



Department for Children and Families

Family Services Child and Family Services Plan

Annual Progress and Services Report June 30, 2007

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FOCUS OF ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICES REPORT

This Annual Progress and Services Report will focus on:

- Progress and accomplishments that have occurred since the submission of the Annual Progress and Services Report submitted in January 2007;
- Progress on goals and objectives established in the plan;
- Report on the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, including an application for funding; and
- Preliminary findings of Vermont's second Child and Family Services Review.

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

It is the mission of the Department for Children and Families to promote the social, emotional, physical and economic well being and the safety of Vermont's children and families. This is done through the provision of protective, developmental, therapeutic, probation, economic, and other support services for children and families in partnership with schools, businesses, community leaders, service providers, families, and youths statewide.

Within the Department, Family Services is the division responsible for the delivery of child protection, child welfare, permanency planning and youth justice services. The Deputy Commissioner for Family Services sits on the department management team.

VERMONT'S SECOND CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE REVIEW

We began the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process in October 2006 with the Statewide Assessment. Our onsite was the week of April 9-13, 2007. The statewide assessment process gave us an opportunity to get input from a wide variety of staff and stakeholders on issues important to us. We used the opportunity to determine progress made since the first CFSR, to further our work in family engagement and permanency for youth and to begin planning for program improvement. You can view Vermont's Statewide Assessment at <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/CFSR/index.html>

The data and practice analysis that was conducted for the Statewide Assessment enabled us to focus on the data and determine the underlying story it tells about our strengths and challenges. We feel we are positioned well to use the statewide assessment and the results of the onsite review to develop strategies to improve outcomes for children and families.

We had planned to incorporate the findings of the CFSR in this planning document but the final report is several weeks late and we do not have an estimated date of arrival. It is difficult to establish new goals for this ASPR without our CFSR findings.

During the Statewide Assessment the following areas were identified as strengths.

Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

- **Timeliness of initiating investigations.** Vermont Outcome Reports and the Vermont Data Profile both indicate that the Division responds to incoming reports of child maltreatment in a timely manner.
- **Safe from Repeat Maltreatment.** Vermont consistently exceeds the standard (94.4%) for safety from repeat maltreatment as reflected in the Vermont Outcome Reports and the Vermont Data Profile.

Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

- **Physical health of the child.** Results of Vermont's 12 District Reviews¹ compiled in 2005 reflect that in 90% of the cases reviewed medical needs of children were appropriately met.
- **Mental health of the child.** Results of Vermont's 12 District Reviews² compiled in 2005 reflect that in 94% of the cases reviewed the mental health needs of children were appropriately addressed.

Quality Assurance System

- **Standards for Ensuring Quality.** Currently, the Division has standards in place to guide program evaluation in a number of arenas. The Residential Licensing Unit evaluates compliance with the following standards:
 - Foster care licensing standards
 - Residential care licensing standards
 - Child placing agencies licensing standards
 - Runaway shelter approval standards

¹ Vermont Department for Children and Families. Family Services Division. *Family Services Division 2005 District Review Annual Report*. January 2006)

² Vermont Department for Children and Families. Family Services Division. *Family Services Division 2005 District Review Annual Report*. January 2006)

- Practice and Procedures for the following contracted services: Intensive Family-Based Services, Parent Educator Services, Foster Care Support Services and Post-Adoption Services.
- **Quality Assurance System.** Vermont is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in all 12 districts. This system, implemented after the first CFSR, mirrors the CFSR process as it evaluates the quality of services, identifies the strengths and needs of the service delivery system, and provides relevant reports to evaluate program improvement measures. You can view the Family Services Division 2005 District Review Annual Report at <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/CFSR/index.html> under Supplemental Reports.
- **Staff and Foster and Adoptive Parent Training.** The Child Welfare Training Project has partnered with representatives from Family Services and community partners to redesign our professional development programs to address some of the issues identified in the first CFSR. The initial and ongoing staff training as well as the foster and adoptive parent training have been restructured to create learning environments that we believe will result in quality trainings for all participants.

During the Statewide Assessment the following areas were identified as areas needing improvement.

Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

While some of the items included in this outcome are strengths, two of the major items are areas needing improvement. As mentioned earlier in this report, Vermont is one of only a handful of states serving a broad population of children that includes youth adjudicated delinquent and youth found to be beyond the control of their parents. These different populations give Vermont one of the highest median ages of children in out of home care of all states reporting AFCARS data and have an effect on our performance.

