier to adoption related to unclear lines between custody and guardianship, the TPR process and the need to explore methods to expedite appeals. In 2008, legislation was crafted by OCFS and was enacted as Chapter 519 of the Laws of 2008. It clarified the rights and responsibilities of custodians and guardians and created a permanent guardianship.

Other initiatives aimed at expediting adoptions statewide included the following accomplishments:

- Revising the Lawyers Guide to Adoption for the purpose of publishing this document as a statewide guide of the responsibilities of attorneys in the adoption process.
- The Comprehensive Adoption Report (CAR) is now available online for use by social services districts and voluntary agencies. The CAR was developed to provide a standard model/template that will guide practice and training on the contents of an agency's adoption report to be submitted to the court. The CAR provides a guide so that adoption reports prepared and submitted by agencies meet the requirements of State statute and the courts. In NYC, CAR training was provided to ACS, voluntary agency and the court personnel in an effort to initiate use of the CAR in all 5 boroughs.
- Collaborative effort to focus on the needs of older youth in foster care, the services available to them and improving permanency planning for these youth

Collaboration to AdoptUSKids:

The Collaboration to AdoptUSKids is a service offered by the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Children's Bureau. This is a national foster care and adoptive initiative to recruit new foster care and adoptive families for children in our foster care system. At the conclusion of the contract for the Response Recruitment teams in 2009, OCFS has taken on the responsibility of responding to inquiries for all upstate families by linking them to the local agency with responsibility for a child or linking them to the state/county/local agency responsible to provide pre-service training and home studies. The Administration for Children's Services continues to respond to inquiries from New York City, OCFS worked with AdoptUSKids to assist in updating New York State children with overdue or outdated photo listings and assisted AdoptUsKids in their efforts to clean up outdated family information. Discussions between OCFS and AdoptUSKids IT staff continued in 2009 on the potential for integrating the New York State Adoption Album with the AdoptUSKids photolisting site.

ADOPTION MONITORING SYSTEM  
 FREQUENCY COUNTS FOR STATEWIDE  
 WAITING CHILDREN (FREED NOT PLACED) – 1024  
 April 28 2010

Age Group	NUMBER	PERCENT
0 TO UNDER 2	32	3.1
2 TO 5	190	18.6
6 TO 9	197	19.2
10 TO 13	226	22.1
14 TO 17	323	31.5
OVER 17	56	5.5
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TOTAL	1024	100.0

Ethnic groups	NUMBER	PERCENT
WHITE	307	30.0
BLACK	388	37.9
HISPANIC	145	14.2
ASIAN	1	0.1
INTERRACIAL	83	8.1
OTHER	100	9.8
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TOTAL	1024	100.1

Sex	NUMBER	PERCENT
FEMALE	469	45.8
MALE	555	54.2
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TOTAL	1024	100.0

Number of siblings	NUMBER	PERCENT
01	910	88.9
02	43	4.2
03	32	3.1
04	18	1.8
05	11	1.1
06	7	0.7
08	3	0.3
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TOTAL	1024	100.1

## **Institutional Abuse/Maltreatment Investigations (IAB)**

### **Accomplishments 2009-2010**

In 2008, a Governor's Program Bill was introduced and was approved by the legislature impacting Institutional Abuse practice and protocols. Chapter 323 of the Laws of 2008 took effect on January 17, 2009. This legislation changed definitions, practice protocols and outcomes of report investigations.

While OCFS continues to investigate and make determinations in those cases containing allegations of abuse or neglect of children in residential care that are registered by the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and maltreatment (SCR) concerning residential care facilities within New York State, it must do so under new standards. In those cases determined to be indicated, OCFS, through its regional offices, continues to promote the development and implementation of appropriate and effective plans of prevention and remediation. Additionally, there are several new requirements. It is now necessary to establish whether a familial case must be registered at the SCR, whether or not a crime may have occurred and whether a regulatory standard has been violated. In all circumstances, there is appropriate follow up activity required. IAB investigators remain empowered to send letters of concern to those agencies that are found to have programmatic issues regardless of the individual case determination. The new legislation enhances this requirement.

OCFS organized an IAB Quality Assurance Priority into three distinct areas. The first group focused on the development of an updated IAB manual for use by investigators and supervisors. The team determined that this could be accomplished most efficiently by updating the 1996 version of the IAB manual. Chapters were assigned to members and proposed revisions reviewed by the entire team. Due to the change in statute, the manual revisions are being reworked to incorporate necessary changes. A finalized manual will be distributed in 2010. The second team developed a Peer Review Process as a quality assurance mechanism. Quarterly IAB quality assurance case reviews are ongoing. In 2010, the Quality Assurance process will change to incorporate regional office staff into the review sessions. The third team developed a Communication Strategy and staff development recommendation. The work of all three teams continued through 2007 and 2008. The statutory changes were supported by statewide training in 2008 that continued in 2009.

Staff from IAB is working closely with stakeholders in the field to continue to elevate trauma awareness and distribute information regarding trauma informed program models of residential care.

OCFS has also worked collaboratively with stakeholders in the field and in August of 2007, the Automated Restraint Tracking System (ARTS) was brought on line. Each Regional Office hosted a training site for the simultaneous statewide training of all voluntary agencies. This is a web-based system designed to capture critical information regarding each use of physical restraint in residential care agencies. As the database

grows, it will help to inform practice and identify training needs for residential care providers.

OCFS continues to investigate and reach appropriate determinations in reports accepted by the SCR that concern children residing in New York State congregate care facilities. In addition, OCFS will continue its efforts with regard to the development and implementation of appropriate and effective plans of prevention and remediation. OCFS remains focused on improving the timeliness of determinations and feedback to agencies in order to support the development and implementation of meaningful plans of prevention and remediation. IAB continues to promote close, productive working relations between home office and the various regional offices; to maintain a close working relationship between investigative staff and staff with responsibility for foster care and licensing; to coordinate among OCFS and the various State agencies with which it interacts regarding institutional child abuse/maltreatment (State Education Department, Office of Mental Health, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities). Efforts are also focused on the development of ongoing training initiatives.

In order to support IAB activities, creation of an internal OCFS database and a tracking system for incidents of abuse and neglect in residential settings are being explored. This system would allow OCFS to track data elements regarding reports of institutional abuse. The potential exists for OCFS to be able to identify trends in types of allegations, reporting and determinations. This activity is being supported in the OCFS Data Warehouse. Eventually, the data could be analyzed to support activities related to prevention and remediation efforts. Additionally, a tracking system has been developed and revised to support activities relative to the administrative review and fair hearing process.

A comprehensive case review of all IAB cases determined in February of 2008 was completed. The objective of the review was to identify targeted training areas for all IAB staff statewide. This will enable a more focused and effective use of resources. Also in 2008, additional information and training supports were provided regarding trauma informed models of residential care. A three part teleconference series on Trauma and Mental Health was broadcast throughout 2008.

Since the beginning of 2008, OCFS Division of Legal Affairs has been reviewing all recommended determinations made in cases investigated by the Commission on the Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. OCFS has been providing technical assistance and support to investigative staff at CQCAPD.

### **Safety of Children in Residential Care: Establishing Trauma-informed Facility Environments**

OCFS continues to be successful in securing training supports and has sponsored the participation of 16 voluntary agencies in training in the Sanctuary Model® of residential care. This model of organizational change is designed to create a therapeutic community milieu where children and adolescents who have been impacted by trauma can heal and

move forward to positive futures. Full implementation at an agency is expected to take a minimum of three years.

The first five agencies began the process in 2006. In 2008, five additional residential voluntary agencies and nine OCFS facilities joined the process of shifting their practices and procedures to incorporate trauma-sensitive approaches through the adoption of the Sanctuary Model® for organizational change and continuous improvement. In 2009, 16 additional OCFS facilities began the process. The Sanctuary Model®; an evidence based, trauma-informed initiative that is appropriate for residential childcare agencies, supports the program improvement strategy “Improving Child Welfare Outcomes” and helps agencies establish safe environments for staff, youth, families and administrators.

There is a heightened recognition within the child welfare field that a majority of youth placed in residential care have experienced significant traumatic events such as abuse, neglect, loss of loved ones, or family and community violence. Implementation of the Sanctuary Model® is creating safe facility environments to help these young people heal by acknowledging what has happened to them in order to move into lives of promise and fulfilment.

By involving everyone within the organization in comprehensive trauma training, adopting a common language and instituting multi-disciplinary teams that identify necessary changes and develop alternatives, the facility environments become less confrontational and become more focused on treatment. The features of Sanctuary Model® environments, in addition to the multi-disciplinary teams, include twice daily Community Meetings, Safety Plans for youth and staff, Red Flag reviews, psycho-education in trauma, team meetings, treatment planning conferences, a commitment to 7 program principles, and continuous feedback and self evaluation by staff and the resident youth.

As staff begins to better understand the causes of the behaviours of the youth in their care, they will improve and individualize their approaches and begin to see the youth for what has happened to them, as opposed to what they have done. The focus of staff shifts from reacting to behaviours, to helping youth learn to manage their emotions, therefore reducing violence and the need for physical restraints. There is a shift from an environment of control to one of collaboration. Children are encouraged to learn how to make connections between their behaviours and their emotions and to find new ways to help them express themselves productively.

Each facility has a Sanctuary Model Steering Committee comprised of the top decision makers and a Core Group comprised of a broad representation of staff and disciplines within the agency. Within OCFS, a central - Home Office - Steering Committee has been established to support the work of the OCFS facilities in the project.

## **Evaluation of Sanctuary Model**

In fall 2008, the OCFS Bureau of Evaluation and Research initiated a multi-year evaluation of the Sanctuary Model®. Evaluation activities will focus on monitoring changes in institutional culture and practices over time, and will assess the extent to which Sanctuary ideals and tools are being implemented with fidelity to the Sanctuary Model. The findings will help to identify areas in which the model is most successful in order to capitalize upon them and identify weaknesses in order to make improvements.

The Sanctuary Model Evaluation examines whether youth and staff's perceptions of facility climate (e.g., safety, youth-staff relations, communication) and sites' use of sanctuary tools (e.g., community meetings, safety plans) improve over time as programs progress through the three-year implementation process outlined by the Sanctuary Model®. Nine sites, including 4 DJJOY facilities and 5 voluntary agencies, are included in the evaluation. To gather information on how Sanctuary affects program climate, the evaluation team developed two survey instruments – one for staff and one for program youth – that ask about staff-youth interactions, communication, perceptions of personal safety and well-being, and knowledge of Sanctuary tools and concepts. Surveys are being administered once a year at each of the 9 sites included in Cohort #2 of the Sanctuary Roll-Out (4 OCFS facilities, 5 voluntary agencies).

## **Plans for 2010-2011**

In 2010, 16 additional OCFS facilities and five more voluntary agencies have begun the process of adopting a Sanctuary Model® environment to create a residency milieu that supports improved safety and well being of children in their care. Additionally, OCFS anticipates adding six more OCFS facilities in 2011.

## **Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2009-2010**

- **Training and Technical Assistance to Support Social Services District Permanency Planning**

A regional, child welfare training resource project provides district-specific training and technical assistance to improve caseworker, supervisor, and managerial skills, enhance district foster parent recruitment and retention efforts, and to effectively use the legal system to advocate for and obtain permanency for children. Also provides training consultation to OCFS Home Office.

- **Training for New York City Voluntary Agencies**

Training for New York City Voluntary Agencies, development and operation of a training consortium (a network of training providers), provides a competency-based foundation program for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors, and a variety of training resources to voluntary agencies. Technical assistance is provided. A one-day conference for child care staff was also delivered in NYC. In addition, the training

project provides resources to support Children's Services Improved Outcomes for Children initiatives.

99 Training Days

- **Foster and Adoptive Parent Training**

This program consists of several foster/adoptive parent certification preparation components, Foster/Adoptive Parent Preparation and Selection (GPSII/MAPP), Caring for Our Own, Shared Parenting, and Deciding Together. These training programs prepare local district and voluntary agency staff and foster/adoptive parents to lead training groups in their areas on the topics above.

- GPSII/MAPP: A 30 hour preparation and selection program delivered over a period of 10 weeks by districts and agencies to prospective foster and adoptive parents to assess, develop, and strengthen the attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed by parents intending to foster or adopt children.
- Caring For Our Own: Develops program skills needed for local district and agency staff to prepare relatives of children in care for their role as care giver and to provide necessary support.
- Shared Parenting: Provides a four day leader certification program prepares trainers to deliver the Shared Parenting Program to foster parents. The program is also delivered directly as needed.
- Mini-MAPP: Prepares GPSII/MAPP certified trainers to provide an overview of the basic concepts in the GPSII/MAPP training program to child welfare staff and foster and adoptive staff within the agencies.
- Deciding Together: Provides training to individual families to prepare them to foster or adopt.
- COMPASS, the in-service portion of this training program includes basic and advanced courses in such topics as Loss and Separation, Preparing Children for Adoption, Managing Difficult Behaviors, Sexual Abuse, Child Development and Discipline among other.

7795 trainees  
647 training days

- **Therapeutic Foster Boarding Home Training (TFBH)**

TFBH provides training and technical assistance in a set of core problem-solving and intervention skills for foster parents, agency workers, and trainers in therapeutic foster boarding home programs. This program was completely revised in 2008 to infuse trauma informed care throughout the curriculum.

731 trainees  
55 training days

**Behavior Support, Crisis Prevention and Intervention in Residential Settings**

The program focuses on building the competencies of staff to work more effectively and in a positive, therapeutic manner, with children in institutional settings. The training includes techniques on preventing, de-escalating, and intervening in crisis situations. The training leads to certification of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) trainers. In addition to the core program, refresher training and technical assistance is provided to previously certified TCI trainers, to assist them in keeping their certification current. This program also provides training on Institutional Abuse (IAB) Practice and Implications in New York to OCFS employees and staff from residential care agencies who work with IAB and residential care issues.

1,888 trainees

170 training and technical assistance days

- **Child Welfare Training and Technical Assistance**

Provide training and technical assistance to social services districts to improve casework practice and to overcome barriers to permanency for children in care. Provide training manuals and materials in support of OCFS policy and program initiatives.

214 training and technical assistance days

- **Foster/Adoptive Family Recruitment and Retention**

This project offers foster/adoptive parent recruitment materials development for specific county or regional use. Provides districts and voluntary agencies with training and technical assistance in the following areas: training foster/adoptive parents as local or regional recruiters; developing innovative regional area/other area partnerships to enhance recruitment/retention; recruiting and supporting families able to care for sibling groups, special needs children and adolescents; developing innovative recruitment plans and strategies at both the agency and regional level; planning recruitment activities in the context of concurrent planning, ASFA, Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA), Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, and other relevant statutes and directives; and assessing organizational development issues that may impact local recruitment/retention efforts.

336 training and technical assistance days

2175 trainees

- **Post Graduate Certificate Program in Adoption Training**

The ten session post graduate certificate program in adoption therapy provides non-credit bearing advanced education and training for child welfare staff in specialized theories and practices for working with all members of the adoptive triad, including birth mothers and fathers; adoptive mothers and fathers; and the adopted person. The project includes a website to be used for announcement and recruitment purposes. The website also provides an overview of the course, an extensive bibliography and

reading list as well as a complete listing of all students who have completed the course.

13 trainees  
1 offering  
15 training days

- **Health Services for Children in Foster Care**

This project teaches local district and voluntary agency child welfare staff how to facilitate access to health care services for children in care, and how to coordinate services, identify health risk factors and integrate the current health standards into their practice and case management.

251 trainees  
12 training days

### **Training Planned for Federal Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

- The training programs provided in 2009-2010, as described in Goal 2 of the APSR, have not only been judged effective, they continue to reflect an ongoing need. Therefore, all of these training programs will be offered in the coming year. In addition, the following programs will be offered or revised.
- The Office is currently working with the National Resource Center for Adoption to revise their Adoption Competency Curriculum for use in NYS in 2009.
- Supervisory Core Module I Foundations, the introductory course designed for all new supervisors, will be redesigned beginning in 2010 under a grant with the Federal Northeast and Caribbean Implementation Center. This is expected to be a multi-year activity.
- The work of the Social Work Education Consortium will continue: OCFS has developed a Consortium of Schools of Social Work to work in partnership with the agency to elevate public child welfare practice. The Consortium activities include a full range of training and education activities including degree programs for state and local district staff, field instruction, curriculum development as well as short term training and workforce development.

