

**The Georgia
Division of Family and Children Services**



**STRATEGIC PLAN
STATE FISCAL YEAR 2017-2019**

Message from Director Virginia Pryor

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services is committed to the safety, self-sufficiency and well-being of Georgia's most vulnerable citizens in decisions made and actions taken. As Director, my goal is to build a better future for all Georgians, where people from all walks of life share a vision of safety and success for every child, family and individual who lives in their community. My plan to realize this vision is to build Regions of Hope around the state. The *Blueprint for Change*, our journey towards a State of Hope, is a three-pillar approach to reforming Georgia's social service system. The first pillar includes the establishment and adoption of a practice model that will serve as the foundation to keep children safe and strengthen families. The second pillar focuses on developing a robust workforce for the Division, both in numbers and level of expertise and training. The third pillar is focused on constituent engagement, which is an effort to engage with the public to build consensus and collaboration among partners, staff and stakeholders. State of Hope will live and breathe in the third pillar of the reform effort as an inclusive network that provides welcoming opportunities for youth, families and supporters. By leveraging the collective wisdom of communities, we will create a better quality of life for all Georgians. The Division's 2017-2019 Strategic Plan is the operationalization of the *Blueprint's* pillars.

The process for developing this strategic plan began with the guidelines provided by the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and culminated with the input of leadership, staff and stakeholders. We are excited to be able to partner with our stakeholders in the development and implementation of this plan since many of our goals and objectives require collaboration with community partners. It takes the collective impact of communities to make positive changes for children and families. The Division's stakeholders include our primary constituency (the children, individuals and families we serve), all levels of staff within the agency, service providers, advocacy groups, faith communities, judges and court systems, the business community, the criminal and juvenile justice systems, medical and behavioral health providers, the educational system, public and private funders, and the community at large. An effective partnership with each of these stakeholder groups is vital to our success as we embark on this journey of building communities of hope around the state.

The Division's strategic plan is encapsulated in six overarching goals. Each goal includes measurable objectives and corresponding strategies to meet these objectives. The majority of these objectives are ones which directly relate to the *Blueprint* and other major initiatives underway within the agency. They also reflect the practical application of our agency mission, vision and guiding principles. Additionally, the target measures set for these objectives were established after thoughtful consideration and dialogue with our staff and leadership, as well as a review of our current performance and comparisons with national benchmarks. Each target represents a desire to achieve a balance of setting the bar high enough without making it impossible to reach.

Leading this organization is an honor and I am filled with gratitude to be at the helm. We are proud of the plan that has been developed, and are confident that its successful implementation will support the achievement of our common goals of keeping children safe, strengthening families and building a stronger Georgia.

"Once you choose hope anything is possible."
– Christopher Reeve

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VISION

Safe children. Strengthened families. Stronger Georgia.

MISSION

We commit to the safety of Georgia's children in the decisions we make and the actions we take. We strengthen families toward independence and build stronger communities through caring, effective and responsive service.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Commit to the safety of our children in the decisions we make and the actions we take.
2. Empower, strengthen and support families on their path to independence.
3. Embrace a servant's heart with compassion.
4. Provide caring, responsive and effective service.
5. Listen and respond to our constituents, communities and each other.
6. Collaborate with our communities to create systems of support.
7. Develop a professional and efficient workforce that never stops learning and growing.

DFCS DIVISION GOALS

- Safety* Families and individuals are free from abuse and neglect.
- Self-sufficiency* Families and individuals have sustainable financial independence, voice and choice in services, and are self-directed.
- Permanency* Families and individuals are healthy and stable.
- Well-being* Families and individuals have enhanced capacity to meet their physical, cognitive and educational needs.
- Workforce* The Division's workforce is competent, professional and efficient.
- Stakeholders* The Division and its stakeholders are fully engaged and responsive.

Goal One – Safety

*Families and individuals are free from abuse
and neglect.*



SAFETY OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Reduce recurrence of maltreatment from 8% to no more than 5% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	8%
July 2018	6.5%
July 2019	5%

Data Source: The Division's Child Welfare Quality Assurance Data compiled for the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

National Standard: The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Standard is 9.1%

Objective 2: Reduce reentries into Foster Care from 7.5% to 5% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	7.5%
July 2018	6.25%
July 2019	5%

Data Source: The Division's Child Welfare Quality Assurance Data compiled for the Federal Child and Family Services Review

National Standard: The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Standard is 8.3%

Objective 3: Reduce maltreatment of children in Foster Care from 1.084 victimizations (per 10,000 days in care) to no more than 0.75 victimizations (per 10,000 days in care) by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure [*Per 10,000 days in Foster Care]
July 2017	1.084
July 2018	0.92
July 2019	0.75

Data Source: The Division’s Child Welfare Quality Assurance Data compiled for the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