- **Foster Care Re-entries.** While we are showing improvement in this area Vermont's Data Profile also shows we are just above the national median (15.0%) in this measure at 15.6%. The reality of being a child welfare and juvenile justice agency heavily influences our re-entry numbers.
- **Placement Stability.** Vermont's Data Profile shows that we experience considerable challenges in this area; we do not come close to the national median in the relevant measures.

Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

- **Involvement in case planning.** Results of Vermont's 12 district reviews³ compiled in 2005 reflect that in only 68% of the cases children, families and caretakers were involved in case planning.
- **Social Worker visits.** Results of Vermont's 12 District Reviews⁴ compiled in 2005 reflect that in only 47% of the cases reviewed social worker contact was happening at least monthly. Staff attending focus groups indicated that they agree that monthly face-to-face contact is appropriate, however, there was universal agreement that it is almost impossible to achieve.

DISASTER PLANNING

The Agency of Human Services Emergency Response Planning Team has been meeting for approximately one year in order to assess, organize and plan the Agency's divisional response in the event of an emergency health or other significant incident. The Family Services Division has two representative assigned to the State Emergency Response Planning Team. The Family Service liaisons are responsible for assuring that divisions in the Department for Children & Families complete continuity of operations plans (COOPs), that the Family Services districts are familiar with and understand the expectations and processes around the critical functions outlined in the divisional COOP, and that there are plans in place to prepare and educate foster families on the protocols and their responsibilities for children in care in an emergency. The FS COOP (Attachment D) will be discussed in July with the Division Management Team.

The Family Services IT staff has created a routine which runs every night. This routine generates a file which contains information about every open case. It includes client name and contact information for children, their parent(s) and caretaker, where each child is currently placed and the placement contact as well as current case type and assigned worker.

It is working on a process which will ship this file via secure connection to our disaster recovery backup site in Burlington. When ready, this file will be accessible to all members of the Family Services (FS) Management team as well as the IT staff that support FS. The file will be retrievable via secure connections from personal computers as well as on-site at the Burlington location.

³ Vermont Department for Children and Families. Family Services Division. *Family Services Division 2005 District Review Annual Report*. January 2006)

⁴ Vermont Department for Children and Families. Family Services Division. *Family Services Division 2005 District Review Annual Report*. January 2006)

In the event of a major disaster in Waterbury (building floods or burns down, huge power surge damages computer equipment, prolonged power outage, etc.), or around the State, we will be able to retrieve this file and have the necessary info to contact and continue to supervise our clients.

SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

The Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families delivers child protection, child welfare (including independent living) and juvenile justice services to Vermonters. All of these services are fully coordinated and delivered by local district staff.

Child Protective Services (CAPTA Services)

Prevention

Much of Vermont's prevention agenda is carried out through a cluster of programs and initiatives known as Success by Six. Under our Agency of Human Services reorganization several of these programs were moved to the Child Development Division. This move will help to integrate services and provide better customer service to community providers as well as children and families. The core programs of Success by Six are:

- **Healthy Babies Program** provides critical early support and health promotion for pregnant women and infants.
- **Family, Infant and Toddler Program (FITP)** provides early intervention services including evaluation and family services planning and coordination (IDEA Part C services).
- **Essential Early Education Program** provides services to children age three to six who need specialized services for school readiness.
- **Parent Child Centers** in 16 communities, provide comprehensive supports to families with young children including parent education, playgroups, home visiting, and early childhood services.
- **Headstart** in 7 communities provides services focused on health, mental health, nutrition, early education and parent education.
- **ReachUp** provides case management, education and specialized supports for families receiving TANF payments.
- **Welcome Baby** for families with newborns and newly adopted children;
- **Community-specific initiatives** focused on the well-being of young children and their families.

While there have been no changes to these individual programs, the Child Development Division is piloting a framework to further integrate some of the above early childhood programs to make it easier for families to access and participate in services.

Child Abuse Reporting

The department accepts reports alleging child abuse or neglect, including reports of sexual abuse by any person. This reality makes Vermont look different from other states when types of abuse are compared. Each district office is responsible for taking intakes. After hours, the Emergency Services Program takes intakes. About 1000 calls are received each month.

Once a report is accepted, the alleged victim is seen and/or interviewed within seventy-two hours. The district director may waive the seventy-two hour requirement, but only for limited reasons. The investigating social worker completes the assessment within thirty days, whenever possible. The decision to substantiate is made by a supervisor. By policy, only substantiated cases may be opened for ongoing CPS services.