OCFS plans to continue to provide a wide variety of management and computer training, which is available to State and local staff from all programs. These courses are open to managers and staff in the child welfare area as well to those serving in administrative functions that support all programs.

## GOAL #3

VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE, BOTH CHILD AND ADULT,  
WILL BE AFFORDED THE SAFETY AND SUPPORT NECESSARY TO  
ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY (ADULT), AND/OR TO PROMOTE  
THEIR CONTINUED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (CHILD)

**ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

Local districts are required to provide emergency shelter and services to all victims of domestic violence regardless of financial eligibility.

All approved residential and non-residential domestic violence programs in the state are in compliance with the program regulations and offer the core services designed to provide safety and the supports needed to achieve self-sufficiency. NYS is fortunate to have a mandated funding stream and federal family violence funds to help support these initiatives.

**2009 – 2010 PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

- In eleven counties CPS and DV staff will continue to implement a joint protocol to improve safety outcomes for families affected by child abuse and domestic violence.

Baseline: 11 counties were funded to implement protocol to work jointly on cases with both domestic violence and child abuse in 2009.

- Approved residential and non-residential services will be provided to adult victims of domestic violence and their children in an effort to offer safety and self-sufficiency options.

Baseline: In 2009, 7,132 adults and 8,658 children were sheltered in residential programs and 34,567 adults and 11,376 children were served in non-residential programs. During that year there were 163 licensed residential programs with 3,006 beds (excluding safe home beds) and 87 approved non-residential programs.

- All CPS workers in NYS will receive the mandated DV training in accordance with Chapter 280 of the Laws of 2002.

Baseline: In 2009, 357PS workers were trained for a total of 2,109 workers that have completed the mandated DV training since it's inception in 2005.

- 5 additional county social service districts will be visited and provided with Domestic Violence Profiles. OFCS will assist these counties in planning and improving their domestic violence services after evaluating the profiles.

Baseline: In 2009, 5 county social service districts were visited and provided with Domestic Violence Profiles. OCFS assisted these counties in planning and improving their domestic violence services after evaluating the profiles. The counties visited are in various stages of reviewing self improvement plans due to their individual situations and self assessments.

## **STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Domestic Violence Services**

The prevention of and intervention in domestic violence is a central component of New York State's approach to preserving and strengthening families after the passage of the State Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 1987 (Social Service Law Section 459-a et. seq.), OCFS completed a multitude of regulatory, funding and licensing initiatives which resulted in major changes in the way domestic violence programs are funded and services are provided to victims of domestic violence. Social services districts are required to refer victims of domestic violence, whether eligible or ineligible for public assistance, to available licensed residential programs and reimburse such programs on a per diem basis which is established by OCFS and approved by the New York State Division of the Budget. Social services districts are also required to provide non-residential services for victims of domestic violence directly or to purchase such services from a residential or non-residential domestic violence program. As a result, domestic violence programs, over a multi-year period, have become increasingly mainstreamed into the social services delivery system. These programs continue to offer the safety and support needed to assist victims of domestic violence and their children in becoming self sufficient and living free of violence.

OCFS is responsible for funding, licensing, approving and monitoring these programs and providing the technical assistance needed to support quality and comprehensive services. This work requires on-going collaborative efforts with other state agencies, social services districts, service providers and Domestic Violence victims and their families.

### **Accomplishments for 2009-2010**

- Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FFVPSA) Funds – In 2009, OCFS received an FFVPSA award of \$4,251,001. Five percent of the funds (\$212,550) were applied to administrative expenses. \$274,000 supported continuation of CPS/DV collaboration projects, and the remaining \$3,764,451, in the amount of \$38,808 each, was issued to 97 approved residential and/or non-residential domestic violence programs. The grants support program maintenance, health and safety improvements and/or program enhancements.

- Domestic Violence Information System (DVIS) – During 2009, the Domestic Violence Information System, which is used to support the statistical requirements of the mandated annual report, continued to be refined. The goal of the system is to improve the accuracy and timeliness of the annual report and make related information more accessible to users and other stakeholders. DV providers entered their 2009 data directly into the system. The only exception being NYC providers who already report data to the Human Resources Administration (HRA) in NYC. Our data system was able to import data from the HRA system directly so these providers would not have to duplicate efforts.
- CPS/DV initiatives – During 2009, significant progress was made towards improving safety outcomes for families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
  - 11 CPS/DV collaboration projects were funded in 2009. The collaborations have an out stationed domestic violence advocate at the local CPS office. To facilitate reporting outcome data, common outcomes were used by the projects.
  - OCFS worked on coordinating the implementation of the CPS/DV co-location model and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan strategy to improve safety outcomes for families impacted by both domestic violence and child abuse/maltreatment. An advisory group of representatives from the court, domestic violence and child protective services fields has created draft guidelines for domestic violence programs to collaborate with child protective services to improve outcomes for families impacted by both child abuse and domestic violence.
  - A 2-day mandated domestic violence training for CPS workers was again provided to local department of social services districts. OCFS contracts with The Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to provide the training. This training is designed to improve CPS capacity to intervene with families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
  - OCFS is currently contracting with OPDV to provide domestic violence training to CPS supervisors in the local social services districts. Curriculum is being developed and a pilot training is scheduled to be provided before the end of 2010.
- Non-residential Programming – Additional efforts were made to support the network of non-residential domestic violence programs across the state. In 2009, county plans updates were reviewed by OCFS. Included in the plans are the appendices for approving non-residential domestic violence programs. Also during this year, staff conducted site visits to many of the stand alone non-residential domestic violence programs. In response to site visits and county plan reviews, home and regional office staff, together with local districts, addressed regulatory, contractual and best practice issues

- Domestic Violence Regulatory Workgroup – OCFS has co-facilitated a Domestic Violence Regulatory Workgroup with OPDV and the Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance. The workgroup includes domestic violence program and local social services representatives, the intent of which is to review and recommend changes to the domestic violence regulations which have existed unchanged for approximately 20 years.
- Fatherhood Initiatives – OCFS has been working with national consultants and experts in the field of Fatherhood initiatives to bring the issue of DV into the forefront. The goal is to find ways to keep victims safe when DV is involved while still working with fathers to improve their parenting skills and interactions with their children. OPDV held three OCFS supported regional fatherhood forums for local department of social services staff across the state.
- Supervised Visitation – OCFS participated in the development of a supervised visitation protocol for domestic violence involved families. Partners included: The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, The NY Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and Oswego County Opportunities.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

#### Initiatives

- OCFS will continue to support CPS/DV collaborations. These collaborations are designed to improve safety for families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse/maltreatment. Other anticipated outcomes include preventing reoccurrence of child abuse/maltreatment, and reducing out-of-home placements. Draft guidelines for domestic violence programs to collaborate with child protective services have been developed. These include screening questions to assist in identifying domestic violence and focus on new ways to work with batterers while keeping safety of the victims of paramount concern. Office staff will continue to assist in the provision of domestic violence training to child protective workers and other child welfare workers across the state.
- A 2-day mandated domestic violence training for CPS workers will continue to be provided to local department of social services districts. OCFS contracts with The Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to provide the training. This training is designed to improve CPS capacity to intervene with families experiencing both domestic violence and child abuse and maltreatment.
- A one day domestic violence training for CPS supervisors will be rolled out in 2010. OCFS is working with OPDV to provide the training with the purpose of

giving CPS supervisors the tools they need to assist CPS caseworkers when dealing with CPS cases that involve domestic violence.

- Non-residential Programming – OCFS will continue to support the network of non-residential domestic violence programs across the state. County plans updates are reviewed by OCFS. Included in the plans are the appendices for approving non-residential domestic violence programs. Staff will also conduct site visits to many of the stand alone non-residential domestic violence programs. In response to site visits and county plan reviews, home and regional office staff, together with local districts, will address regulatory, contractual and best practice issues.
- OCFS will continue to license and approve residential domestic violence programs and distribute Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and TANF funds to support the viability of residential and non-residential programs.
- The internet based DV Information allows staff to identify information that will be useful to programs and communities in identifying trends and gaps to assist in further supporting and enhancing services for victims of domestic violence. OCFS will collaborate with other state agencies on collecting and reporting information that can support community development. Data collected will be used to provide Domestic Violence Profiles to each county social service district to assist them in evaluating the domestic violence services provided by their county. Also, this information will help them recognize any areas which may be lacking and assist them in planning and improving overall services for victims of domestic violence in their particular county.

OCFS will review and approve county consolidated services plan updates as they relate to non-residential domestic violence services and will provide technical assistance to counties and programs as needed to comply with the non-residential program regulations and to provide quality services.

OCFS will continue to collaborate with other state agencies to help achieve consistency and coordination regarding funding and program quality. The office will participate in the OPDV Advisory Council and the data, prevention and funding subcommittees.

### **NYCRO Foster Care/Domestic Violence Unit**

#### **Foster Care/Domestic Violence 2009-2010 and Projections for 2010-2011:**

The Foster Care/Domestic Violence (FC/DV) unit has engaged in activities that have focused on new Federal and State initiatives to include: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008, Kinship Guardianship, Federal Medical Assistance Percentage, Title IVB – Monthly Case Work Contacts, Permanency Panels, Adolescent Work Group Strategies/YIP and Children and Family Services Review Baseline Case

Record Review and implementation of the new SILP and Transitional Plan regulations.

**Foster Care and Domestic Violence Reviews and Program Development:**

The FC/DV unit conducted assessments and licensing activities of domestic violence and foster care programs. The program staff completed thirteen voluntary agency reviews and recertified and reviewed fifteen domestic violence programs. The unit assisted in two joint reviews with the Administration for Children Services of foster care residential programs.

The unit processed a number of proposals to increase Domestic Violence beds throughout New York City. In 2009, the unit approved twenty-four (24) new shelter facilities representing an increased bed capacity of 147. An additional 180 bed increase has been requested by HRA for approval in October 2010 and 2011 and remains pending at this time.

The FC/DV unit approves and licenses new foster care programs. In 2009, the unit approved a hard-to-place mother/child group home and the conversion of a program to a three-tiered hard-to-place forty-six-bed program based on the Sanctuary Model. The unit continues to process the certification and licensing of the two (2) State Education Department facilities.

The FC/DV unit processed agency requests for rate adjustments to support increases in services. Several agencies requested intensification rates for therapeutic foster boarding home programs or hard-to-place congregate care programs. In addition, we have begun working with agencies who have expressed an interest in restructuring their congregate care programs to have only six bed facilities, which offer a more home-like setting for youngsters who are in need of a higher level of care.

The FC/DV unit monitors Pre-placement Services (PPS) through monthly data review of the number of children admitted to or remaining at the Children's Center on a monthly basis. Foster care staff, along with support from NYCRO CPS/PPAI units, conducts quarterly unannounced visits to PPS. In 2009, the unit completed three (3) unannounced visits to PPS. Daily reports of the children's placement data is reviewed, analyzed, compiled and included in the Commissioners Monthly Report, and sent to ACS.

The Unit conducted a Voluntary Agency Safety and Risk Review of all Agency Operated Boarding Homes and facilities that accept the placement of OCFS youth. The reviews included a comprehensive assessment of the program, staff capacity to manage the youth and identified training needs.

**Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2009-2010**

- **Domestic Violence Training for Child Welfare Caseworkers**

This training provides caseworkers with the knowledge to identify domestic violence within their caseloads, to conduct comprehensive safety and risk assessments, and to develop service plans that promote safety, permanency, and well being.

207 trainees  
12 offerings  
24 training days

- **Domestic Violence Training for Child Protective Services Caseworkers**

This training provides CPS staff and supervisors with the knowledge and skills to identify domestic violence within their caseloads, to conduct comprehensive safety and risk assessments, and to develop intervention strategies in cases where domestic violence is present that promote child safety, permanency, and well being. Chapter 280 of the NYS Laws of 2002 requires this mandatory training for all CPS workers.

357 trainees  
22 offerings  
45 training days

### **Training Planned for 2010-11**

The training provided in the current year has not only been judged effective but also continues to reflect an ongoing need. Therefore, the Domestic Violence and Child Welfare training, as described in Goal 3 of the last APSR, will be offered in the coming year. In addition, the following course is now complete and being offered to LDSS staff and supervisors as needed.

### **Domestic Violence Training for Child Protective Services Caseworkers**

This two-day training is designed to provide a comprehensive skill base for child protective workers. Course topics will include: The Nature and Dynamics of Domestic Violence; The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children; Harm Experienced by Children, Prevention of Foster Care Placement, Legal Remedies, Cultural Factors Involved in Responding to Domestic Violence, Obstacles to Leaving, and Coordination of Services and Community Resources Including Domestic Violence Service Providers. The training will be delivered to CPS workers in LDSS offices throughout the State.

360 trainees  
18 offerings  
36 training days

### **Domestic Violence Training for Child Welfare Staff**

Provides training in Domestic Violence including the dynamics of family abuse and safety planning interventions for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors who are

working with families experiencing domestic violence. Special consideration is given to preparing these caseworkers to conduct case planning to meet the needs of children.

360 trainees  
18 offerings  
36 training days

GOAL #4

ADOLESCENTS IN FOSTER CARE  
AND AT-RISK TEENS IN RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
WILL DEVELOP THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS  
NECESSARY FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

**Objective:**

OCFS will increase the number of foster care youth and former foster care youth who will be able to make a successful transition to self-sufficiency and who will be able to develop into healthy, functional citizens with permanent attachments to supportive adults, families and communities.

**Actions and Benchmarks:**

1. Workgroup will be formed to plan for the presentation of educational and vocational forums targeted to foster care youth, service providers, foster parents and the community, locations and dates of regional forums identified, materials to be distributed developed.
- 1.1a Six regional forums will be held and materials distributed.

**ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS**

In 2009 the number of youth with a goal of Independent Living now called *Another Planned Living Arrangement with an adult resource* or APLA was 3,072 or 12.8% of the total number of children in care. This number continues the upward trend from the previous year.

Of the youth discharged from care during 2009, 1,504 or 11.2% were discharged to APLA. This represents a decrease from the previous year of 0.5 %.

The mean length of stay at time of discharge for youth with a goal of APLA is 6.3 years. This is the same as in the previous year.

In 2009, 31.8% of the youth leaving care after their fourteenth birthday had spent three or more consecutive years in care. Thus, for these youth, their residential care experience

extends over a period of time in their development when the acquisition of self-sufficiency skills is very important.

## **STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Independent Living Activities**

#### *Program Access*

The Independent Living Program for foster care youth is directly administered by OCFS for the facilities it operates, each of the 58 social services districts, and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (hereinafter included in the reference to social services district) in New York State. Social services districts have the option of providing independent living services to foster care youth either directly or through a purchase of services contract. Each social services district's Independent Living Program must have available the array of services described below.

The Independent Living Skills program provides youth in OCFS direct care facilities, which are found in several locations throughout the State, twice-weekly life skills training sessions. In addition, youth returning to the community continue to receive community living skills training.

The Education and Training Voucher program for foster care youth and former foster care youth, including youth currently in or discharged from OCFS direct care facilities, is directly administered by the Orphan Foundation of America under contract with OCFS, with the cooperation of local social services districts.

#### *Program Administration*

OCFS is the State agency responsible for administering the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), including the newly established Federal Education and Training Voucher program carried out under this plan. OCFS has a strong commitment to supporting positive youth development and assisting youth in their transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. OCFS and its predecessor agency have been responsible for administering the federally funded Title IV-E Independent Living Program for foster care youth in New York State since the program's inception in 1987.

#### *Program Description*

New York State has a state-supervised, locally administered child welfare system. New York's Independent Living Program and Education and Training Voucher Program for foster care and former foster care youth is administered by the social services districts. In addition, OCFS has direct service responsibilities for the Independent Living Program for

youth adjudicated as juvenile delinquents receiving care in our direct care residential centers.

### **Independent Living Program**

New York State's Independent Living Program for foster care youth, which is operational on a statewide basis, is designed to help youth who are under the responsibility of social services districts or the State to develop skill in areas that promote self-sufficiency. The Independent Living Program consists of the following service components:

- A. Assessment Services and Case Planning activities include the setting of a permanency planning goal and documentation of case planning and service provision in the Uniform Case Record, self-identified goals and activities of the foster child and at a minimum, joint discussion of the plan semi-annually. Assessment services must include educational and vocational assessments as well as documentation of Life Skills competencies as a minimum, with semi-annual assessments and modifications of the plan to reflect continued growth and learning.