National Standard: The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Standard is .85 victimizations (per 10,000 days in care)

Objective 5: Train and educate 100% of all new OFI staff annually on mandated reporter requirements.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	100%
July 2018	100%
July 2019	100%

Data Source: The OFI Education and Training Registration and Transcript System

Objective 6: Reduce the number of sleep-related deaths for children who are currently receiving or previously received services from DFCS by July 2019. There were a total of 44 sleep-related deaths in 2013, 53 deaths in 2014 and 66 deaths in 2015.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	No more than 63 sleep-related deaths (represents a 5% decrease)
July 2018	No more than 60 sleep-related deaths (represents a 5% decrease)
July 2019	No more than 56 sleep-related deaths (represents a 7% decrease)

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES) and the Child Fatality and Serious Injury Review Team

SAFETY STRATEGIES

1. Implement Solution-Based Casework (SBC), a component of Georgia's Comprehensive Practice Model, to provide a trauma-informed framework for safety decision making.
 - A. Certify trained staff in our practice model.
 - B. Increase fidelity of the practice model through fidelity reviews, coaching and live learning.
2. Implement mandatory, annual training for all new and veteran staff on mandated reporting requirements to promote awareness of mandated reporting.
3. Implement a comprehensive, research-based Safe to Sleep Campaign in partnership with community partners and providers.
4. Develop and implement a framework for utilizing predictive analytics in order to guide effective decision-making related to child safety and permanency.
5. Disseminate funding to community based organizations that provide primary and secondary prevention services to families in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Adheres to Governor's Goals of: Safe and Healthy

Goal Two -- Self-Sufficiency

Families and individuals have sustainable financial independence, voice and choice in services, and are self-directed.



SELF-SUFFICIENCY OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Sustain or increase the percent of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants engaged in a countable work activity from 59% to 60% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	59%
July 2018	60%
July 2019	60%

Data Source: The Office of Family Independence Planning, Performance and Reporting Monthly Files

National Standard: The federal standard rate set by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for Work Participation is 50%

Objective 2: Increase family and individual participation in Child Welfare Case Planning from 42% to 95% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	59.7%
July 2018	77.3%
July 2019	95%

Data Source: The Division's Child Welfare Quality Assurance Data compiled for the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

National Standard: The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Standard is 95%

SELF-SUFFICIENCY STRATEGIES

1. Strengthen and expand the TANF Employment Job Placement Program and job skills training to promote self-sufficiency.
2. Implement the Connected by 21 initiative, the extension of Foster Care for youth ages 18-21, to ensure that those youth in transition are supported and self-sufficient.
3. Implement Georgia's Comprehensive Practice Model to provide Child Welfare staff with skills to effectively engage, partner and plan with families, as well as track and celebrate their successes.
 - A. Certify trained staff in our practice model.
 - B. Increase fidelity of the practice model through fidelity reviews, coaching and live learning.
4. Strengthen the One Caseworker, One Family Practice Model within the Office of Family Independence to effectively improve customer service delivery, increase accountability for program outcomes and ensure local county-based service to customers.

Adheres to Governor's Goals of: Safe, Healthy and Educated

Goal Three – Permanency

Families and individuals are healthy and stable.



PERMANENCY OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Increase the stability of placement for youth in Foster Care by reducing the rate of placement moves from 5.84 moves (per 1,000 days in care) to no more than 4.12 moves (per 1,000 days in care) by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure <i>*Per 1,000 days in care</i>
July 2017	5.84
July 2018	5.42
July 2019	4.12

Data Source: This is a federal data indicator for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) pulled from Georgia's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System

National Standard: The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Standard is 4.12 moves (per 1,000 days in care)

Objective 2: Increase the percentage of monthly parent visits in Child Protective Services and Foster Care by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure for Birth Mothers	Target Measure for Birth Fathers
July 2017	87%	80%
July 2018	91%	87.5%
July 2019	95%	95%

Data Source: The Federal Every Parent Every Month (EPEM) data pulled from the State's Automated Child Welfare Information System

National Standard: The Federal Every Parent Every Month (EPEM) Standard is 95%

Objective 3: Increase the percentage of relative placement for children in Foster Care from 25.6% to 50% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	27.4%
July 2018	38.7%
July 2019	50%

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 4: Increase the percentage of children in Foster Care with adoptions that finalize (within 24 months of entering care) from 28% to 52% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	28%
July 2018	40%
July 2019	52%

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 5: Increase the total number of approved Foster Caregiver resources (foster and relative) by 20% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	4,544
July 2018	4,828
July 2019	5,112

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 6: Increase the percentage of children in Foster Care who achieve permanency within the first 12 months of entering care from 47% to 60% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	50%
July 2018	55%
July 2019	60%

Data Source: This is a federal data indicator for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) pulled from Georgia's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System

National Standard: The Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Standard is 40.5%.