Allegations of child abuse or neglect in regulated facilities (foster homes, residential facilities, child care facilities and schools) are handled by a central Specialized Investigation Unit, which is under the supervision of the Child Safety Unit.

The Child Safety Unit has been responsible for supervising staff that supervise investigation functions in each of the 12 district offices since July 2005. The Child Safety Assessment Manager does not use a traditional supervision model; rather she focuses on training, technical assistance and quality assurance. She works with the Quality Assurance Coordinator to maintain a continuous quality improvement approach for the intake and investigation process.

Every three months, an intake/investigation supervisors meeting is held as a forum for discussion of issues related to this function. These meetings are intended to provide supervisors with group supervision while at the same time ensuring that they receive consistent messages about intake and investigation policy and practice. The Child Safety Assessment Manager has also convened practice forums related to specific issues including repeat maltreatment and unsubstantiated high and very high risk cases.

The Child Safety Assessment Manager is involved with the hiring of all staff in the intake and investigation chain of command.

In 2006, the Legislature passed *An Act Relating To Decriminalizing Voluntarily Delivering A Baby To A Safe Haven*, also known as the *Baby Safe Haven Law*.

The Baby Safe Haven Law allows parents to safely and anonymously relinquish their infants to the care and custody of a Safe Haven without fear of penalty—as long as the babies have not been abused or neglected.

To be covered by the law, a person must hand the baby, up to 30 days old, to an employee or volunteer of a Safe Haven. This can include any police or fire station; health care facility; place of worship; adoption agency licensed in Vermont; or place an emergency responder, contacted through 911, agrees to meet a person to receive a baby.

In June of 2006, a team was formed within the Family Services Division of the Department for Children and Families to develop and implement the Baby Safe Haven public outreach campaign. Before any materials were conceived or written, the team consulted with Safe Havens from several other states. Once that research was conducted, the team focused on developing materials for a Vermont audience.

The public outreach materials include:

- *Baby Safe Haven Brochure*, which answers the most frequently-asked questions about the Baby Safe Haven Law and explains how it works.
- *Baby Safe Haven Poster*, which informs parents that the Baby Safe Haven Law offers them safe places they can give up their babies—anononymously and legally.
- *Guidelines for Safe Havens*, provides general guidance to volunteers and employees of designated Safe Havens and helps them carry out their responsibilities under the Baby Safe Haven law.
- *Baby Safe Haven Website*, (babysafehaven.vermont.gov) contains information about the Baby Safe Haven Law, how it works, guidelines for Safe Havens, links to others resources, and the Baby Safe Haven outreach materials.

The Baby Safe Haven Law was intended as a last resort. The general assembly recognized that it was “preferable for a wide array of services to be available to all expectant mothers and to newborn infants and their mothers”. There are significant resources available to pregnant women and to newborn infants and their mothers in Vermont.

The Department of Health’s Community Public Health program agreed to answer Baby Safe Haven’s 1-800 number. When a woman calls the number, she will be referred to a public health nurse in her area who can:

- Help her find pre-natal care;
- Give her advice about her options;
- Help her find financial and other support if she chooses to keep her baby; and

- Refer her to an adoption agency to make an adoption plan for her baby if she decides *that* is the best option.

Family Services staff has already conducted several trainings for the Health Department with their central office staff and with maternal child health nurses from their district offices across the state.

The public outreach materials were launched by the Governor at a press conference held at the State House on October 12, 2006. Posters and brochures were placed in each of the 20 Visitor Centers throughout the State. The main distribution took place throughout November and December 2006 with the help of the Department of Corrections and incarcerated women at the Dale Women’s Facility in Waterbury. Materials were distributed as follows:

Safe Havens		Non-Safe Havens	
Police Stations	92	Schools	363
Fire Stations	235	Mental Health Counselors	650
Places of Worship	880	Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselors	800
Adoption Agencies	18	Cities and Towns	250
Health Care Facilities	2855	State	130
911	202	Other	96
TOTAL	4282		2289

Training for this new law was conducted by Vermont Interactive Television. These sessions were open to designated Safe Havens as well as non-Safe Havens. Information about the sessions was included in the materials that were distributed in November/December 2006.

People registered for the trainings at the babysafehaven.vermont.gov website. Our Child Safety Assessment Manager conducted four trainings that included a total of 40 sites and approximately 100 participants.

All of this preparation and training paid off as we had our first Baby Safe Haven case earlier this month and everyone involved worked as a team to facilitate the process.

Child Safety Goals

Goal CS3: Advocate for an updated state child protection statute.