Upon discharge, the social services district, in consultation with the youth, must identify any persons, services or agencies that would help the child maintain and support him/her and must assist the child to establish contact with such agencies, service providers, or persons by making referrals and by counseling the child about these referrals prior to discharge. In addition, each youth who will be discharged to Independent Living must receive a written 90-day notification of discharge, including the established discharge plan. The plan developed in consultation with the youth also outlines coordination of services otherwise available to the youth.

- B. Educational Services are integral parts of the Independent Living plan in helping youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment.
  1. Academic Support Services are provided to assist youth in achieving literacy and basic academic skills required for completing a high school degree program or equivalency or, where appropriate, to help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary education institutions. Academic Support Services include, but are not limited to, educational and career assessment and counseling, tutorial and mentoring services, examination preparation and resource and referral services. These services, particularly the mentoring services, should provide personal and emotional support to youth and promote interactions with dedicated adults.
  2. Vocational Training, which should be selected on the basis of assessments of interests and aptitudes, is provided, where appropriate, to those youth in foster care who will not pursue post-secondary education or who may not

graduate from high school before their 20th birthday. Remedial education is required prior to the provision of the vocational training for youth with limited academic proficiency. Vocational training includes, but is not limited to, training programs in a marketable skill or trade or formal on the job training. Vocational training may include two-year college programs with specific vocational objectives, occupational training supported by other State or federal funds or provided by organizations, which have demonstrated effectiveness in providing such training. Agencies will advocate and arrange for youth with special needs to receive specialized assessments in order to qualify them as eligible for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), mental health or other specialized services.

3. Life Skills Training offers, at a minimum, job search, career counseling, locating housing/apartments, budgeting and financial management skills, alcohol and substance abuse prevention, preventive health activities, shopping, cooking and house cleaning.

Youth should be provided with experiential learning or practice opportunities in all areas under the guidance of coaches or mentors.

- C. Independent Living Stipends are provided to foster care youth who are actively participating in the Independent Living programs and serve as an incentive to participate in the program; provide money management experience; and provide the means where savings can accumulate to assist in the transition to independent living.
- D. Aftercare Services are provided to former foster care youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years and include financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services. Aftercare services are required for any youth over the age of 16 who is discharged to Independent Living through a trial discharge period. Trial discharge is required for every child discharged to independent living. Custody of the youth is retained for at least six months and certain requirements for casework contacts and service provision apply. The trial discharge period may continue until a youth reaches the age of 21. If a youth loses housing during the period of trial discharge, the social services district must assist the youth to find other appropriate housing or replace the youth in a foster care setting, if necessary. In addition, when custody ceases, the social services district must maintain supervision of the youth until the youth is 21 years of age. Supervision includes casework contacts, referral to needed services, including income and housing services, with sufficient follow-up so that the youth has begun to receive the necessary services.
- E. Room and Board Services, as defined include, but are not necessarily limited to, money for rent, ongoing maintenance (e.g. utilities), furnishings and start-up costs generally associated with renting an apartment, (e.g. money for security deposits

on apartments or a utility deposit). For a residence to be considered appropriate under room and board services there needs to be a reasonable expectation that the housing the youth enters will be available to the youth for at least 12 months. Appropriate residence proposed will exclude shelter for adults, shelter for families, or any other congregate living arrangement that houses more than 10 unrelated persons, with the exception of college dormitories or new, innovative models which provide intensive employment or other supportive services in residential settings. In addition, youth receiving room and board services will be required to be supervised. Supervision will include at least monthly contact with the youth if the youth has not sustained adequate housing and income continuously for six months. Additionally, face-to-face quarterly contacts would be required. Quarterly casework contacts are required to be maintained for youth who have sustained adequate housing and income continuously for the past six months.

New York State's approach to room and board services affords social services districts the flexibility to determine how much of their Independent Living federal allotment (up to thirty percent) they will spend on room and board services and whether they will provide limited housing assistance (e.g. security deposits on apartments) or a more complete package of housing services. This approach will support the development of creative strategies to assist youth in a successful transition to adulthood. Social services districts that choose to provide room and board services must establish written policies and procedures for room and board services that address:

- The categories of youth that will be provided room and board services; including if room and board will be provided to the optional category of eligible youth who left care before attaining the age of 18; the maximum levels of funding for the provision of room and board assistance to former foster care youth who aged out of foster care at 18, 19 or 20, but who have not attained the age of 21; and the expenses that will be covered under the room and board program; and
- The maximum dollar amount that will be paid to any youth for room and board assistance; the length of time room and board assistance can be provided to eligible youth; and any stipulations related to employment or school for the provision of room and board

In addition, New York State provides preventive housing services, including rent subsidies of up to \$300 per month, and up to three years, to youth in foster care who have a goal of independent living when the acquisition of housing is needed to complete the discharge.

In New York State, social services districts have the option of providing room and board services for youth who left foster care because they attained 18 years of age, but have not yet attained 21 years of age. These services may be provided for youth upon discharge from foster care or at a later point in time, provided the youth has not yet attained the age

of 21. In addition, social services districts have the option to provide room and board services to former foster care youth who were in foster care and eligible for Independent Living Services while in care, but who left foster care before they attained the age of 18.

### **Services to Youth**

New York State has a state-supervised, locally administered child welfare system. New York's Independent Living Program and Education and Training Voucher Program for foster care and former foster care youth is administered by the social services districts. In addition, the OCFS has direct service responsibilities for the Independent Living Program for youth adjudicated as juvenile delinquents receiving care in our direct care residential centers.

### **OCFS Direct Residential Care**

OCFS directly operates the Independent Living Skills Program for its direct care residential population as part of the Focus Intervention Process-counseling program. Youth prescriptively receive Independent Living sessions based upon their risk evaluation scores. The program is designed to help youth improve their capacity to make good decisions and develop needed skill sets.

OCFS has identified nine life skill modules as primary interventions to address recidivism risk factors for youth in OCFS direct care juvenile justice settings to better prepare youth to transition to self-sufficiency. The modules include:

#### *Making Good Decisions*

- Building Self-Esteem and Awareness
- Youth and the Law
- Employment
- Community Resources
- Relationships
- Parenting

To further meet the needs of youth at risk, an Independent Living Skills Community Based Curriculum was developed for those youth who have been released from residential care and are on aftercare status. The course is outcome based, highly interactive and includes a variety of learning strategies including discussions, experimental activities, and simulations. Facilitators are encouraged to have youth practice the skills taught in a community based setting and begin to develop community resources. This curriculum is a four-month program, which corresponds to the average length of stay for OCFS placed youth who are on aftercare status.

The following is a list of the modules in this curriculum:

Developing Community Resources and Transportation Skills  
Developing Employment and Money Management Skills  
Developing Housing/Home Management & Healthy Living Skills  
Developing Media Awareness and Skills for Parenting

### **Services and Supports for Youth in local district custody**

#### **Accomplishments for 2009-2010**

New York State's Permanency legislation, Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, brought about many changes to laws that will affect adolescents. The law includes a requirement to provide life skills services to foster care youth beginning at age 14, regardless of the youth's permanency goal. Implementing OCFS regulations were initially filed on an emergency basis. These regulations became effective as final regulations on December 20, 2006. With these new regulations, the discharge-planning goal of independent living has been renamed "Discharge to another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource." This permanency planning goal is to assist foster care youth in their transition to self-sufficiency by connecting the youth to an adult permanency resource, equipping the youth with life skills and, upon discharge, connecting the youth with any needed community and/or specialized services. An adult permanency resource is a caring committed adult who has been determined by a social services district to be an appropriate and acceptable resource for a youth and is committed to providing emotional support, advice and guidance to the youth and to assist the youth as the youth makes the transition from foster care to responsible adulthood.

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 provides individual states with the option of allowing young people to remain eligible for Medicaid up to the age of 21. New York State law was amended by Chapter 58 of the Laws of 2008 to provide Medicaid coverage to youth under age 21 who were in foster care on or after their eighteenth birthday without regard to an income or resource test. This provision became effective January 1, 2009.

The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, (P.L. 110-351), which went into effect on October 7, 2008, includes requirements for a transition plan for youth age 18 and older exiting foster care. Implementing OCFS regulations were filed on an emergency regulations pertaining to the transition plan requirements. OCFS regulations require that whenever a child will remain in foster care on or after child's 18th birthday, the agency with case management, case planning or casework responsibility for the foster child must begin developing a transition plan with the child 180 days prior to the child's eighteenth birthday or, where the child is consenting to remain in foster care after his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, 180 days prior to the child's scheduled discharge date. The transition plan must be completed 90 days prior to the scheduled discharge, and must be personalized at the direction of the child. The transition plan must include specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors, continuing support services, and work force supports and

employment services. The transition plan must be as detailed as the foster child may elect.

New York State addresses the needs of youth of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence through the following activities/services such as: assessment and case planning activities, after care services, self sufficiency training and room and board services.

OCFS' Supervised Independent Living (SILP) Program assists older youth in making the transition to self-sufficiency. On February 13, 2008, new OCFS regulations were adopted governing the approval and operation of Supervised Independent Living Programs and Supervised Independent Living units. The regulatory amendments implement the legislative change enacted by Chapter 160 of the Laws of 2004. The regulations enable authorized agencies that operated supervised independent living programs approved by OCFS to certify homes or apartments as supervised independent living units. The benefit of authorized agencies operating supervised independent living programs and certifying supervised independent living units, is to facilitate expanded use of supervised independent living programs and increase the number of older youth having access to and placed in these programs. In addition, the regulatory change adds the definition of a Supervised Independent Living Unit. Supervised Independent Living Unit means a home or apartment certified in accordance with OCFS regulations by an authorized agency approved by OCFS to operate a supervised independent living program for the care of up to four youth, including their children. Each unit must be located in the community separate from any of the authorized agency's other congregate dwellings. Youth under supervision live on their own in the community in apartments or homes that more closely approximate the type of living quarters youth will be residing in after they are discharged. To participate in the program, youth must be between 16 and 21 years of age, have been in foster care for at least 45 consecutive days immediately preceding the placement in the program or have been in the care and custody or the custody and/or guardianship of the local commissioner of the social services district in a status of trial discharge. Youth must be visited in their unit at least twice per week. The services must provide youth with opportunities to achieve positive outcomes and make successful transitions to self-sufficiency.

To support the development of these skills by youth, OCFS currently offers its Independent Living Core Curriculum, "Introduction to Self-Sufficiency," to child welfare caseworkers in voluntary authorized agencies and social services districts, working with adolescents in foster care who will be discharged to independent living. This outcome-based training program is designed to give caseworkers and caregivers the knowledge, values, and skills that they need to prepare youth to lead self-sufficient and productive lives after they leave care. The Independent Living Core Training Program was developed in partnership with the Adolescent Services Resource Network staff (formerly known as the Independent Living Training Network), a network of four regionally based training centers, which provides training and technical assistance to those preparing youth 14-21 for self-sufficiency, and an advisory committee of social services district and voluntary authorized agency caseworkers, administrators and caregivers. The Independent Living Core is interactive and focuses on building the skills needed to achieve positive outcomes for youth through the use of case scenarios, group work and

role-plays. The Independent Living Core is comprised of five days of classroom training, pre-training reading, and on-the-job training activities.

In addition to the Independent Living Core Training Program, OCFS provides a series of advanced courses for caseworkers that have completed the Independent Living Core. These programs highlight skill building around issues such as education and employment, and accessing community resources. Regionally requested training and technical assistance are also given through the Adolescent Services Resource Network. The Network offers regional training conferences and an annual “Youth Speakout” that gives foster care youth the opportunity to voice their concerns and feelings about being in placement, to State and local administrators, family court staff, and of course, their peers.

OCFS, in conjunction with the Adolescent Services Resource Network, conducts ongoing needs assessments of social services district and voluntary authorized agency training needs around working with youth in care. Additionally, OCFS Regional Offices provide periodic technical assistance and monitoring of Independent Living service provision. This allows programs to be responsive to emerging needs.

Foster and adoptive parents need many of the same skills and abilities that caseworkers need to prepare adolescents to live self-sufficiently. Using the Independent Living Core concepts, OCFS has developed in-service training that meets the specific needs of this group and the training curriculum for foster/adoptive parents is now available.

Staff working directly with youth in OCFS direct care facilities receives training on how to use the Independent Living Skills Curriculum and in innovative presentation techniques. The Annual Training Symposium provides an additional two-day formal training opportunity for all direct care Independent Living Skills providers.

A practice guidance paper has been issued to provide social services districts and voluntary agencies, and the OCFS Division of Juvenile Justice and Opportunities for Youth with a new framework for practice with adolescents to strengthen services to adolescents and improve their achievement of permanency. A tool for monitoring adolescent services has been revised and is being used by OCFS Regional Offices to help social services districts strengthen services to adolescents. The new practice framework recognizes for adolescents to achieve functional independence they must be provided with life skills development and a connection with at least one adult permanency resource to assist them after they are discharged from foster care. Older adolescents in foster care must continue to be provided with opportunities to identify adoption resources and obtain a permanent home. The new practice framework also recognizes that youth who are discharged from placement settings should be provided with resources to support them moving into the community.

On June 16, 2009, the Office issued 09-OCFS LCM-08 advising local social services districts of the process for applying for FFY 2009-2010 Education and Training Voucher program funds, the process of selecting program participants, and information on eligible

expenditures and match requirements. The priorities for selecting eligible participants for the Education and Training Voucher program for FFY 2008-2009 were as follows: (1) Priority is given to youth over the age of 21 who had received an ETV award in 2008-2009 who continue to be enrolled in and attending a post-secondary educational or vocational training program and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program; (2) Second priority is for any other youth who received an ETV award in FFY 2008-2009; (3) Third priority is for youth who are 20 years of age and will be 21 by July 1, 2010, and who are enrolled in and attending a post-secondary or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program. These youth would not have received an ETV award in FFY 2008-2009. (4) Fourth priority is for youth who are 17, 18, 19 and 20 years of age who are enrolled in a post-secondary or vocational training program and making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.

A White Paper on: Educational Opportunities for Youth in Care has been developed which provides statistics, background and research information on the importance of enhancing post-secondary education and vocational training opportunities for youth in care.

#### Transition Plans

On August 26, 2009 an Administrative Directive, 09-OCFS-ADM 16 Transition Plan Requirements for Youth 18 and Older Aging Out of Foster Care was issued to districts and agencies transmitting the newly required Transition Plan Form. Districts and agencies are now required to document transition plans on the form for youth exiting foster care who are 18, 19 and 20 years of age. This new Transition Plan form is intended to assist districts and agencies in developing transition plans with youth that are youth driven and cover the areas that are required by law and regulations. The Transition Plan Form consists of two parts: Part One: Transition Plan Discussion and Part Two: Transition Plan Update and Summary. The questions on the Transition Plan Discussion form are intended to be used by a worker, over a period of time beginning 180 days before the youth's scheduled discharge from care, to engage and guide a youth in discussions about the youth's plans after leaving care. The Transition Plan Discussion form must be completed 90 days prior to the youth's scheduled discharge. Part Two: Update and Summary form provides a comprehensive snapshot of a youth's transition plans at 90 days prior to the youth's scheduled discharge. Training has been developed on the transition plan form and is being piloted in districts and agencies.

OCFS is aware of the amended section 475(5)(H) of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requiring that prior to the youth's emancipation from foster care, the caseworker must develop a personalized transition plan as directed by the youth. Additionally, with regard to P.L. 111-148, New York State is required to insure that the transition plan, conducted during the 90 day period immediately prior to the date on which the child will turn 18 years of age, or such greater age as the title IV-E agency may elect in accordance with section 475(8)(B)(iii) of the Act, include "information about the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the child if the child becomes unable to

participate in such decisions and the child does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized under State law to make such decisions, and provides the child with the option to execute a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under State law.” OCFS insures that it will be in compliance and have a title IV-E Plan amendment submitted reflecting this requirement by December 31, 2010.

### Youth in Progress (YIP)

The OCFS’ new framework for practice also supports youth involvement in improving the child welfare system. Youth In Progress, commonly referred to as YIP, is the New York State Foster Care Youth Leadership Team. YIP was established in 2003 and is comprised of teams of youth leaders, each with an adult mentor, from each of the six regional foster care youth leadership groups. Activities of the regional groups are supported by participation of OCFS Regional Office Liaisons, the New York State Adolescent Services Resource Network and other OCFS partners. The motto of YIP is “We are Today’s Youth, Tomorrow’s Leaders.” The mission of Youth in Progress is:

“To enhance and advance the lives of today’s and tomorrow’s foster care youth by supporting their sense of self and responsibility. To do this, we pledge to educate everyone involved in the various systems. Youth In Progress members represent, to the realities of this experience.”