PERMANENCY STRATEGIES

1. Implement the Connected by 21 Initiative to allow older Foster Care youth additional time to prepare for a safe and stable transition into adulthood.
2. Implement Solution-Based Casework (SBC), a component of Georgia's Comprehensive Practice Model, to provide a trauma-informed framework for safety decision making and to ensure quality visits and engagement with parents and children.
 - A. Certify trained staff in our practice model.
 - B. Increase fidelity of the practice model through fidelity reviews, coaching and live learning.
3. Implement the Partnership Parenting Model to provide support to both resource and birth Parents.
4. Implement a Kinship Care Continuum – to ensure that relatives caring for children and youth in foster care are provided the necessary services and supports to maintain placement stability, including continuation of benefits such as TANF and Medicaid.

5. Develop and implement processes that ensure timely filing of Termination of Parental Rights in accordance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) in order to prevent barriers to permanency achievement.
6. Implement a statewide Foster Care Recruitment campaign to provide information about Foster Care to prospective foster parents and build awareness about the need.
7. Develop partnerships with faith and community-based organizations to recruit and retain foster homes.

Adheres to Governor's Goals of: Safe, Healthy and Educated

Goal Four – Well-Being

Families and individuals have enhanced capacity to meet their physical, cognitive and educational needs.



WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Increase the percentage of current and former foster care youth in the Independent Living Program (ILP) receiving Medicaid or health insurance within six months of their 18th Birthday, from 45% to 85% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	45%
July 2018	60%
July 2019	85%

Data Source: The Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES) and the Office of Family Independence (Gateway)

Objective 2: Increase the percentage of youth in Foster Care who successfully graduate from high school from 8% to 75% by July 2019.¹

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	17%
July 2018	46%
July 2019	75%

Data Source: The Georgia Department of Education and the Division's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 3: Increase the percentage of Educational Programming and Assessment Consultation (EPAC) referrals for youth in Foster Care from 46% to 90% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	46%
July 2018	68%
July 2019	90%

¹ Going forward, the Division will work with the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that the DOE is the primary source of all education-related data for children and youth in foster care.

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 4: Increase the percentage of initial wellness screenings for youth in Foster Care from 16.9% to 75% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	16.9%
July 2018	45.95%
July 2019	75%

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 5: Support the development of executive functioning for children in foster care by increasing the number of these children (ages 0–5) who are enrolled in: Early Head Start/Head Start, Pre-K, or any other Quality Rated Childcare Program by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	36.25%
July 2018	60%
July 2019	84%

Data Source: The State's Automated Child Welfare Information System (SHINES)

Objective 6: Improve the Family Medicaid Standard of Promptness to 92% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	85%
July 2018	90%
July 2019	92%

Data Source: The Office of Family Independence Planning, Performance and Reporting Data Management Files

Objective 7: Increase the number of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Nutrition Education participants that receive information regarding healthy and nutritious food choices for low income families from 49,184 to 81,058 by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	53,686
July 2018	67,504
July 2019	81,058

Data Source: The Office of Family Independence's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Unit

WELL-BEING STRATEGIES

1. Implement Georgia's Comprehensive Practice Model, inclusive of a trauma-informed approach, throughout the State to ensure timely initial assessment of family and individual needs, as well as connections to relevant supports to meet identified needs.
 - A. Certify trained staff in our practice model.
 - B. Increase fidelity of the practice model through fidelity reviews, coaching and live learning.
2. Coordinate activities with community partners statewide to facilitate the increase of SNAP participants' access to nutritious food, healthy eating and increased physical activity.
3. Implement standardized tutoring methods for contracted education support specialists to ensure that youth in care are provided with quality educational support services. For those youth engaged in intensive educational support services, their academic performance will be tracked and monitored (when appropriate) from the initial education assessment through their exit from foster care.

4. Develop memoranda of understanding with local school systems as identified in order to formalize and standardize data sharing processes, as well as educational procedures and processes for children and youth in foster care.
5. Provide continuous Educational Academies to train DFCS staff, caregivers, and partners on the Division's educational policies, procedures and entitlements to promote successful educational outcomes for youth in Foster Care.
6. Train and educate OFI and Child Welfare case managers on the Medicaid referral and enrollment process for former and current Foster Care youth (ages 18-21 years old) so that these youth can successfully access healthcare.
7. Develop and implement innovative strategies with the Department of Community Health (DCH), Amerigroup and other stakeholders to facilitate youth access to medical, physical and behavioral health services.
8. Provide education and support to caregivers in regards to the importance of health and wellness screenings for children in care to promote access to the appropriate medical, physical and behavioral health services for children and youth served by the Division.

Adheres to Governor's Goals of: Safe, Healthy and Educated

Goal Five – Workforce

The Division's workforce is competent, professional and efficient.