SFY 2005 Update

We did not advocate for this bill in the last Legislative session. We are in the initial stages of discussing major changes in the way we carry out our work. Topics of discussion include differential response, family group decision making, strengths based and solution focused practice, etc. We are evaluating whether or not we need statutory changes to accomplish our goals.

SFY 2006 Update

We have requested technical assistance to help us to evaluate possible directions for revision of our child abuse statutes. We are strongly considering moving to a differential response system.

SFY 2007 Update

DCF Family Services advocated for an update of the state's child protection statute during the 2007 legislative session. As a result, several changes in the law were adopted including a clear definition of the state's Central Registry for child abuse and neglect and for substation recommendations made after September 1, 2007, individuals may request an independent review before their name goes into the central registry. In addition, the legislature required that DCF Family Services perform a study for the purpose of considering issues related to allegations of abuse or neglect of a child, including a tiered approach to the investigation and substantiation of child abuse or neglect that is based upon the severity of the behavior and the risk to children and the community and that establishes appropriate corresponding consequences and protections. The H.148 study will serve to assist the division in identifying the elements of a differential response system that could be utilized in the future.

Child and Family Assessments

In 2005 we developed an initial screening process that is conducted on all children who are likely to remain in custody for 30 days or more. For these children, a contracted screener begins the process of meeting with key players and completing specific screens and gathering family information as well.

The goal is to complete the screening packet within 30 days so the social worker and the team have vital information to inform the assessments, the initial case plan, and service and placement decisions.

The Department has a long-standing Memorandum of Agreement with the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) to provide EPSTD services.

This program, called Fostering Healthy Families refers new custody entrants to the VDH for assistance with initial evaluation of children’s health needs.

In the context of this agreement all districts have established partnerships with VDH nurses to assist with the initial assessment of children’s medical needs. Nurses work as part of a team to collect data to complete the Health Intake Questionnaire (HIQ) which identifies information about the health status and needs of children and youth entering custody.

The main goals of the HIQ are to ensure that serious health issues are identified as soon as possible and that every child has a medical home. Educational, health and mental health needs and services are addressed in the child’s case plan and discussed frequently at treatment teams. This meets the new requirement for medical professional involvement in assessing the health and well-being of foster children.

During our second CFSR in April 2007, reviewers found evidence of the initial screening packet in many of the case files that were reviewed. They were impressed with the level of documentation of medical and dental records and related issues in the files. These are all part of the initial screening packet and the partnership with the public health nurses.

IDEA Part C

On June 25, 2003, the U.S. Congress passed the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, a reauthorization of CAPTA. This legislation requires states to establish provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services.

In June of 2007, DCF Family Services adopted a new procedure for the referral of children to early intervention services. This procedure was agreed to by the Child Development Division of DCF and the VT FITP Part C Coordinator and requires that the DCF Family Services investigator will refer all children to the local host site for early intervention services within five days of the date of substantiation.

July 1, 2006 – April 30, 2007				
Number of children (0-3 years old) substantiated victims of abuse or neglect	Number Referred for Screening	Number Referred to FITP	Number Eligible for FITP	Number in Process of Evaluation for Eligibility
147	147 – 100%	107– 73 %	42– 39 %	28 - 26%

Child and Family Assessment Goals

Citizen Review Panel (VCAB)

Our Citizen Review Panel, The VT Child Protection Advisory Board (VCAB,) meets four times a year to discuss changes in policy and practice as well as outcome performance. The Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner for Family Services and the Manager of the Child Assessment Unit attend these meetings and respond to questions and/or issues raised by the panel.

Pursuant to sections 106(c)(4)(A)(i) and (ii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), each Citizen Review Panel must evaluate the extent to which the State is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with its CAPTA State plan by:

- Examining the policies, procedures and practices of State and local child protection agencies.

VCAB reviews all new policies and procedures, Legislative activity and specific cases. During this reporting period VCAB reviewed and provided feedback on seven policies related to intake and investigations and spent substantial time reviewing bills H.148 and S.7. Please see VCAB's 2007 Annual Report for more detail (Attachment C).

Family Preservation and Support and Family Reunification Services

The division contracts with a variety of community agencies to provide services that supplement casework services. These services comprise a statewide network of family support and preservation services and are available in all 12 districts. We use this service system for family preservation and support as well as for reunification.