The Ongoing Goals of Youth In Progress are to:

- Raise public awareness of the experiences of youth in care;
- Increase youth involvement in all systems that touch their lives;
- Empower youth through the development of leadership and decision-making skills;
- Improve policies and practices to assist youth transition out of foster care; and
- Increase awareness, availability, and participation in services provided to youth transitioning out of care.

From 2003 to the present, YIP has achieved an impressive number of results including:

- co-writing a handbook for youth in foster care;
- holding regional speak-outs;
- participating in the filming of a video to accompany the handbook;
- enacting regional distribution plans for the handbook;
- producing a video on clothing;
- developing a proposal on clothing in partnership with OCFS which was incorporated into an Informational Letter issued by OCFS to social services districts and authorized voluntary agencies on meeting the clothing needs of foster care youth ages 12 through 20 years of age;
- Producing a video to address issues related to the stereotyping of youth in foster

- care;
- Continuing to meet with state legislators and are participating in local, statewide and national/events featuring Youth Voice.
- Becoming trained and certified by Foster Club, a national organization, to teach other youth about the importance of permanency for older youth in foster care. This training is being used in New York State to train service providers as well as youth.

In addition, each year Youth In Progress in partnership with OCFS, produce four informational resource guides for youth in care. To date, we have developed pamphlets on: the YIP mission; clothing allowances; privacy issues; sibling placement; pregnancy and parenting; law guardians; Chafee Foster Care Independence Program; college/vocational training; and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Questioning youth (LGBTQ) issues. Youth In Progress participates on the OCFS Adolescent Services and Outcomes Strategy Workgroup which meets on a bi-monthly basis to address the needs and challenges of youth in care and former foster youth. Youth In Progress is also represented on the Commissioner's Youth Advisory Board which meets on a quarterly basis with OCFS Commissioner Carrion.

The major efforts in the coming year will be geared to enhancing the implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (CFCIP), including the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program, the new Medicaid provisions for former foster care youth and transition planning for older youth exiting foster care. OCFS will continue implementing the new policy framework through training and monitoring service provision to adolescents in foster care in order to strengthen and enhance positive outcomes for youth in care.

OCFS will be instituting a new, evidenced-based, strength-based Life Skills Training program throughout its direct care system as a key core component of the OCFS residential treatment program. Additional life skills interventions will be identified and prescriptively provided for youth in OCFS direct care programs from the newly developed "Counselor's Toolbox".

OCFS will continue to expand the number of independent living program sites serving youth in its custody and on aftercare status. Those youth who are in residential placement in OCFS operated facilities receive independent living skills as part of the Focus Intervention Process. This process is part of the OCFS counseling program, which addresses those risk factors that may lead youth to recidivate.

### **NYCRO - Adolescent and Youth Services**

Foster care participated in all the Adolescent work group meetings and provided input to modify and improve the Transitional Planning draft instrument and Medicaid letters required under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of

2008. Foster care staff provided technical assistance and attended Summer Youth Employment registration and program activities to improve youth participation in the summer jobs program furthering the youth's job skills and work experience.

Youth in Progress (YIP) was established through the development of a partnership between OCFS, CWCS and Adolescent Services Resource Network (ASRN). Commissioner Carrion agreed to partner and support youth in our foster care programs by meeting with youth during speak-outs and on a quarterly basis with the expectation that with our support we will achieve better outcomes for youth in care. Foster Care is a member of the Adolescent workgroup actively partners with the ASRN on YIP efforts and activities. Outcomes: two summer interns will be assigned to respective offices, ASRN as a training resource, and Hunter ASRN library. OCFS will support the June 12, 2009 Educational Forum to be held at Hunter College, a mass mailing of YIP/ASRN/ETV/B2H information will be sent to foster care agencies by the YIP liaison, and two candidates were interviewed for ASRN summer interns.

## **Training Provided in Federal Fiscal Year 2009-2010**

- Adolescent Services Resource Network for Training and Technical Assistance

This network of four regionally based training provides training and technical assistance to caseworkers, voluntary agency staff, foster parents and DJJOY staff who work with all youth ages 14-21 preparing them for self-sufficiency. A variety of specialized programs address regional needs around independent living services/skills. This includes the outcome based Adolescent Services Core Training "Introduction to Self Sufficiency" and the Adolescent Services "Toolbox" Skills Development Training that is delivered statewide. Youth leadership will be emphasized through youth forums and speak outs statewide. Additionally, supportive informational and training materials, curricula, videos, etc. are maintained in a central location to be loaned to persons working with youth and their caregivers. The New York State Adolescent Services Resources Network administers the Regional and Statewide Youth Advisory Leadership Team called "Youth in Progress" (YIP). YIP consists of a team of foster care youth, including youth in OCFS facilities who represent each of the six regions in New York State. SUNY Albany Professional Development Program coordinates this group.

657 training days

### **Adolescent Services Resource Network**

The member contractors are SUC Buffalo, SUNY Albany, SUNY Stony Brook and CUNY Hunter College.

The Adolescent Services Resource Network provides resource materials, curricula and individualized training and consultation to support preparation of foster care youth for discharge and independent living. Each regional provider offers services in all competency areas of independent living services/skills. They assist workers with the skills needed to engage and motivate youth through the developmental steps required to

achieve self-sufficiency in the community. Services are provided through training, educational forums, technical assistance, materials distribution, newsletters, curriculum seminars, practicums, etc. The network provides an integrated delivery of coordinated services.

The outcome-based Adolescent Services Core Training called “Introduction to Self Sufficiency” is offered throughout the State. This outcome-based Core Curriculum will give caseworkers the knowledge, skills, and value base they need to prepare youth to achieve self-sufficiency. Some of the focus includes: using interpersonal helping skills with adolescents; special needs of youth leaving care; assessment and case planning; developing and enhancing supportive relationships; and identifying and building community supports. The Adolescent Services “Toolbox” training gives caseworkers, foster parents and DJJOY staff the tools needed to assist youth in developing competencies needed for transition to adulthood.

The statewide youth advisory group, Youth in Progress formed in August 2003, addresses and provides input into improving the CW and DJJOY systems. This group is composed of foster care adolescents and their adult mentors, including youth in OCFS facilities and representing each of the six regions in New York State. YIP focuses on making targeted improvements in the quality of foster care services and improving positive outcomes for children and families. YIP training activities for 2009 focused on strengthening the practice around permanency for youth in care. YIP youth continue to be trained by Foster Club which is part of the All American Program, to deliver the course “Getting Solid” which talks about permanency. YIP youth continue to serve as members of the CFSR PIP Adolescent Strategy Workgroup.

### **Training Plans for 2010-2011:**

To offer outcome based Core Adolescent Services Core “Introduction to Self-Sufficiency” and Adolescent Services “Toolbox” Training, and customized regionally specific training and technical assistance in compliance with 1999 Chafee Legislation and to support the efforts of social services district and voluntary agency caseworkers, supervisors, foster parents, and Title IV-E funded OCFS facility staff to help foster care youth transition from care to self-sufficiency.

OCFS will continue to support the regional and statewide Youth Advisory Leadership Team, “Youth in Progress” (YIP) which consists of a team of foster care youth, including youth in OCFS facilities who represent each of the six regions in New York State. OCFS will accomplish this mission by listening to youth in care and by offering them guidance that will allow them to achieve success in their lives and to realize their full potential.

Hunter College maintains the statewide Adolescent Services Network Library consisting of nearly 4,000 items. Among them are more than 1,000 videos on various topics and numerous books, teaching games, curricula and a variety of other resource materials used in hands-on teaching of life skills to youth. Hunter also hosts the Adolescent Services

Network Website and the statewide Foster Care Youth Advisory Team “YIP” website presenting current information and issues as well as links to the websites of the other members. It is anticipated that this function will continue to increase and continue to:

- Assess regional needs around adolescent services and program development.
- Support local adolescent services programs through technical assistance and individualized agency assessment.

Each Network member presents an annual youth speak out and leadership development event that gives youth the opportunity to inform agency and OCFS and LDSS administrators, judges and elected officials of issues of youth in care.

The training programs that focus on adolescent issues support state and federal legislation including ASFA and the 1999 Chafee Foster Care Independence Act. These programs continue to reflect an ongoing need. Therefore, all of those training programs, as described in Goal 4 of the CFSP, will be offered in the coming year.

### Adolescent Services Core Training and Advanced Adolescent Services Courses

Designed for child welfare caseworkers in social services districts, voluntary agencies and foster parents working with adolescents in foster care and DJJOY staff to help them develop life skills needed to work toward self-sufficiency. This includes a competency-based, four-day program called “Introduction to Self Sufficiency” and “Adolescent Services Tool box” a two-day Course to further assist youth to develop competencies needed for self sufficiency. Support for regional youth speak outs and activities, Youth In Progress (YIP) youth leadership training, district/agency specific training and technical assistance will also be offered to each district and facility on how to improve their independent living programs. A library and website of materials to support training and youth development is maintained. Special events/workshops will be held statewide.

## GOAL #5

NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES, INCLUDING NUCLEAR, EXTENDED  
AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND SUPPORTED  
IN RAISING AND NURTURING THEIR CHILDREN; IN MAINTAINING THEIR  
CHILDREN'S CONNECTIONS TO THEIR TRIBAL HERITAGE;  
AND IN PLANNING FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

### ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND CURRENT STATUS

The 71 Native American children in out of home placement on December 31, 2009 lived in ten upstate counties plus NYC and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Reservation, with the majority of those children being located as follows: 26.7% in Erie/Niagara counties; 10% in New York City; 36.6 % in St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Reservation; 10% in Cattaraugus County, 8.4% in Niagara County, and 2.8% Onondaga County. This number of Native American children represents .3% of the total foster care population.

OCFS is supporting this goal by involving tribal representatives in the Agency/Court Collaboration meetings and inclusion in other OCFS strategies such as Family Connections, which engages extended family to provide sustainable meaningful connections and cultural relevance. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe has designated a representative for the OCFS Court Collaboration committee and has accepted training on the Family Assessment Response (FAR) model. In 2008-2009, the Seneca Nation of Indians has increased their work with tribal families to include Family Engagement through Family Meetings. During 2009, 73 Native American children were in out of home placement and 20 Native American children were in Institutions or required higher level of care. Of the 51 children in foster boarding homes or kinship placements, 30 (58.8%) were in foster families whose ethnicity was also Native American.

All of the New York State Tribe's have been invited to participate in CORE caseworker training and other training opportunities to strengthen their skills in the child welfare field. OCFS also continues to build strong networking activities among tribal staff through quarterly stakeholder meetings sponsored by the Native American Services Unit.

### PERFORMANCE TARGETS

#### **Indian Child Welfare**

- Increase to 50% the number of Native American children who are placed in foster care families of the same ethnicity over a five year period.

Baseline: The number of Native American children who are placed in foster boarding homes or adoptive homes of Native American ethnicity in 2004.

2004: 26 Native American children of the 75 in placement (34.6%)

Current Data:

2005: 36 Native American children of the 80 in placement (45%)  
 2006: 34 Native American children of the 65 in placement (52.3%)  
 2007: 45 Native American children of the 74 in placement (60 %)  
 2008: 29 Native American children of the 60 in placement (48.3%)  
 2009 36 Native American children of the 73 in placement (49.3 %)

Projected Targets:

2009: not below 50% \*

\*It is anticipated that the identification of Native American children will continue to increase based on extensive ICWA trainings from 2006-2008. It is not known if the number of licensed Native American Foster Homes will meet such increase of identified Native American children. Improved preventive efforts and kinship placements may factor into the performance targets.

OCFS reviewed this data by county in year one. Interim benchmarks are incremental: year two - 40%; year three -43%; year four -47%; and year five -50%.

Placement of Native American children and youth in Native American homes and programs whenever possible remains a state policy. Some of the data reported in this target comes directly from the field including contacts with Native American services agencies in New York State. As demonstrated by the data, we have been successful in our efforts to support our goal. The difference in current year data reflects more children properly identified as Native American, but a drop in placement resources that match the child's tribal heritage. Of the 59 Native American youth, 29 were matched with placements to support their tribal heritage. Ten of the 29 were placed in a Tribal Group Home, which met their higher level of need.

Many Native American children are not placed in Native American homes because of the type of placement required. These placements are often for youth and children with special needs. Some placements in non-Native homes have been reviewed by either tribal staff or Native American services agencies, which have approved the placements. These placements, as well as "relative or kinship placements" are included in the data above. Three placements in non-Native Foster Care were a direct result of the geographic location to the birth mother, who supported non-Native Foster Care to enable her to maintain contact with her children. It was also found that Native American Service Providers were at 100% compliance in 2008 in placing Native American children in Native American placements (21/21). Tribal consultation meetings held in 2008 and 2009 provided OCFS with input from Tribal leaders and their delegates on what we have done to strengthen this goal. The specific training activities and quarterly stakeholder meetings have also strengthened the ability to serve tribal families under ICWA

Data Source to measure progress for the performance target above: Data Warehouse and OCFS Native American Services Unit\*

## STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

### State/Tribal Relationship

The St. Regis Mohawk entered into a State/Tribal Agreement with the predecessor of OCFS in August 1993 that was effective April 1, 1994. That Agreement contained two specific components: legal terms and conditions; and a service plan for the provision of foster care, preventive services and adoption services. The plan contained in the Agreement outlines strategies to: reduce the need for foster care through intensive preventive services; increase recruitment and certification of foster homes on the Reservation; and promote the provision of foster care services in a way that maintains cultural and Tribal values and permit the earliest return of the child to natural family. Children freed for adoption will be placed in adoptive homes that will meet their personal and cultural needs. The delivery of child and adult protective services is addressed through an amendment to the State/Tribal Agreement and the tribe's updated services plan that became effective in April 2005. On-going meetings between the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and OCFS to improve and expand services took place throughout 2001-2009 and continue. The result of the earlier meetings included a cooperative agreement to license the Akwesasne Youth Group Home in March 2001.

The Seneca Nation of Indians and their various administrations have expressed an interest in improving their working relationship with local districts. OCFS Native American Services Unit has been involved in an ongoing dialogue regarding such a relationship. Throughout 2001-2002 OCFS arranged for several training events to meet the needs identified by Seneca Nation. In 2002, the Seneca Nation developed and endorsed a tribal protocol for child protective services. Meetings between OCFS, local districts and Seneca Nation continue to refine this protocol and meet the child welfare staff development needs.

Although the Oneida Indian Nation no longer accepts federal Indian Child Welfare funding, it staffs a Family Services Program and has continued to work closely with Native American Services on ICWA issues and training. OCFS responded to training needs identified by Oneida Nation. OCFS provided on-site Mandated Reporter training for Oneida Nation staff in December 2006 and continues to include Oneida Nation in our training initiatives.

The Tuscarora Nation, Tonawanda Senecas, and the Onondaga Nation do not operate ICWA programs on their reservations or accept federal funds.

The Long Island Tribes, the Shinnecock Tribe and the Unkechaug Nation, do not receive funds for and do not operate programs for other reasons, including a lack of sufficient numbers on the Reservations to qualify for funding.

The interactions that take place through Native American Services (NAS) are complemented and strengthened by ongoing interactions between the social services districts, OCFS and those who provide services to Native Americans.

In December 2004, an ICWA desk aid was developed for use by local districts and voluntary agencies. Copies were distributed to the Indian Nations and OCFS Regional Offices in January 2005. An update to include information on use of a Qualified Expert Witness was added to the desk aid in December 2005. The new desk aids were distributed to the local districts through OCFS release 06-OCFS-INF-07 letter in October 2006 along with an updated list of tribal contacts.

In November 2006, OCFS responded to a variety of training needs identified by tribal representatives by offering a statewide Indian Child Welfare Conference. The first conference in 12 years drew more than 200 participants from Tribes and social service organizations from throughout the state. The 3-day conference provided a well-received forum to discuss best practices for ICWA compliance.

After a year of collaboration OCFS completed an IWCA DVD training tool in December 2006. The DVD titled “ Indian Child Welfare Act: What Caseworkers Need To Know”, includes interviews with Tribal representatives including Chiefs, Clan Mothers, judges, attorneys, ICWA Directors and caseworkers. The DVD was developed with tremendous support from and collaboration with tribal stakeholders. The training tool was introduced to the local districts and voluntary agencies through 16 training events in 2007. At the request of ACF, a copy of this DVD has been forwarded to Region II offices.