WORKFORCE OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Decrease the Case Management Staff annualized turnover rates by June 30, 2019. (Baseline OFI – 17%, Child Welfare – 36%)

Month/Year	OFI Target Measure	Child Welfare Target Measure
July 2017	15%	30%
July 2018	13%	26%
July 2019	11%	18%

Data Source: The Office of Human Resources

Objective 2: Increase the percentage of employee satisfaction from 66% to 90% by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2018	80%
July 2019	90%

Data Source: The Division's Employee Satisfaction Survey compiled by Georgia State University

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES

1. Implement the Employee Selection Protocol to ensure the selection of the most appropriate Child Welfare employment candidates for the Division.
2. Conduct an evaluation regarding the effectiveness of and fidelity to the Employee Selection Protocol, and utilize the results to determine its widespread use across the Division.

3. Provide Solution Based Casework training and certification to all Child Welfare case management and supervisory staff as part of the statewide implementation of Georgia's Comprehensive Practice Model to ensure Child Welfare staff have the necessary skills to effectively engage, partner and plan with families.
 - A. Certify trained staff in our practice model.
 - B. Increase fidelity of the practice model through fidelity reviews, coaching and live learning.
4. Implement the provision of a regular employee satisfaction survey for all Division staff to guide development and implementation of strategies intended to continuously strengthen the Division's workforce.
5. Implement a supervisory mentoring program for Child Welfare and OFI supervisors to ensure that Child Welfare and OFI Case Managers are appropriately supported by their direct supervisors.
6. Implement an agency-wide branding initiative in order to positively impact the internal agency culture and staff morale.
7. Develop and implement a career path initiative for DFCS staff to ensure the retention of staff and promote employee satisfaction throughout all levels of the agency.
 - *Contingent upon funding*
8. Implement a comprehensive 360 assessment review process for all supervisory and managerial staff to identify and promote opportunities for leadership development and continuous learning.
9. Provide training to staff at all levels regarding the identification and management of secondary trauma.

Adheres to Governor's Goals of: Responsible Government, Educated and Growing

Goal Six -- Stakeholders

The Division and its stakeholders are fully engaged and responsive.



STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Increase the percentage of stakeholder engagement by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	Baseline to be developed in 2017
July 2018	49% Very satisfactory 59% Satisfactory
July 2019	54% Very satisfactory 65% Satisfactory

Data Source: Roadshow Stakeholder Engagement Surveys

Data represents an average of three roadshows from Regions 1, 3 and 14, July through November, 2017.

**We have a goal of reaching all 14 regions in a two year timeframe.*

Objective 2: Train or educate the Division's key stakeholder groups on Georgia's Comprehensive Practice Model by July 2019.

Month/Year	Internal Stakeholder Target Measure	External Stakeholder Target Measure
July 2017	33%	33%
July 2018	66%	66%
July 2019	100%	100%

Data Source: The Education and Training Unit within the Division's Knowledge Management Section

Objective 3: Reduce the total number of valid complaints received by the Division from 3,687 to 1,796 by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	2,765
July 2018	2,212
July 2019	1,796

Data Source: The Office of Communications and Constituent Services

Objective 4: Increase the number of cash match relationships/agreements from 34 to 136 by July 2019.

Month/Year	Target Measure
July 2017	34
July 2018	68
July 2019	136

Data Source: The Office of Family Independence UAS Budget Report

STAKEHOLDER STRATEGIES

1. Implement monthly regional Foster Parent Engagement Conference Calls to ensure that Foster Parents are provided regular opportunities to engage with the Division.
2. Implement regular community “Road Shows” at the regional, district and state levels in order to provide consistent and ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the State.
3. Provide education and training on Georgia’s Comprehensive Practice Model to the Division’s key stakeholder groups to ensure statewide support and engagement as implementation occurs.

4. Utilize the statewide Child Welfare Training Collaborative – a partnership between the Division and Georgia State University -- in order to provide stakeholders with regular opportunities for consistent and ongoing training.
5. Further implement and support the development of Regional Advisory Boards in each of the Division's 14 Regions to promote community partnership and engagement.
6. Increase partnerships with community agencies to enhance nutrition education and physical activity for low income households.
7. Implement regular meetings with hospitals and community organizations at the regional, district and county levels to facilitate an increase in cash match relationships.
8. Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit for the Division that highlights promising practices, lessons learned from Roadshows and supports leaders in implementing effective stakeholder engagement efforts.
 - Implement a Stakeholder Engagement Survey for Division stakeholders, in order to regularly gauge the impact of constituent engagement.
9. Implement a Customer Satisfaction Survey for Clients served by the Division, in order to regularly gauge the impact of constituent engagement efforts.

Adheres to Governor's Goals of: Safe, Educated and Responsible Government