- Parent Educators provide home-based support and parenting education, focusing on family support, preservation and reunification.
- Intensive Family Based Services provide time-limited, intensive in-home therapeutic services focusing on family preservation and reunification.
- Sexual Abuse Victim and Offender Treatment Services are offered by trained therapists who are authorized to provide treatment under a special DCF Medicaid program.
- Supervised Visiting Programs are operated locally. In most instances, districts hire one or more professionals to supervise visits for children in foster care with their families.
- District Specific Services purchased with IV-B, Subpart II and other funds, include case management, mentoring programs, after school programs and family-tailored individual services.

Children and Youth in Custody

The division has responsibility for children and youth in custody for reasons of:

- Child abuse and/or neglect
- CHINS(C) Children without or beyond the control of their parents
- Delinquency
- Voluntary Custody

As of 3/31/07, we were serving the following children and youth in custody:

Type	Number
Child abuse and/or neglect	847
Children beyond the control of their parents	195
Delinquent Youth	340
Voluntary Custody	6
Total Number	1388

Permanent Connections and Family Engagement

We are committed to attaining permanency for all children we serve. Clearly the best option for every child is to safely remain at home. When placement becomes necessary, returning home to family is the preferred goal, but this is not always possible. Traditionally, the next option for children who can not return home is adoption, then guardianship.

During this reporting period we continued efforts to help staff gain the knowledge and skills necessary to engage families in a meaningful way and to explore permanency options at every stage of a case. We have started to see results from our efforts, but sustainability depends on our continued attention forward movement. Districts will continue their focus on the achievement of permanency for youth in care through casework practice identified in our Program Improvement Plan.

In this reporting period we formed a “Permanency Unit”, whose charge has been to establish an integrated permanency framework built on the Division’s Core Practice Principles which can be viewed at www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/pubs&reports/index.html. The Permanency team is in the process of revising permanency related policies and developing trainings.

Individual District offices developed “Permanency Plans” identifying regional issues and committing to a number of action steps that integrated important goals and methods for reaching them that emerged during the two day Permanency Convening in 2006.

There have been some significant areas of change and improvement in this reporting period:

- A Permanency Unit was developed and organized under the supervision of the Family Services Policy and Planning Chief. Districts have been given improved access to information and technical assistance from members of this unit and the UVM Training Partnership to implement outcome based practice methods, such as Family Finding, Evidence Based Practice, Family Group Conferencing and Signs of Safety, to name a few.
- In Q4 2006 89% of youth statewide exited custody through reunification with parents, adoption or guardianship, as compared to the baseline of 77% in Q1 2006. Examples:
 - One office increased permanency for their youth by 43% in one year, to 93% from a baseline of 50%
 - Another office achieved 100% permanency, from a baseline of 82%
 - Yet another office increased to 82%, from a baseline of 74%
- Placement with kin increased statewide to 11% in Q4 2006, as compared to 9% in Q1 2006. Examples include:
 - One district office, on average, placed 18% of children and youth with kin/fictive kin, in 2006
 - Another, on average, placed 15.5% with kin/fictive kin in 2006
 - Yet another office had an average 10.5% of children/youth placed with kin/fictive kin in 2006 (this is an increase of over 13% from baseline in less than one year.)
- There has been an increased focus in all districts on the identification of ongoing, personal and caring relationships that will provide personal support to all youth who exit custody as emancipated.
- Districts have looked carefully at ways to increase permanency for youth who have been in care three (3) or more years. Approaches have included:
 - Staffing the youth in monthly district permanency meetings
 - Referring the youth for intensive case management with Youth Development Coordinators
 - Re-focusing district staff on the use of Interagency Team meetings to provide comprehensive planning and support
 - Use of screening tools such as eco-maps and genograms to inform permanency planning efforts
 - One district decreased the overall number of youth in care for three or more years to 14%, from 22% just about one year ago

Permanency Convening III – Youth Voices, was held on May 1, 2007 at the Killington Grand Hotel. The theme “Youth Voices” was chosen as a way to provide an opportunity for youth and other participants to engage in meaningful conversations by hearing from youth themselves about their need for family, connections and permanency. Speakers and workshop facilitators were chosen for their expertise and/or ability to assure that youth are supported and encouraged in using their “voice” to inform and inspire, and be informed, and provide enhanced skill building opportunities to foster parents, social and mental health workers, and court and legal personnel.

Workshops for youth with topics such as “Advocating for Yourself”, and a “youth friendly” luncheon menu was held in order to assure that the focus of the event remained youth centered. Convening III was built on meeting the needs identified by participants in the 2006 Convening.