To continue efforts to improve child welfare services in Native American families, additional training events were held to train local districts and voluntary agency staff on ICWA compliance issues throughout 2008-09. These initiatives were expanded to include Qualified Indian Expert Witness training to Tribal caseworkers.

#### Description of Native American Population in New York State

The Native American population in New York State resides in every county across the State in urban and rural areas, with concentrations near urban areas and near Reservations. Approximately ten per cent of the Native American population resides on Reservations. The Urban Centers are located in New York City, Buffalo and Niagara Falls, Syracuse and Rochester. Available data also reports that over 40% of the Native Americans living in New York State resides in the five boroughs of New York City.

The Native Americans who live outside of the Reservations seek services and social interaction at the Urban Centers or with other Indian Nations, if they are not located in close proximity to their own Tribe. However, with the pending approval of federal recognition for the Shinnecock Indian Nation, we believe Indian Child Welfare services can be offered.

#### **Native American Population in New York State as Reported by the Indian Nations/Tribes**

Indian Nation	Reservation	Enrollment	Resident Population
Iroquois:			
Cayuga Nation of Indians	No reservation	487	0
Oneida Indian Nation	Oneida Nation Territory	1,000	74
Onondaga Nation	Onondaga Reservation	1,959	900
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	St. Regis Mohawk	13,338	13,338
Seneca Nation of Indians	Total Tribal Enrollment	7,824	
	Allegany Reservation		1,435
	Cattaraugus Reservation		2,696
	Other		3,693
Tonawanda Band of Senecas	Tonawanda Reservation	1,100	600
Tuscarora Nation	Tuscarora Reservation	1,200	1,500
Algonquin:			
Shinnecock Tribe	Shinnecock Reservation	250	500
Unkechaug Nation	Poospatuck Reservation	128	250

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

The St. Regis Mohawk territory, known as Akwesasne, "Land Where the Partridge Drums", is located in northern New York State and crosses the international border and the St. Lawrence River, extending into Canada. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and recognized government of the Mohawk people. The Tribe provides comprehensive services to the community through four basic divisions: Education, Environment, Health and Human Services, Planning and Economic Development.

Education programs include support for students enrolled in the public schools to encourage their continuation, Head Start, GED programs, higher education and vocational training, including college extension services and Job Training Partnership Act Program services. Health and Human Services include a medical clinic, opened in 1991 and serving more than 7,000 Mohawks, a Dental Clinic, WIC, alcohol/chemical dependency program, Teen/Women Health program, nutrition services and mental health services, and a program to empower young mothers. Human Services staff address the needs of the children, senior citizens, families and disabled residents in the community while maintaining the integrity of the Mohawk family unit. Indian Child Welfare Act services provide support services for families at risk of dissolution, providing a vital link to families while insuring the maintenance of cultural values. The social services program provides mandated preventive, foster care, adoption, child protective services and adult protective services on the Reservation through the State/Tribal Agreement with OCFS. A Family Support program provides respite services for families of the developmentally disabled and supportive apartments provide services to allow developmentally disabled residents to transition from home to a sheltered, independent environment. OCFS has licensed a tribally operated Youth Group Home to serve 12 at-risk Native American youth.

Seneca Nation

The Seneca Nation operates with an elected form of government. Elections for Tribal Council members and officers including President, Treasurer and Tribal Clerk occur every two years. The Seneca’s judicial elections for Surrogate Judges, Peacemakers, and a Court of Appeals take place every 2 years opposite the general elections. Most judges serve four-year terms. The Tribal Council administers all Tribal programs on both the Cattaraugus and Allegany Reservations.

The Indian Health Services provides state-of-the-art health clinics on both Reservations. In addition, mental health, alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, job training, Head Start and day care programs, Indian education, housing, and a senior nutrition program are provided through staff that spends time alternating between the Cattaraugus and Allegany Reservations.

In addition to the above, the following Indian Nations or Indian organizations provide limited Indian Child Welfare services.

Cayuga Nation

The Cayuga Nation operates a traditional form of government and provides limited ICWA services. The Tribe receives official tribal notification and attends court proceedings involving minor Cayuga children entering foster care or being freed for adoption. OCFS Native American Services unit also maintains trust accounts for minor Cayuga children and distributes tribal annuity payments three times a year.

**Summary of Governmental Structures**

The Indian Nations in New York State have adopted a number of different forms of governmental and administrative structures. There is interaction and consultation between these structures in the decision making process which also includes the Clan Mothers. This respect and inclusiveness of differences within the communities has an impact on the decision-making process.

Indian Nation/ Tribe	Governing Structure	Administrative
Cayuga Nation of Indians	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
Oneida Indian Nation	Tribal Appointment	Representative Acts as CEO
Onondaga Nation	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe	Tribal Elections/Chiefs	Chiefs Council
Seneca Nation of Indians	Elections/ Tribal Council	Tribal Council with President
Tonawanda Band of Senecas	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as

		Chairperson
Tuscarora Nation	Hereditary Chiefs	Council of Chiefs One Selected as Chairperson
Shinnecock Tribe	Tribal Elections	Trustees Serve as President, Secretary and Treasurer
Unkechaug Nation	Tribal Elections/Trustee	Trustees Elected to 1, 2, 3 year terms

ICWA Funding:

Three of the Indian Nations receive ICWA funds to provide Indian Child Welfare Services. The following outlines the Indian Nations/Reservations that operate ICWA programs and the counties that are included in their service area.

Indian Nation/Reservation	County Service Area
St. Regis Mohawk Tribe/ St. Regis Mohawk Reservation	Franklin, St. Lawrence counties primarily, but also statewide for Mohawk children
Seneca Nation of Indians/ Allegany Reservation Cattaraugus Reservation	Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties
Cayuga Nation are served through administrative staff; there is no Reservation	Cayuga members only, statewide,
Oneida Indian Nation,* Oneida Nation Territory	Oneida members only, Oneida, Onondaga, Herkimer, Chenango, Madison and Cortland

\*The Oneida Indian Nation declined their federal share of BIA/ICWA funding beginning federal fiscal year 1999, but still operates a Family Services program with Tribal revenues.

Urban Indian Centers

Local non-profit Urban Centers provide a wide range of programs, including job training, alcohol and substance abuse and services for the developmentally disabled. The New York City Urban Center programs include a Youth Council and Health Services. The Buffalo/Niagara Falls Urban Centers provides ICWA services including preventive counseling, foster care recruitment and certification, intervention, AIDS training and outreach, a program for seniors, youth and cultural programs.

Since 1997, the Urban Indian Centers do not receive federal Indian Child Welfare funding, but do provide services to the following service areas:

New York City	Queens, Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island, Nassau, Suffolk, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland counties.
Buffalo/Niagara Falls	Niagara, Erie counties (off-reservation)
Rochester	Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Livingston counties
Syracuse	Onondaga, Madison Counties.

The Buffalo Urban Center provides ICWA services including preventive counseling, foster care recruitment and certification, and intervention through a purchase of services contract with the local district.

**Accomplishments for 2009-2010**

Throughout 2009-2010, the OCFS Native American Affairs Specialist (NAS) met on a formal basis with various Tribal Leaders across New York. A formal protocol for regular and on-going dialogue and consultation with Tribal Leaders was established in 2002. Three formal Tribal Consultation meetings were held in April, October and December 2009 with OCFS CWCS Deputy Commissioner.

Regular consultation with the Indian Nations regarding child welfare issues has occurred primarily at the service provider level or as it relates to specific issues and/or children and families. The NAS Specialist and OCFS Buffalo Regional Office staff continued facilitation of a multi-disciplinary workgroup with the Seneca Nation of Indians from 2001-2008, which included Child Protection workers from Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua County. This resulted in the first written tribal protocol for CPS investigations for Seneca Nation families. The tribal protocol was presented to each county's Director of Services and continues in use.

Site visits are conducted to Indian Reservations in New York by the Native American Affairs Specialist. The primary purpose of the site visits was to assess the needs of the Indian Nation and to address concerns related to the delivery of child welfare services. As a result of the site visits, regular follow up meetings are held at the St. Regis Mohawk and Seneca Nation reservations.

The NAS Specialist continues to hold regular Indian Child Welfare meetings throughout New York State with tribal and social services staff members. The NAS Specialist has agreed to continue to chair the meetings of the well-formed network known as the Native American Family Services Commission. The meetings feature guest speakers from OCFS and other agencies that provide information on how to improve services to Indian children and families.

In 2009, OCFS supported Indian Child Welfare compliance through trainings offered at various local districts and OCFS licensed voluntary agencies.

OCFS also sponsored 11 tribal representatives to attend the Adult Abuse Training Institute in Albany on Sept. 16-17, 2009 to provide information to strengthen Tribal Adult Protection programs.

NAS offered technical assistance and compliance support to 249 ICWA cases identified by the local districts, voluntary agencies and Tribal staff in 2009.

#### OCFS Tribal Consultation

The Deputy Commissioner of Child Welfare & Community Services, the Native American Affairs Specialist and the respective Regional Directors participated in the Tribal Consultation Meetings with Tribal Leaders and delegates in 2009. These meetings provided an opportunity for OCFS to present updates on initiatives for ICWA compliance. The Tribal Consultation forum allowed OCFS to engage the state's Indian Nations/Tribes in the Family Services Review (CFSR) and the development of the CFSP Plan. The meetings provided Deputy Commissioner Laura Velez the opportunity to meet with various Tribal representatives to discuss OCFS priorities and learn about specific needs of some Indian Nations. The April 2009 meeting took place in Home Office to allow for a tour of the State Central Register for Tribal officials. The October 2009 meeting was held at the St. Regis Mohawk reservation to allow OCFS officials an opportunity to tour the community. It was agreed to continue the meetings in 2010 and on June 11, 2010, OCFS held the spring 2010 meeting in Home office (Rensselaer) to allow for broader OCFS representation. During this meeting OCFS participated in an overview and discussion with regard to CWCS activities and structure, CCS activities and structure, along with a review of Chafee IL Services. The summer 2010 meeting will take place in New York City to accommodate the Long Island Tribes.

Native American Services also continued hosting quarterly meetings of the Native American Family Services Commission, which provides consultation with tribal stakeholders in both urban and reservation areas throughout New York State. These meetings helped to develop the training initiatives, provide input into the CFSP Title IV-B plan and to strengthen service delivery to Native American children and families. These meetings have also produced tribal volunteers to serve on the Agency/ Court Collaboration committee and support the OCFS Court Collaboration strategy. All planning for training initiatives, conferences and tribal meetings have been initiated through the dialogue with these tribal stakeholders. The members have contributed to the Foster Care recruitment and retention toolkit under development by the CWLA. The meetings have produced action steps for OCFS, including the development of Qualified Indian Expert Witnesses and Positive Indian Parenting trainers. The meetings have also supported OCFS strategies for Engaging Extended Family and Family Engagement through Family Meetings.

With the support of the Center for Development and Human Services (SUCB), Native American Services was able to conduct five meetings with the Native American Family Services Commission in March, June, September, and December 2009 and April 2010. The Commission was expanded to include more tribal caseworkers and administrators from around the state, as well as local districts and voluntary agencies. The quarterly meetings provide an excellent forum to introduce other OCFS supported initiatives such as Protective Services for Adults, to Tribal and agency staff who need program support to serve their respective Tribal and Urban Indian communities. Other guest speakers this year were representatives from OASAS, Healthy Families New York, OCFS Domestic Violence Unit, National Indian Child Welfare Association and Casey Family Program Consultant Kathy Deserly.

The June 2010 meeting will be scheduled over two days to allow attendees to learn more about Domestic Violence.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

OCFS will continue to promote interaction with directors of services from social services districts to reiterate and strengthen awareness regarding the need to identify Native American children and to make the appropriate notifications with assistance from the NAS staff.

OCFS' Native American Services Unit will continue to participate in quarterly meetings with Tribal and local district representatives in both urban and reservation settings to improve ICWA services to this population.

OCFS will be available to support efforts of Tribes interested in establishing or expanding services under a State/Tribal Agreement.

New York State will continue to utilize existing structures to promote that appropriate federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) continued goals can be identified in consultation with the Tribal Leadership. There continues to be a need to reinforce social services district requirements to inform Tribes of involvement with Native American children and families.

OCFS will continue to support regional and statewide training to social services districts, other public and private agencies, tribal staff and community members to develop strategies to keep Indian families intact and to identify Native American resources to support at-risk families.

OCFS will continue to discuss Chafee IL Services with Tribes.

OCFS will continue efforts to improve child welfare services in Native American families, regional training events are being planned to address cultural competency and ICWA issues.

Tribal Training Initiatives:

There were several ICWA training events sponsored or supported by OCFS in the last 5 years through 2010; the foremost being the statewide ICWA Conference in November 2006. The first statewide conference in 12 years brought together over 200 participants from Indian Nations, local districts and voluntary agencies for three days of plenary and workshop sessions to improve ICWA compliance in New York. The conference evaluations were extremely positive and indicated that this event was an overall success. Budget constraints prevented the repeat of this successful event, but ICWA specific regional trainings were provided at 7 events in 2009 with approximately 115 participants.

OCFS supports tribal training initiatives in several ways. Beginning in 2008, the OCFS-NAS office reviews all training opportunities available to the general caseworker population in New York State. The specific training announcements related to building child welfare competencies are forwarded to tribal training coordinators. In 2009, over 330 training announcements were sent to the Tribes, and resulted in an increase of tribal participation statewide.

OCFS also supported a training request on behalf of the Tuscarora Nation to host a training event entitled "Positive Indian Parenting" in May 2007. Tribal and local district staff was able to participate in a 3-day Training of Trainers to utilize Indian Parenting curriculums developed by the National Indian Child Welfare Association. It is anticipated that this training will be offered again in 2010.

Native American Services presented 16 Regional Indian Child Welfare training to child welfare workers in 2007, three of which trained tribal staff. The OCFS Native American Specialist also presented training on the ICWA DVD and its impact on ICWA compliance in New York State to audiences at the Annual National Indian Child Welfare Association Conference in April 2007, the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. Annual Conference in June 2007 and the Northwest Bureau of Indian Affairs Conference in August 2007.

OCFS was able to support the sponsorship of ten tribal representatives at the 2009 NYS Adult Abuse Training Institute last September. This is the sixth year of participation of tribal staff statewide in our effort to support more tribally based adult abuse prevention efforts.

In 2009, an OCFS tribal newsletter was created to capture important events and announcements for Tribal leadership. The newsletter is sent electronically to Tribes on a quarterly basis.

The NAS also presented cultural competency training to the New York State OCA Judicial ICWA Conference in Buffalo in November 2007 and for a Court Improvement project initiative in Niagara County in April 2009. We also provided an overview of working with Native American families to OCFS Home Office staff also in November 2007, and September 2009 and participated in an April 2010 webinar sponsored by NYS Office of Mental Health on Working with Native American families.

### Indian Child Welfare Training Resources

- In November 2007, A Caseworker Guide was completed to accompany the ICWA DVD training tool. The two training resources were combined into an interactive training tool in March 2008. The web-based training will be made available to local districts, voluntary agencies and tribal organizations this year.
- In November 2006, OCFS completed the DVD entitled “Indian Child Welfare Act: What Caseworkers Need To Know”. The DVD features interviews with tribal experts including the author of the ICWA Handbook, Tribal Judge BJ Jones. The DVD includes six chapters providing a historical view of ICWA as well as the process to identify Native American children and provide proper tribal notification. The DVD also provides relevant information on active efforts and tribal court proceedings. The DVD was premiered at the Statewide ICWA Conference. A training guide to accompany the ICWA DVD was completed in December 2006, and was used to train local district and voluntary agency Case Supervisors. There was 16 Regional “Train the Trainers” sessions in 2007 to get the training tool to the front line of caseworkers.
- OCFS publication #4757 (Guide To Compliance with the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act in New York State) continued to be distributed to local districts and voluntary agencies in 2007. The guide was posted on the OCFS Native American Services website.
- The Proud Heritage booklet (OCFS publication #4629) is posted on the OCFS Native American Services website and continues to be distributed at various forums, local district activities and tribal meetings.

### Regional Office of Practice Improvement (ROPI) Teams Established

The Buffalo ROPI staff continued to work closely with Native American Services staff throughout 2009-10. Meetings of the Seneca Nation of Indians multi-disciplinary workgroup continued throughout 2007. This provided an opportunity for Buffalo Regional Office and Native American Services to assess how well the CPS Tribal protocol is working. The multi-disciplinary work group included representatives from Erie, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties and Seneca Nation staff.