We are pleased with the overall evaluation scores of this year’s Convening (scoring 0-5):

Event	Average Score
Keynote	4.08
Speak Out Team	4.62
Workshops Overall	4.42
Very Special Arts Project	4.50
Overall Conference	4.16

Lessons learned for the event include:

- Soliciting youth voice only has meaning if it results in real, systemic change. Youth clearly know and react when they are asked to provide input and that does not happen.
- Efforts to change current programs, and develop new programs and services that include the input and perspectives from the youth they serve are critical to youth well-being and success.
- While we have begun moving in a more positive direction by beginning to do so, our future efforts must reach broader and deeper into both the organization, the community and most importantly, the larger population of youth served.

- We need to develop different methods to invite youth to join us for the Convening. Online registration was a good idea but we could have marketed this event to youth in a different way.

We anticipate holding the Convening on an annual basis. This focused event reenergizes and renews participants' commitment to youth and permanency as well as educates newcomers. Throughout the year we will continue permanency related activities to educate professionals and youth, to network and share ideas and to integrate permanency related practice in all aspects of our work with children and youth. Activities include, but are not limited to:

- DCF data tracking and evaluation
- Statewide permanency newsletter – Connections Count
- Permanency focus in DCF Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan
- Collaboration on permanency trainings between DCF, MH and community
- Local permanency discussions facilitated by the Adoption Consortium

Goal PC2: Promote practice that will result in all youth leaving DCF custody in late adolescence having meaningful, ongoing relationships with one or more adults who will provide personal support into adulthood.

SFY 2005 Update

The Connections and Permanency Work Group has been meeting in the Southern part of the state since December 2003. Now, workers in the Northern part of the state have expressed interest in a Northern Connections Work Group.

The Connections and Permanency Work Group offers an innovative method of providing permanency planning for youth who are unable to return home and do not have an adoptive placement. They have piloted a model of finding permanent connections in 6 districts. This model was developed by Robert Lewis and implemented in other states to effectively find permanent connections and families for youth who would otherwise not have resources.

SFY 2006 Update

The Connections Project is a collaborative of social service professionals who have a strong commitment to the permanency needs of youth exiting foster care. The goal is to educate and inform other service providers on ways to ensure that youth have strong permanent connections with caring adults before they enter adulthood. With these lifelong connections, youth exiting foster care will have a greater chance of success and happiness throughout their adulthood. Participation varies and the facilitators would like to see more people join the groups. They scheduled the meetings on a regular day each month and recently sent a flyer to all caseworkers with information about the workgroups.

SFY 2007 Update

The Connections workgroups have been discontinued due to lack of participation. Many districts are now working with members of our central office Permanency Team to staff individual cases on an ongoing basis to determine permanency needs as well as their community partners. In addition, one of our team members is devoted to supporting family finding efforts in the districts. Currently she is actively working with 10 districts.

Goal PC3: Partner with contractors in efforts to achieve permanency for older adolescents in danger of “aging out” of the foster care system.**SFY 2005 Update**

Recognizing that residential and other out-of-home care providers are uniquely situated to support permanency initiatives, Family Services will review best-practice models from other states for their applicability to Vermont’s residential care contractors. Additionally, providers of community based support services will be contractually required to address permanency issues within their scope of services.

SFY 2006 Update

Several contracted providers attended the two day Permanency Convening and joined district teams in developing local plans for achieving permanency for youth. More and more conversations regarding permanency are occurring between private and public partners. In addition, we have formed a working group with our residential and foster care providers to keep them informed about our practice priorities, and how they may impact contract expectations.

SFY 2007 Update

Contracted providers are partnering with district offices on training and delivery of a variety of activities targeted at assisting youth and families in achieving permanency including family group conferencing, signs of safety methods, family finding, and delivery of training and supports to kin providing care to children and youth. These efforts are currently occurring in 6 districts. Further expansion to additional districts and consolidation of efforts in existing districts is planned and will be reported on in next years APSR.

Goal PC4: Promote the importance of regular contact between social workers and the children and families they serve.**SFY 2005 Update**

In November and December 2004 we conducted 9 Structured Decision Making trainings where we introduced our new social worker contact guidelines. All Family Services staff was required to attend training. Information about the importance of social worker contact and the correlation between such contact and positive outcomes was presented.

In addition, the policy emphasizes home visits as the preferable form of face-to-face contact, for both children and families. Visiting families in their own homes enables social workers to better assess safety and other factors that influence the decision to reunify. Visiting children in their own homes not only results in greater comfort for children, but also allows the worker to see the interaction between children and other family members.