Two on-site training events were held at Seneca Nation in early 2008 to promote collaboration and cross training for tribal staff. The first session provided an overview of the OCFS – Seneca Nation multi-disciplinary workgroups accomplishments and updates to NYS regulations on permanency. The second session held in March 2008 focused on ICWA specific training and provisions that must be adhered to by New York State. Both sessions included tribal participants representing the Child & Family Services staff, tribal law enforcement and tribal court personnel. Local district staff was also invited to participate.

Albany ROPI staff and NAS staff continued meetings and site visits to the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe to address on-going child welfare program operational needs. OCFS Native American Services also distributes an electronic Tribal Newsletter to the tribes as well. This newsletter highlights state and federal legislation, funding opportunities, training, and meeting and consultation dates. (See summer newsletter in appendix).

Principles of ICWA will provide focus for any actions:

- Indian parents and tribes have the right to notice of and to intervene in state proceedings involving Indian children;
- special preference for placement of Indian children with (1) member of child's extended family, (2) other members of the child's tribe, or (3) other Indian families;
- active efforts to prevent breakup of the Indian family including use of tribal community services and culturally appropriate programs; and
- use of tribal courts in child welfare matters, tribal rights to intervene in state proceedings, or to transfer the proceedings to the jurisdiction of the tribe.

In 2008, a national study of ways to recruit/retain Native American Families was conducted and is now being incorporated in work to attract Indian Foster/Adoptive parents for available Native children.

To continue efforts to improve child welfare services for Native American families, a Caseworker Guide will be made available through an on-line training site accessible to local district and voluntary agency staff in 2010. On-going ICWA training will also be planned with a concentration in the New York City area in 2010.

Throughout 2010, the Native American Affairs Specialist will meet on a formal basis with various Tribal Leaders across New York. A formal protocol for regular and on-going dialogue and consultation with Tribal Leaders has been established for 2010.

### **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**

#### **CAPTA Initiatives**

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 USC 5101, et seq) supports a number of activities designed to develop and strengthen child abuse and neglect prevention programs in New York State. CAPTA funds support the federal Children's Justice Act programs, and management of the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Program, the William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program. In addition, funds support a statewide Prevention Information Resource Center that operates a 24-hour

prevention helpline for parents and distributes printed child abuse and neglect prevention materials.

CAPTA project coordination provides that the state's utilization of CAPTA funds is in compliance with federal requirements and guidelines and that CAPTA projects meet stated objectives. The CAPTA Coordinator assumes the role of State Liaison Officer and works with OCFS' policy and legal staff to fulfill that responsibility. The CAPTA Coordinator oversees the Children and Family Trust Fund, Basic State Grant, the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant, and coordinates activities with the Children's Justice and Assistance Grant, and the HFNY Program as needed. The CAPTA Coordinator also facilitates collaboration and integration with other child welfare and other services for children and families, responds to individual requests for information on programs available in New York State, and responds to complaints from individuals that are brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Chapter 485 of the Laws of 2006 took effect on December 14, 2006. Amending section 422-b of the New York's Social Services Law (SSL), it added the ability of local and regional fatality review team to investigate fatalities where there was an open preventive services or CPS case and authorized such teams to investigate any unexplained or unexpected death of any child under the age of 18. It added to the required members of such teams: county health and Emergency Medical Technicians. It clarified that a mandated member must be a pediatrician or comparable medical professional, preferably with expertise in the area of child abuse and maltreatment. It added to the list of permissive members: domestic violence agencies, substance abuse programs and Family Court.

Subdivisions 4-6 of section 422-b of the SSL were added relating to access to records and meetings, qualified immunity of members of the team and the release of individual and annual reports by the team.

### **Accomplishments in 2009-2010**

OCFS continues a variety of strategies and initiatives to prevent and treat child abuse and maltreatment.

The Prevention Information Resource Center (PIRC) & Parent Helpline is PCANY's umbrella program for helping people throughout New York State understand how to prevent child abuse and maltreatment and to support strong, safe, nurturing families. Under that umbrella, the Prevention and Parent Helpline provides direct assistance, in the form of information and referrals, to parents, family members, service providers and other community members. During 2008-09, 3,570 New York families and professionals were directly assisted through the Helpline.

PIRC's public education includes a variety of outreach, from literature development and distribution, to presentations and exhibits, media activities, and website. More than 96,000 people received prevention information through these avenues this year.

The New York State Parent Education Partnership (NYSPEP) project was made possible by Prevent Child Abuse New York's involvement in the national PREVENT Child Maltreatment Institute, along with OCFS, NYS Department of Health, and the Children and Family Trust Fund. During 2009, active membership in NYSPEP reached 282 individuals with over 900 receiving educational information. The "Evidence and Evaluation" workgroup developed a comparative grid of program curricula which can be viewed at [www.parentingeducationpartnership.org](http://www.parentingeducationpartnership.org). Research information and on-line resource links are also available. A second survey to assess provider use of evidence and evaluation for comparison to the 2008 survey is planned for the coming year. Additional funding related to the State Children's Plan for Social and Emotional Development will support the development of a prototype New Parent Kit. Professional development remains a key component to this work with the drafting of a framework for certifying parent educators. Six focus groups were conducted around the state to solicit input. The NYSPEP Steering Committee continues to lead this effort and through a workgroup process is focused on its mission of enhancing parenting skills, knowledge and behavior through a strong, statewide network that promotes and improves parenting education.

The annual New York State Child Abuse Prevention Conference, co-sponsored with the Children and Family Trust Fund, built the knowledge and skills of 419 professionals, advocates, community leaders, and parents who are concerned about preventing child abuse and assuring healthy growth and development for children. Returned evaluations indicated 93% of the participants found the conference relevant and that they gained new knowledge, skills and tools to take back to the community.

### **Federal Family Violence**

Federal Family Violence funding provides financial support to residential and non-residential programs experiencing low occupancy or needing health and safety enhancements to their residential program.

### **Children's Justice Act**

The federal Children's Justice Act (CJA) Program Grant continues to enhance OCFS'S ability to develop, establish, and operate programs designed to improve (1) the handling of child abuse and maltreatment cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim (2) the handling of cases of suspected child abuse and maltreatment related fatalities; and (3) the investigation and prosecution of cases of child abuse and maltreatment, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Children's Justice Act program funds are primarily used to promote start-up and/or improved functioning of local community coordination of the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse and neglect cases, particularly sexual abuse cases and fatality cases. Through the implementation of local multidisciplinary investigation teams, child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams, child protective services, law enforcement, and prosecution, medical and mental health agencies are better able to coordinate, collaborate and communicate on cases. The goals of all funded programs are to reduce additional trauma to child victims after their disclosure and improve the handling of cases for all agencies involved and improve the skills and knowledge of all professionals involved.

The federal Children's Justice Act Program has allowed OCFS to expand its efforts to develop and maintain multidisciplinary investigation teams, child advocacy centers and child fatality review teams across the State. Beginning in 1996, OCFS funded the NYS Child Advocacy Resource and Consultation Center (CARCC). Services provided by CARCC include specialized and/or interdisciplinary training, team functioning analysis, and coordination of a statewide coalition of child advocacy centers and MDTs wishing to develop child advocacy centers (CACs). CARCC also assists MDTs throughout the state with access to current information and research on: child sexual abuse; child fatalities; child abuse and neglect data from a multidisciplinary perspective; training resources and opportunities, including a directory of discipline specific consultants and technical assistance material to assist in team development.

CARCC has provided information to professionals, students and concerned citizens across the state, and throughout the nation, responding to over 250 requests for information on issues related to child sex abuse, the multidisciplinary approach and especially The NYS Children's Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices (FIBP). CARCC's resource library has expanded and offers users a wealth of printed, audio and video materials.

Training Opportunities for the benefit of professionals involved in multidisciplinary teamwork. CARCC's trainings will be designed to strengthen both investigatory and team management skills. Other services and networks in which CARCC are involved include:

- New York State Children's Alliance
- Case Tracking Database Project
- Forensic Interviewing Project

### New York State Children's Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Train the Trainer

The continued success of the Forensic Interviewing Best Practices Trainings relies on the actual teaching of the curriculum. To confirm the integrity and the reliability of the best FIBP Trainings, CARCC actively recruits professionals to become FIBP Trainers. This relieves some of the training demands and helps to perpetuate the level of skilled trainers

as well as interviewers around the state. CARCC has implemented a selection process for all prospective trainers factoring such requirements as expertise, teaching style and demonstrated commitment to the children of New York State.

### Child Abuse Prevention Evaluation and Treatment: A Toolkit for Medical Providers

From 2006-2008, CARCC, the Child Abuse Medical Provider Program (CHAMP), and a group of physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, and other non-medical professionals in the child abuse field from across New York State had been working together with Dr. Ann Botash on a Toolkit for primary care, urgent care and emergency providers that addresses the issues of providing care to all types of abused children. This resource continues to provide guidance on prevention methods, recognition, reporting methods, management and referral needs for the abused child. The website [www.ChildAbuseMD.com](http://www.ChildAbuseMD.com) may be accessed for more details.

### Child Abuse and Disabilities Training Project

With administrative support from CARCC, the Children's Justice Task Force supported development of a CD-Rom "Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities" for MDT investigators interviewing children with disabilities, one of the most vulnerable populations for all forms of abuse. The CD-Rom was released in 2005, and is still in use today.

### Marketing Program

CARCC continues to assist teams and centers with initiatives to support training and awareness events. The project co-sponsors such events by providing financial assistance for promotional materials announcing upcoming events and trainings. Teams and centers are eligible for monetary and in-kind support for promotional and event expenses, including postage and printing.

### Mentoring Program

CARCC continues to encourage and support the mutual benefits of mentoring matches between counties. These relationships are vital to the multidisciplinary team process as teams learn from each other and work through practical solutions to problems. To help facilitate this relationship, CARCC matches teams and provides financial support to both the traveling team and the host team by reimbursing for expenses such as travel and lodging.

### Toll Free Telephone

CARCC operates a toll free telephone number in order to accommodate those teams who have limited or no long distance access. This has helped facilitate program access to more professionals in the field.

### Child Advocacy Center /Multidisciplinary Team Program Standards

The CJA/NYS funds for multidisciplinary investigation teams are currently being used to fund 14 Tier I and 12 Tier II grants to assist counties in establishing or enhancing child advocacy centers and local multidisciplinary teams for the purpose of investigating reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment--particularly cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse and family violence--in a manner which limits additional trauma to the child victim(s). Minimally, all teams investigate child sexual abuse cases. These projects have recently been categorized based upon quantifiable and qualifiable standards that support New York State expectations and the National Children' Alliance Standards. All projects must have accomplished or demonstrate significant progress towards achieving the 10 program standards for CACs which have been listed in earlier admissions of the APSR.

### Child Fatality Review Teams

The CJA/NYS funds for start-up or enhancement of child fatality review teams (CFRTs) are being used to fund three counties. These multidisciplinary review teams minimally include child protective services, police, District Attorney, a medical examiner or coroner, and a physician. The CFRTs review fatality cases reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment and fatality cases where the child's custody has been transferred to an authorized agency. The primary activities of these teams include: developing a mission statement and goals; developing interagency protocols; implementing a review process; actively conducting reviews; and developing a mechanism for collecting and reporting data. Teams may also review all suspicious, unexplained or unexpected deaths, but grant monies may not be used for this purpose. Such reviews are paid for by CFRT agency members. On December 14, 2006, OCFS released 06-OCFS LCM-13 Notification to OCFS of the death of children in open Child Protective or Preventive Services cases.

Children's Justice Act funds are also used to support the annual New York State Police Sex Offense Seminar, which is a five-day comprehensive training program for state and local police officers. CPS workers and other team members who work with police as an investigative team are also invited. The program reaches about 200 professionals a year. Starting in November 2006, this seminar was expanded to include child physical abuse training and will be presented as a two part "Crimes Against Children Training Seminar".

### Citizen Review Panels

Chapter 136 of the Laws of 1999, commonly referred to as the Governor's CAPTA (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act), details the state's compliance with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Amendments of 1996. CAPTA established three citizen review panels. One panel is established in New York City for the purpose of addressing issues particular to the City. The other two panels are located in Buffalo and Albany.

**Citizen Review Panel Members:**

- Must be volunteers who are broadly representative of the community, in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. No person employed by federal, state, county or municipal agencies, which directly deliver child welfare services may be a panel member.
- Cannot disclose any identifying information about any specific child protection case to any person or government official. A member who knowingly violates this duty of confidentiality may be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars and removal from the panel.
- Must elect a chairperson for each of their respective panels.
- Must meet not less than once every three months.

OCFS continues to provide technical assistance. As requested by the panels, each panel will maintain regular meetings and will continue to examine aspects of New York State's child welfare system to evaluate the extent to which the state and local child protective service agencies are effectively discharging their child protective responsibilities. It should be pointed out that the members of the New York State Citizen Review Panels have exhibited an enthusiastic willingness to commit themselves to the task for which they have volunteered, and have gone beyond the minimum federal mandate of quarterly meetings. Citizen Review Panels are required to submit an annual report of their activities, findings and recommendations. A copy of the most recent Citizen Review Panel report is with this plan submission (Appendix A).

**William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program****Accomplishments in 2009-2010**

Trust Fund priorities include support for research-based home visiting services such as the Parent Child Home Program, Parents as Teachers, and Parenting Wisely, in addition to training and implementation of evidence-based parenting education curricula including the Incredible Years. Funds support, expansion and development of the NYS Family Resource Center Network, services to support young parents and fathers, crisis respite/parenting education and support services, supervised visitation in domestic violence cases, school-based domestic violence and child abuse prevention programs, shaken baby prevention education, elder abuse prevalence study, and services for the elderly at risk of abuse in New York State. The Trust Fund continues to collaborate with Healthy Families New York and other state partners through initiatives such as NY Loves Safe Babies and the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP).

The Trust Fund supports the Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) hospital-based education program with targeted outreach to all maternity and birthing hospitals in the state. The purpose is to educate all parents of newborns to the dangers of shaking and reduce the incidence of SBS. Continued tracking of the incidence of SBS in the Western New York, Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley regions documents a sustained 50% reduction in the incidence of SBS in the Western NY Region. In 2009, over 46,000 parents of newborns received information through the project, close to 90% of live births in the service area. Collaboration with the New York State Department of Health (DOH) continues in an effort to promote child safety and the prevention of SBS. The SBS project staff will be contributing to a new shaken baby prevention video that typifies families in New York and can be translated into multiple languages. The video is slated for production in May 2010. This video will replace “A Portrait of Promise” that was approved to support part of Chapter 219 of the Laws of 2004 signed in October 2004 which requires every birthing and maternity hospital to show the video to all parents prior to discharge and ask them to sign a consent form that they viewed or declined to participate in the educational programs.

Replication of New York’s model continues throughout the country and abroad. Pediatricians in both regions are partnering with both projects to disseminate the same information at the time of the first immunization or pediatric visit. Likewise, each site does follow up telephone surveys to obtain feedback from the target population about the program’s effectiveness. The Hudson Valley region reports that close to 100% of parents surveyed, remembered viewing the SBS video.

The Trust Fund continues its sponsorship of the NY Loves Safe Babies Campaign with DOH, NYS Center for SID (Sudden Infant Death) and Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program. The Trust Fund maintains its work with state agency partners, and local programs to promote the safety of infants and children by educating parents and caregivers on how serious injuries can be reduced and/or prevented. An OCFS sponsored video conference for child welfare staff was conducted in March 2010 to illustrate the importance of safe sleeping environments for infants and young children, and to provide an understanding of the nature of child fatalities, the risks associated with sleeping environments, and effective strategies for conveying child safety information to help reduce the growing number of infant deaths reported to OCFS.

This year was once again highlighted by the availability of a series of safety tips entitled Helpful Tips to Keep Your Baby Safe. Additional materials developed as part of the campaign include a Personalized Safety Tips and Emergency Contact Sheet for Baby Sitters that is also available as a magnetic memo board with safety information for caregivers, a New York Loves Safe Babies DVD, and a brochure entitled Keeping Sleeping Babies Safer. These are available in English and Spanish. Requests for materials remain robust. Over 135,000 New York Loves Safe Babies publications are disseminated annually statewide. The campaign will go forward with continued efforts to identify and promote child safety issues as resources allow.