The guidelines for social worker contact went out to DCF staff for comment in July 2004. The feedback was considered, some adjustments were made and the final product was reviewed and approved by our Deputy Commissioner. However, the Commissioner's office requested a revision, which has not been completed yet. We added the requirement to assess social worker contact to the District Self Assessment as well as to the district review process. We have established a new benchmark date for this goal.

These guidelines reflect the importance of the relationship between social workers, children on their caseloads and their families in attaining permanency. The contact is organized by risk level, case type and placement of child and includes guidelines for contact by social workers and service providers.

SFY 2006 Update

Supervisors reviewed these guidelines again at one of their monthly meetings and again expressed concerns regarding worker's ability to meet these guidelines. We have not released the guidelines at this time however; we continue to discuss the research that reflects that frequent social worker contact contributed to successful outcome attainment.

SFY 2007 Update

Preliminary findings from our second CFSR indicate that we have a lot of work to do to improve the frequency of social worker contact. While waiting for the final report we have revised the social worker contact policy and are developing a caseworker contact report to meet the requirements set forth in this plan. The revised policy, which includes contact standards as well as guidance on the content of visits, will be reviewed by supervisors during the summer. Below are excerpts from the draft policy:

Based on federal requirements, one face-to-face in-home or in-placement contact per month with children/youth by the social worker, in-custody or non-custody, is the contact minimum. Additional recommended monthly contacts, based on factors such as increased risk or crisis may be necessary. Together, the social worker and the supervisor should decide if additional contact is needed.

There are several key elements that quality visits should include. Visits should be:

- primarily held in the child or youth's living situation (family or foster home) at times convenient for children/youth and caretakers;

- planned in advance of the visit and used as an opportunity to discuss issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery and goal attainment;
- used to complete a formal or informal assessment of the issues that impact safety and other issues or goals identified in the case plan;
- used as opportunities for open dialogue and meaningful consultation with and by children/youth and parents;
- individualized whenever possible, such as providing separate time for discussion with children/youth and parents;
- supportive and skill-generating, in order that children/youth and families feel safe in dealing with challenges and change, and are provided skills and tools to take advantage of resources and services.

The following procedure will be used to track and report caseworker visit data to HHS. We are in the process of modifying our contact notes collection screen which will be used to generate the required caseworker visit reports. Every contact note will include contact details and identify which client(s) the contact related to. When the worker selects "Face-to-Face" as the form of contact, they will be required to document where the contact occurred and who was present at that face-to-face meeting.

For any period in question, we will query our placement data to determine which children were in foster care and for which full months. We will link this information with our contact data which will allow us to meet our federal reporting requirements. By linking placement and contact data, we will be able to determine which children were seen each and every month they were supposed to be seen and, determine if at least one of those monthly contacts occurred where the child was placed. Having this data will allow us to report the rate of children seen each and every month as well as the rate at which they were seen in their placement.

We will submit our FFY 2007 baseline data regarding current caseworker visitation and targets for improvement to HHS by the October 31, 2007 deadline. New caseworker visit funds were used to support caseworker visits with children who are in foster care.

Goal PC5: Ensure the meaningful involvement of children, mothers, fathers and resource families in development of initial and ongoing case plans and in case plan reviews.

SFY 2005 Update

The Quality Assurance Coordinator held 2 regional meetings for case reviewers in September 2004. Eleven reviewers attended the meetings. They offered suggestions for training new reviewers and we developed a phone and email tree so they can contact one another for networking and support.

The next New England Quality Assurance meeting in 2006 will be about the case review process. We are hoping to benefit from other states experiences before we begin to evaluate and redesign our system.

SFY 2006 Update

The QA position has been vacant since February 2006 and we have not made any progress on this goal. However, there was interesting information regarding several different case review processes presented at the last Annual States and Tribes meeting.

We anticipate this position will be filled before our next CFSR as this person will be an important player in preparing for the review. The administrative case review process evaluation and possible redesign will be a focus once this position is filled.

SFY 2007 Update

The Quality Assurance Coordinator, hired in October 2006, was actively involved in securing input for the Statewide Assessment and also acted as a State Co-lead in the CFSR in April. She will plan an active role in PIP development and tracking as well.

Preliminary results of the CFSR indicate that we have improvements to make in engaging children and families in case planning. We have started revising our initial and ongoing case plan formats to ensure that they serve as an agreement between families and the Division. Our focus on family engagement through facilitated case consultations was identified in the April CFSR as an improvement in engaging families in decision making as well as service planning.