The Trust Fund (OCFS) helps coordinate the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) initiated through participation at the PREVENT Child Maltreatment Institute in North Carolina in 2006. The partnering agencies: Prevent Child Abuse New York, the Council on Children and Families, DOH, the state Education Department, and newest partner Office of Mental Health, work to advance the five-year plan promoting the health and safety of our state's children with a focus on parenting education as a primary prevention method addressing child abuse and neglect. As part of the early childhood priorities of the Children's Cabinet, The Children's Plan, focused on the social and emotional development and children's mental health, closely aligns itself with the NYSPEP goals: increasing education and awareness through a social marketing process, including the development of a new Parent Kit; increasing the availability and scope of web-based resources for parents and professionals that includes social and emotional development; providing educational opportunities and professional development for early care and education staff including a pilot of a parenting educator certificate; and increasing employment of evidence-based curricula and best practices through training and webinars. Over 250 individuals and organizations are active participants of the statewide task force that meets twice a year. A Steering Committee and workgroup structure continue to advance the goals of this initiative. [www.parentingeducationpartnership.org](http://www.parentingeducationpartnership.org)

The Trust Fund recognizes the multi-generational nature of family violence and emphasizes primary prevention by supporting domestic violence and elder abuse prevention and intervention programs. Domestic violence prevention programs focus on education of students K-12, trauma counseling and support services for children, and supervised visitation services for families affected by domestic violence. Elder abuse prevention programs focus on educating both seniors and communities regarding the problem/risks of elder abuse, outreach and services to reduce these risks, providing coordination, counseling, and advocacy services to victims of elder abuse, a public awareness campaign, and a prevalence study on elder abuse. Programs funded in 2009-10 include (1) Cattaraugus Community Action, Salamanca, NY (2) Oswego County Opportunities, Inc, Oswego, NY (3) Putnam Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center, Mahopac, NY (4) The Salvation Army, Jamestown, NY (5) Equinox, Inc., Albany, NY (6) Family Justice Center of Erie County, Buffalo, and (7) Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Rochester, NY.

The federal 2009 Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funding is in keeping with the mission of the Trust Fund, which administers the federal program to support child abuse and domestic violence services. Trust Fund initiatives also support some of the strategies of the NYS OCFS Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan such as increased efforts to support strength-based and family centered practices that engage parents, evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices, and efforts to promote safety, permanency and child well being through enhanced family support services. Current federal and state funded child abuse prevention and family support services include: Statewide Public Education targeting all parents of newborns (1) Kaleida Health/Women Children's Hospital of Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, (2) Children's Hospital Foundation at Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla, NY;

Parenting Education and Support services targeting families at risk including young parents and fathers (3) Gateway Longview, Buffalo, NY (4) Women's Prison Association, Brooklyn, NY (5) SCO Family of Services, Bronx, NY (6) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY (7) Homes for the Homeless, Bronx, NY; School-based prevention education targeting elementary students and school personnel; (8) Child Abuse Prevention Services, Long Island, NY; Family Resource Centers providing early and comprehensive support to parents and caregivers of young children; (9) North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Watertown, NY, (10) Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country, Plattsburgh, NY, (11) Child & Family Resources, Penn Yan, NY, (12) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland, Cortland, NY, (13) Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, Amsterdam, NY, (14) Chinese American Planning Council, New York, NY, (15) Mothers and Babies Perinatal Network of SCNY, Binghamton, NY, (16) ProAction of Steuben and Yates, Bath, NY, (17) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tioga, Owego, NY, (18) Niagara Falls City School District, Niagara Falls, NY (19) Family Resource Centers of Crestwood Children's Center, Rochester, NY, (20) Phipps Community Development Corporation, Bronx, New York, (21) Association to Benefit Children, East Harlem, NY.

During 2009, state and federally funded programs administered under the Trust Fund served approximately 66,000 children, parents, caregivers and professionals through direct services, training and educational opportunities. OCFS applied for and received federal CBCAP grant funds to complement Trust Fund child abuse and domestic violence prevention efforts in 2009. A grant award of \$1,553,742 allows OCFS to continue existing programs implemented in January 2008 under a 2007 Request for Proposals (RFP), supports an outcome evaluation of family resource centers, and contributes to New York's annual child abuse prevention conference. The 2010 Conference, "Education, Inspiration & Solutions" held in April, once again afforded the Trust Fund the opportunity to showcase best practices and to recognize parent partners who demonstrate their leadership as a result of participation in local programs. Trust Fund-sponsored programs and staff are regular presenters at the conference. Funds also support networking activities, training and technical assistance, family engagement and leadership training opportunities, and the Program Self-Assessment and Peer Review Process developed in collaboration with the New York State Family Resource Center Network, OCAN, FRIENDS National Resource Center, the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds, and other stakeholders.

The Trust Fund-sponsored Family Resource Center (FRC) Network meets on a quarterly basis for the purpose of receiving technical assistance and training related to program development, service delivery, evaluation, and fund development. Training and networking opportunities this past year focused on creating a common assessment tool to determine effectiveness of parenting education programs. The Protective Factor Survey (PFS) developed by FRIENDS was instituted in January 2010. Additionally, training and implementation of the research-based curricula, Incredible Years, was initiated this past year at ten (10) FRCs. Further efforts to improve data collection, how to do more with less, and strengthening partnerships with the local social services districts in support of county program improvement plans were topics included in quarterly network meetings.

Many of the Network members also participated in the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP) Professional Development workshops offered this year and are active members of the Professional Development and Evidence and Evaluation workgroups.

One Self-Assessment and Peer Review was held April 1-2, 2009 at the Geneva Family Resource Center in Ontario County. A consultant continues to assist with Center planning and conducting the self-assessment, in addition to preparing for the peer review site visit. Instruments used for the review included the Outreach Booklet from “How Are We Doing?” toolkit and a draft of the Program and Activities General Information subscale developed by FRIENDS National Resource Center. Challenges addressed during the review included improved signage and creation and dissemination of effective outreach materials that are simple and easy to understand, developing a written outreach plan with a concrete schedule to engage families, and strengthening family engagement in planning and operation of the Center.

Feedback from the self-assessment and peer review teams indicate that the process provides the opportunity for stepping away from the day to day work and focusing specifically on programming and areas for improvement. The creativity that surfaced as the Peer Review Team problem solved the challenges facing the program, and the ideas and strategies that emerged were particularly effective. *“The process helped us identify our strengths/challenges in terms of outreach and engaging families. It was helpful in that it showed us that our community partners and parents are unaware of some of the services we have been providing for years.”*

Research conducted in 2009 included a study to evaluate the effects of Family Resource Center programs on developing healthy parenting attitudes, fostering positive parenting behaviors, enhancing social support and other protective factors associated with a reduced risk of child maltreatment. Using a tool based on the Parenting Practices Inventory (PPI), Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPPI), and the Maternal Social Support Index, families were assessed at eight FRCs. There were 115 participants included in the study across a wide range of income and education levels. The study had a 70% follow up response rate with 80 participants completing a questionnaire between five and seven months after their first interview. Initial results indicate that participants with the lowest parenting scores at baseline were most likely to show improvement in all measures including, but not limited to, appropriate expectations of children; rejection of corporal punishment and appropriate parent-child roles. Further evaluation is planned to more closely examine how participant demographics and services received affect participation and to explore integration of FRCs into their community networks.

Efforts to strengthen families through early care and education by engaging child care providers in preventing maltreatment continues through dialogue with ZERO to THREE (ZTT) and the state leadership team created through the Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect (PCAN) Project. The leadership team is committed to continuing conversations through quarterly conference calls and creating opportunities for sustaining the program at state level conferences and through funding opportunities. The leadership team is

comprised of OCFS, ACS, the Council on Children and Families, Prevent Child Abuse NY, the state Education Department, and the NYS Early Care and Learning Council.

Recently, PCAN trainers were invited to participate in a new ZTT funding opportunity called Promoting Responsible Relationships: Impacting Practice in Child Care. The project seeks to enhance the capacity of 12 child care programs in three states to prevent child maltreatment. Further it is designed to develop a model of training and coaching that leads to measurable changes in the capacity of child care programs and their staff to reduce the risk of child maltreatment among families with very young children. Each state is required to identify four child care programs to participate, and four experienced PCAN trainers to support them with training and coaching. In surveying NY'S PCAN trainers' interest in this initiative, they expressed a desire to continue networking and four agreed to be part of this new opportunity. The trainers who volunteered represent diverse communities in Cattaraugus, Niagara, and New York counties reaching a native population, rural, and multi-cultural communities. Child care staff represents both centers and family day care providers. Preliminary indications are that this application was favorably received. The overall goals of this effort are to impart skills in addressing the five protective factors, improve practice in early childhood settings, learn new outreach strategies to engage families, and build a stronger partnership between providers and parents.

### **Plans for 2010-2011**

The 2009-10 CAPTA funds will be utilized to support a number of initiatives aimed at improving the child protection system in New York State. The areas that will be targeted include:

- The use of Citizen Review Panels to review policies, procedures and practices of State and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protective responsibilities. The contract for Administration was awarded to the Schuyler Center for Advocacy and Analysis (SCAA). SCAA has taken a proactive role in helping the three Panels develop specific work plans.
- Implementing Program Standards for all Child Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Child Abuse Teams in New York State. The Standards were developed through input from New York State Children's Alliance, Multidisciplinary Team/Child Advocacy Center projects, and the Children's Justice Task Force
- Developing and enhancing the capacity of community based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level which is a focus of all of OCFS' program development efforts including the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program, the Trust Fund, and the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program. These efforts are described below and throughout this plan.

The 2009-2010 CAPTA Basic State Grant funds will continue to support initiatives related to the OCFS Performance Improvement Plan. CAPTA funds will continue to support the Parent Information Resource Center and the statewide Prevention Conference sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse New York. The funds also support the development of materials for the Safe Babies Campaign, an initiative of OCFS in collaboration with DOH and local community based organizations. In addition to these existing initiatives, OCFS may use funds for additional child protective improvements, which have yet to be determined.

The Children's Justice Act funds will support a number of new initiatives including the following:

### **Multidisciplinary Training Program on the New York State Forensic Interviewing Best Practices**

A three-day training program, New York State Children's Justice Task Force Forensic Interviewing Best Practices has presented 21 regional training sessions over the last three years. A one day training course will be developed and introduced to professionals not directly involved with interviewing of child victims, but who should be aware of the components of a sound forensic interview. The training will be targeted to County Attorneys, prosecutors, judges and members of local multidisciplinary teams.

### **Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities: Reporting, Investigation and Intervention**

The success of the CD-ROM *Child Abuse and Children with Disabilities: A New York State Perspective* lead the NYS Children's Justice Task Force to recommend development of a website to provide more information and easier accessibility to professionals involved with reporting, investigating and interventions with disabled children. The New York CJA program will reach out to other States to link with this program and include service providers and experts from their respective States on the website as well. The website will outline basic information which should be known by all members of the various multidisciplinary teams related to characteristics of these children that might impact upon interviewing, data gathering or "reasonable accommodations" that may be needed in investigative and/or support procedures. It will also describe the current policies and federal/state specific guidelines that exist to date which directly affect the appropriate handling of these cases so that these children are not further victimized on any level.

The website will provide sample case studies and a listing of other statewide resources available. This site will also include short interviews with a variety of experts from New York State and its consultants over the years, who share their work and suggestions related to enhancing the provision of appropriate reporting, investigation and intervention of child abuse involving children with disabilities.

Other initiatives such as Child Abuse Training for Prosecutors and Multidisciplinary Teams, Multidisciplinary Team Management of Children Who Act Out Sexually and The CAC/CASA Partnership Project: Improving Advocacy for Children will also continue to receive support.

**William B. Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program**

Continued support for 28 programs funded under a Request for Proposals (RFP) released in April 2007 to address all forms of family violence including child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse will remain the priority. Funding in the amount of \$1.24 million to continue fourteen of the new initiatives was allocated in the 2009/10 state budget. The 2010-11 state budget may support continuation of existing programs and/or a Request For Proposals for new family violence prevention initiatives. Key programs worthy of note are the Elder Abuse Prevalence Study being conducted by Lifespan of Greater Rochester in partnership with NYC Department for the Aging and Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging (CITRA). It is the first of its kind in the country and will examine prevalence rates among reported and unreported cases, characteristics of victims, types of abuse reported and current referral patterns. The third year of the study beginning in April 2010 will produce final outcomes and recommendations for shaping future policy and funding priorities.

Promotion of the highly successful New York Shaken Baby Prevention program launched in June 2008 continues targeting all maternity and birthing hospitals in the state. This joint effort reinforces the 2004 State law requiring hospitals to talk to parents about the dangers of shaking a baby and to have a plan for coping with crying. Further tracking of the incidence of SBS continues in the Western New York, Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley regions with a sustained 50% reduction in the incidence of SBS in the Western NY Region. The SBS project staff will be contributing to a new shaken baby prevention video which is slated for production in May 2010.

A continuing partnership with DOH, other state agencies and local providers will assist with OFCS's expanded efforts to promote *Safe Sleeping Practices for Infants and Young Children*, a recent teleconference conducted for child welfare staff, and help to identify other safety issues that need to be addressed through public education efforts. Feedback from the teleconference will be used to develop other tools, messages and resources that will engage those families within the child welfare system that are most affected.

The 2010 CBCAP grant will support continuation of the existing Family Resource Center Network and/or identify new programs in high need communities through a Request for Proposals to address. It will also support work begun through the Outcome Evaluation for Family Resource Centers (FRC) by helping to shape future initiatives to demonstrate the value and impact of FRC services. As stated in the accomplishments section further activities include a study of the integration of FRCs into community networks through a community survey, and analysis of individual participation and its relationship with demographics and services attended. The Network will develop an action plan for

addressing the recommendations from the study by building on current outreach efforts and outlining new strategies to engage higher need families. Data from the implementation of the Protective Factor Survey (PFS) will also be compiled with revisions and protocols addressed as needed.

The Trust Fund will continue to promote the use of research-based evaluation to support reliable outcome data, and the use of evidence-based curricula and program models. The Incredible Years (IY) training offered this past year provided the FRC Network the opportunity to strengthen their services with programming that is proven to produce positive outcomes for families. Common tools (PFS) are being put in place to enable the Centers to collect data not only for new families but those that participate in the IY program. Activities to support the trainers to promote its delivery with fidelity will be a focus this year. Bi-monthly conference calls, coaching, and mini workshops at Network quarterly meetings will be considered as well as inviting the national trainer to present a booster session as a webinar or one-day meeting.

If the application for the Zero To Three (ZZT) grant *Promoting Responsible Relationships: Impacting Practice in Child Care* is successful, it will serve to promote similar partnerships within the FRC Network due the participation of the Niagara Falls Family Resource Network. The state leadership team will continue its efforts to sustain this initiative and link appropriate outcomes and resources to the NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP).

The Trust Fund will continue its role as part of the NYSPEP Steering Committee contributing to enhancing the NYSPEP website for use by parents and providers to easily access parenting education programs; determine gaps between what parents need in terms of parenting education and what is being offered; and enhance professional development by providing information regarding parenting education components associated with effectiveness, as well as technical assistance and learning opportunities across the state.

The Trust Fund also addresses recommendations from a range of OCFS initiatives. Many programs provide resources and services that address the 2009 recommendations from the New York State Citizens Review Panels for Child Protective Services, including preventing shaken baby syndrome, increased access to parenting education programs, and providing home visiting services. Trust Fund community-based programs offer alternatives and resources for the Family Assessment Response (FAR) approach to reducing child abuse and neglect and systems intervention.

### **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

The major efforts in 2009-2010 were geared to continue the implementation of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (CFCIP), including the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program, the Medicaid option available to states under Chafee and the new requirements for a transition plan under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. OCFS has developed a transition plan form and

training for districts and agencies on the new transition planning requirements as noted in Goal 4 under Transition Plan.

OCFS is refining its strength-based Life Skills Training program throughout its direct care system as a key core component of the OCFS residential treatment program. Additional life skills interventions will be identified and prescriptively provided for youth in OCFS direct care programs from the “Counselor’s Toolbox”.

OCFS continued to oversee the remaining period of a federal Department of Labor grant to prepare and support eligible youth with lifelong learning skills to enhance their educational and employment prospects. The PASSport (Preparation, Access, and Support Services) system will link youth with comprehensive services designed to help in the transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency. OCFS received continued funding from Casey Family Programs for the same purpose during 2007-2008, since federal funds no longer will be available.

The following pages provide information about the in-care population in receipt of Independent Living Services. The data is presented for 16-21 year olds and for the previously State-funded population 14-15 year olds. The data for 14-15 year olds includes only those children who have a goal of APLA. It does not capture information about other children who, because of the service needs identified, are receiving Independent Living Services, even though their primary goal is not Independent Living.

### Children in Foster Care Receiving Independent Living Services

Age	Frequency	Percent
14	2143	13.1
15	2893	17.7
16	3396	20.8
17	2955	18.1
18	2095	12.8
19	1146	7
20	1112	6.8
thru 21	600	3.7
<b>Total</b>	16340	100

Sex	Frequency	Percent
<b>F</b>	7670	46.9
<b>M</b>	8670	53.1
<b>Total</b>	16340	100

Race/ Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Native Amer-Alaskan	44	0.3
Asian	94	0.6
African American	7197	44
White	3481	21.3
Unk	2463	15.1
Latino	3061	18.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>16340</b>	<b>100</b>
Current Living Arrangement	Frequency	Percent
ADOPTIVE HOME	10	0.1
RUNAWAY SHELTER	19	0.1
INSTITUTION	4888	29.9
GROUP RESIDENCE	446	2.7
GROUP HOME	1763	10.8
SILP	316	1.9
AOBH	471	2.9
FOSTER HOME	5840	35.7
APPVD REL HOME	2136	13.1
SNF	6	0
RTF	144	0.9
HRF	3	0
NON-SEC DET FAC	46	0.3
SEC DET FAC	1	0
CFR DEV CENTER	8	0
ICF-DD	71	0.4
VOL COMM RES	18	0.1
VOL LIV RES	1	0
PROP RES SCHOOL	33	0.2
VOL RES SCHOOL	5	0
UNION FREE SCHOOL	1	0
PSYCH CENTER	2	0
SUPERVISED LIV	34	0.2
INTENSIVE SUPPOR	5	0
PSYCH HOSP	4	0
OTHER-NONSANC	58	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>16329</b>	<b>99.9</b>
System missing	11	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16340</b>	<b>100</b>

Duration of Foster Care	Frequency	Percent
UP TO 6 MOS.	2905	17.8
7-12 MOS.	2468	15.1
13-18 MOS.	1693	10.4
19-24 MOS.	1272	7.8
25-36 MOS.	1698	10.4
37-48 MOS.	1184	7.2

49-60 MOS.	918	5.6
61+ MOS.	4202	25.7
<b>Total</b>	16340	100

OCFS will continue to provide technical assistance and support to independent living program sites serving youth in its custody and on aftercare status. Those youth who are in residential placement in OCFS operated facilities receive independent living skills as part of the Focus Intervention Process. This process is part of the OCFS counseling program, which addresses those risk factors that may lead youth to recidivate. In addition, OCFS will work to enhance Life Skills programming through training, site visits including group observations and the provision of various materials to support this program (See Goal 4 for additional Chafee information). As per P.L. 111-148 of the Act, OCFS will be submitting a certification by the chief executive officer of the State in accordance with amended section 477(b)(3) of the Act no later than September 30, 2010.

### **Education and Training Vouchers**

New York State's Education and Training Voucher program is designed to help youth aging out of foster care to make the transition to self-sufficiency and receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment. Under this program, eligible youth may receive up to \$5,000 per year to attend a post-secondary education or vocational training program. The following categories of individuals may be eligible to receive vouchers under the Education and Training Voucher program: (1) youth otherwise eligible for services under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program; (2) youth adopted from foster care after attaining age 16; and (3) youth participating in the voucher program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

OCFS will continue to contract with the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) to administer and serve as New York State's fiscal agent for the Education and Training Voucher Program. Social services districts continue to be responsible for determining program eligibility. Priority for funding will be given to former foster care youth who are participating in the voucher program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

New York State's Permanency legislation, Chapter 3 of the Laws of 2005, brought about many changes to laws that will affect adolescents. The law includes a requirement to provide life skills services to foster care youth beginning at age 14, regardless of permanency goal. Regulations were filed on an emergency basis to implement the new law. With these new regulations, the discharge-planning goal of independent living has been renamed "Discharge to another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource." This permanency planning goal is to assist foster care youth in their transition

to self-sufficiency by connecting the youth to an adult permanency resource, equipping the youth with life skills and, upon discharge, connecting the youth with any needed community and/or specialized services. An adult permanency resource is a caring committed adult who has been determined by a social services district to be an appropriate and acceptable resource for a youth and is committed to providing emotional support, advice and guidance to the youth and to assist the youth as the youth makes the transition from foster care to responsible adulthood.

## Accomplishments

782 youth received ETV awards during FFY 2008-2009

425 students were returning students (54%) and 357 (46%) were new to the ETV program

Female 548 70%

Male 234 30%

Age and Number of students:

18 225 28.77%

19 195 24.94%

20 185 23.66%

21 107 13.68%

22 70 8.95%

Ethnicity:

African-American 462 59.08%

Asian-American 16 2.05%

Caucasian 92 11.76%

Latino 137 17.52%

Mixed-Race 68 8.70%

Native-American 4 0.51%

Pacific-Islander 3 0.38%

Funding awarded to New York students: \$2,683,005.00

All eligible New York youth who completed the application and attended school were funded. Students who applied, but were ineligible to receive funding include those who were not in foster care, did not attend school, were first time applicants over the age of 21, or previous recipients who are older than 23.

\* Data is derived from the Orphan Foundation of America's report (Appendix D)

OCFS will continue to build on the education work we began in 2007-2008. In 2008 six regional educational forums were held around the state for caseworkers in local districts

and authorized voluntary agencies and foster parents. In 2009 six regional forums were again held around the state. Recognizing that not all youth will go to college, the 2009 forums built and expanded upon the previous years' forums and included a career planning and job readiness component. Resource materials will also be developed and distributed at the forums. In 2010 regional forums are again planned and this year the target population will also include youth.

## **Plans for 2010-2011**

OCFS will continue to contract with the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) to administer and serve as New York State's fiscal agent for the Education and Training Voucher Program. Social services districts continue to be responsible for determining program eligibility. Priority for funding will be given to former foster care youth who are participating in the voucher program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

## **Supporting Information**

### **Juvenile Justice Transfers**

The number of youth transferred to juvenile justice facilities in FFY 08-09 was 212 youth, a slight increase from FFY 07-08 which was 210. This population consists of children that:

- Were in CCRS shown as in the custody of a social services district as a result of a judicial hearing with dispositions of PINS (Person in Need of Supervision), JD (if placed, and placement not exceeding 12 months), JD (initial placement exceeds 12 months), and do not have a disposition of OCFS custody within the same hearing, or
- Have a disposition of transfer custody and guardianship (Surrender or Terminated Parental Rights only) or care and custody to a social services district, or
- Have a voluntary or emergency removal, and
- Have a subsequent hearing with a disposition of OCFS custody during FFY 2008 (the two events must occur between the track open date and the first discharge date, if any that lasts more than one day), plus
- Children that were discharged to an OCFS Facility during FFY 2008, and
- Do not have an open admission in the juvenile justice system between the last movement and discharge in CCRS.

### **Inter-Country Adoptions**

On October 6, 2000, the federal Inter-country Adoption Act (ICAA) of 2000 (P.L. 106-279) was signed into law. The ICAA provides for the implementation by the United

States of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect to Inter-country Adoption. At this time, 19 New York State authorized voluntary agencies have been accredited or temporarily accredited by the Council on Accreditation to provide adoption services for Hague adoption cases. In 2009, OCFS issued Administrative Directive 09-OCFS-ADM-12 Inter-country Adoptions. This ADM informs local districts and voluntary agencies of the impact of the Hague Convention and provides the circumstances under which non-Hague Convention inter-country adoptions may take place.

As residents of New York State, children adopted from other countries have access, if they otherwise satisfy the eligibility standards to mandated preventive services. The State provides TANF funding for Regional Post Adoption Centers where such families, if TANF-eligible, can apply for services. In addition, all New York State authorized agencies providing inter-country adoption programs are regulated and supervised by OCFS. Prospective adoptive parents are evaluated for suitability to adopt through a home study process, which includes a criminal history record review and a check against the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment data base.

OCFS directive 04-OCFS-LCM-05 requires social services districts to collect and maintain information on foster placements of children who are adopted from other countries. Efforts to collect this data are continuing and it is anticipated that analysis of this information will be available in future plan submissions. Extensive Legislative information is available at the OCFS internet site.

During the reporting period for 2008-2009 of the districts reporting there were no entries into foster care from an international adoption.

### **Child Welfare Demonstration Projects**

New York State is not participating in a Child Welfare Demonstration Project

### **Health Care Services Overview**

Health care services: The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351) amended the section 422(b)(15) of the Act which previously required an update regarding ongoing efforts by the State agency to actively involve and consult physicians or other appropriate medical professionals in assessing the health and well-being of foster children and determining appropriate medical treatment. The law now requires States and Tribes, in coordination with the State title XIX (Medicaid) agency, and in consultation with pediatricians and other experts in health care, and experts in and recipients of child welfare services, to develop a plan for ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care. States are required to submit a copy of the Health Care Services Plan with their CFSP.

New York State has a state-supervised, locally administered system of foster care. As such, provision and oversight of the medical care received by these children is the

responsibility of the social services districts, that are the legal custodians and case managers, and the authorized foster care agencies with which these departments contract to provide foster care services. Over 80% of NYS children in foster care are cared for by non-public foster care agencies (voluntary authorized agencies) rather than local departments of social services. OCFS routinely conducts site visits and provides technical assistance to departments and agencies to monitor the quality of services provided.

The models of delivery for health care services to children in foster care vary significantly across New York State. Some authorized foster care agencies deliver primary health care directly through on-site clinics. Some agencies have contractual agreements with health care providers; for example, an agency may contract with one psychologist in the community to conduct mental health evaluations on all new admissions. Most agencies have medical staff that provide some tracking and oversight of routine and specialty health services. Children residing in foster homes often use community health providers.

While OCFS does not provide direct clinical services to children in foster care, OCFS promulgated regulations regarding appropriate medical care [18 NYCRR 441.21]. New York State Social Services Law (SSL) provides the statutory authority for OCFS to supervise social services districts and promulgate regulations. The regulations require that licensed medical professionals assess the health and well-being of children in foster care and determine appropriate medical treatment. OCFS has also provided practice guidance on necessary and optimal health services for children in foster care with our comprehensive manual, "Working Together: Health Services for Children in Foster Care". This manual was developed in close collaboration with our medical director (a pediatrician), and a representative group of foster care agency and social services staff that included medical professionals.

To support optimal health services for children in foster care, social services districts and voluntary authorized agencies use the services of licensed medical practitioners to inform policy and practice. For example, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) has a Medical Services Office that is led by a physician. This office provides policy guidance and oversees the health services provided to NYC children in foster care. They meet regularly with medical staff from the authorized foster care agencies to discuss new policies and address concerns.

NYC has a local coalition, the Committee of Mental Health and Healthcare Professionals in Child Welfare, which provides a forum for members to consult with each other on common concerns around health services for children in foster care. This group has also advised OCFS on the contents of CONNECTIONS, New York's SACWIS system. The Health Care Workgroup of the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) was instrumental in development of the Foster Care Initiative (FCI). FCI is a project in 2 NYC agencies that demonstrated new approaches for mental health services for children in foster care, including addressing trauma.

In the Albany area, a foster care agency has contracted with Albany School of Pharmacy to advise their medical staff on medication matters. In central New York, several counties have contracted the services of a child psychiatrist, who must approve all prescriptions for psychotropic medications for children in foster care before the prescriptions can be filled. This psychiatrist has also conducted chart reviews of medication usage for children in congregate care settings in Onondaga County and advised the county on the appropriateness of the prescribing practices.

The NYS Coalition for Children's Mental Health Services, headed by foster care agency directors, holds annual Public Policy Forums. These forums attended by community health providers as well as foster care agencies, sponsor speakers and workshops that advance optimal, innovative care. The Office of Mental Health (OMH) has held regional, public forums on their children's mental health plan throughout 2008. This allows our service providers to fully understand and provide input into the state plan.

The Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) legislation requires that counties employ a collaborative approach to children with intensive cross-system needs. These collaboratives vary in accordance with local government and community resources, and typically include representatives from social services, mental health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse services, schools, and community providers. The goal is to implement a comprehensive, coordinated, individualized service plan for each child.

At the state level, the OCFS medical director is involved in any regulatory or guidance documents disseminated on health issues. OCFS employs psychologists and a consultant psychiatrist. OCFS routinely engages local and national experts, including psychiatrists, physicians, pharmacists, and psychologists to assist in health-related initiatives. Activities in 2008 included a series of 3 teleconferences on trauma, the development and distribution of a guidance document on the use of psychiatric medication for children in out-of-home care, and an interagency collaboration to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). OCFS has used an expert consultant to customize the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool for use in our Bridges to Health foster care waiver program.

OCFS implemented a four year pilot of health care coordination for children in foster care in eight agencies across the state. The purpose of this pilot, which was conducted from 2003 - 2007, was to identify models for care coordination in a variety of settings and determine the impact of care coordination on the delivery of optimal health care to children in foster care. In addition to an evaluation component, now posted on our website, a white paper is being written on lessons learned at each site. Project directors and participants at the agencies included pediatricians, psychiatrists, nurses, and physician assistants. By their participation in this pilot, these medical professionals have helped us to define how care coordination can be successfully implemented in a variety of foster care settings. All pilot sites experienced positive outcomes, including the development of a Medical Passport at a Buffalo agency, and the creation of an on-site clinic for primary health care at a foster care agency in the Bronx. (Additionally, see Bridges to Health (B2H) noted in Goal 2).

These efforts by OCFS with active collaboration and coordination with sister agencies resulted in our development of a health care services plan for coordination and oversight of health care for children in foster care. There are no changes to the Health Care Services Plan currently. OCFS' Health Care Services Plan was submitted with the 2010-2014 CFSP in June 2009. As required per P.L. 111-148 of the Act, OCFS will submit an updated Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan no later than September 30, 2010.

## **Disaster Planning**

### **Emergency Preparedness/ Disaster Plans:**

OCFS continues to refine and test its disaster plan to identify, locate and service children in care in the event of disaster. The approach will include responding to new cases as needed, maintaining communication with essential personnel, and how to maintain records and coordinate services under such circumstances.

OCFS plans address state and local needs as well as federal requirements to:

- identify, locate and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster;
- respond to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases;
- remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster; and
- preserve essential program records and coordinate services and share information with other States (Section 422(b) (16) of the SSA).

The following plans are available:

- An updated copy of the OCFS Business Continuity Plan (BCP). This Plan serves as a foundation for all OCFS staff to continue to provide essential services during emergencies.
- An updated copy of the OCFS Business Continuity Plan Light. This Plan is an action document used to reestablish essential services during emergencies. It includes helpful information, such as divisional phone trees and contact information for social services districts.
- An updated copy of the OCFS Division of Child Welfare and Community Services (CWCS) Business Continuity Plan. This Division has the primary responsibility for the oversight of child welfare services delivered by local departments of social services.

- A copy of the template used by OCFS juvenile facilities to develop a “Ready Emergency Data Book”, which details each facility’s plan in the event of an emergency.

The BCPs provide the foundation for OCFS staff to continue to provide essential services during emergencies, and to facilitate an orderly recovery from emergency situations. In support of this, they

- Outline key concepts of business continuity operations;
- Identify roles and responsibilities of key OCFS staff;
- Describe how the agency and its five programs units will function in the event that their essential services are disrupted;
- Outline the mechanics and flows of communication within and outside the agency;
- Identify when and by whom the plan is activated and provides procedures for relocation and for a return to normal operations;
- Outlines agency requirements for BCP awareness training and exercises;
- Establish procedures to update and maintain the BCPs.

In relation to OCFS’ role in oversight, OCFS issued 07-OCFS-ADM-10: “New York State Disaster Plan – Local Department of Social Services Requirements,” on July 30, 2007. This ADM outlines the requirements for local departments of social services pursuant the federal Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, P.L. 109-288. The submitted local plans will be incorporated into state planning.

In the spring of 2009, several OCFS staff members were sent to a State Emergency Operations Center Course sponsored by the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO). This training insures that in response to and support of disasters or major emergencies personnel from partner agencies are appropriately briefed on their respective responsibilities when assigned to the SEMO. There is no additional information to add or changes to the disaster plan currently. The New York State Disaster Plan was submitted with the 2010-2014 CFSP in June 2009.

### **Adoptive Incentive Payments**

New York State did not receive Adoption Incentive funding in 2009-10