Goal PC6: Promote practice and training that will increase placement stability

SFY 2005 Update

We have identified all of the 2004 cases where children moved due to provider issues and provider reasons.

SFY 2006 Update

The Quality Assurance Coordinator conducted the case review and compiled a placement stability assessment in December 2005.

A Placement Stability Workgroup was convened and met in January 2006 to review the assessment and determine next steps. We have not moved forward on this goal since the Quality Assurance Coordinator position became vacant in February 2006.

SFY 2007 Update

The Quality Assurance Coordinator, hired in October 2006, convened a Placement Stability Work Group in January 2007, building and expanding upon the work done previously in 2005 and 2006.

The work group reviewed division data and evidence based best practice literature and developed recommendations for addressing the issue of placement stability. Recommended goals and action items will be considered for our Program Improvement Plan.

Relatives as Supports

Now, more than ever, child welfare agencies are recognizing the benefits of engaging relatives in helping families to create and maintain safe environments for children and/or to act as placement resources.

SFY 2006 Update

The Agency continues this focus kinship care in an effort to eliminate some of the barriers that exist. We participate in a Guardianship committee that was convened through Probate Court. This committee is looking at the legal and financial challenges guardianship can create.

We continue to participate on the Vermont Kin as Parents (VKAP) advisory committee helping to expand support groups, develop the annual conference and secure funding for a staff member so the organization can continue to evolve.

We are in the process of developing a Resource Guide for people who are caring for children who are not their own. This guide will list statewide and national resources in the following areas: legal, financial, child care, health, transportation and education.

SFY 2007 Update

The Resource Guide for Kinship Care Providers was released in April at the Vermont Kin as Parents 3rd Annual Conference. DCF Commissioner Stephen R. Dale opened the conference by declaring DCF support for relative providers and unveiling the Guide.

Our support for relative caregivers took an important turn during this reporting period. In partnership with Casey Family Services we made a commitment to fund a coordinator's position for three years at VKAP. The Coordinator will further VKAP's mission statement through the following duties: provide service navigation and coordinate services for kinship caregivers; increase community education; ensure program stability and data collection.

VCORP/VFAFA Analysis

Family Services (FS) is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the statewide system of care for children and youth. This analysis is being undertaken in response to a request from the state's coalition of residential care providers and the statewide foster care association.

The analysis will examine issues related to the identified treatment needs for children and youth in custody, and the capacity of the state's system of care to meet those needs.

The work of this analysis is overseen by a steering committee comprised of FS management, representatives from Department of Health, Division of Mental Health Services (DDMHS) and Department of Education (DOE) as well as members of the Vermont Coalition of Residential Care Providers (VCORP) and the Vermont Foster and Adoptive Families Association (VFAPA).

Beginning with a review of the Vermont system of out-of-home care, the group spent considerable time analyzing the changes in response to treatment needs that the system has undergone in recent years. Additionally, data analysis of trends related to the numbers of children and youth accessing the out-of-home system of care have been discussed. More recently, the focus has included a comprehensive review of the treatment needs of those youth who are, or have recently been, referred for treatment to out-of-state providers.

The preliminary results of that work has yielded some surprising findings in that the profile of the children and youth served in out-of-state programs appears to be markedly different from those youth who were served out-of-state only a few years ago. While several years ago the "typical" profile of an out-of-state placement was that of a lower functioning/DD male with sexually reactive or sexual offending behaviors, today, the profile is that of an adolescent female with significant self-injurious behavior. Many of these young women have had multiple hospitalizations as a result of self-harm, and have had multiple residential placements.

Future meetings will focus on what changes are necessary to Vermont's system of care to reduce the number of children and youth who are referred to out-of-state providers for treatment.

SFY 2007 Update

The ongoing work of the VCORP/VFAPA System of Care group continued this year as we moved to analyzing the system through the eyes of providers as it is experienced by individual youth and children.

Past activities included reviewing profiles of youth who were receiving residential treatment in out-of-state facilities. The work this past year has focused on analyzing the treatment needs and the timeliness of delivering those services to youth referred to or receiving care in state in residential facilities.

To that end, the work group developed a web-based survey (which goes live in July) targeting all providers who came into contact with any youth who had been referred to or was receiving residential treatment *in* Vermont between July 1, 2006 and April 30, 2007. There are approximately 220 such youth who fit this category and there are more than 2,000 providers who had contact with those youth during the time frame being analyzed.

Providers include foster parents, social workers, mental health workers, contractual case-managers, therapists, residential care providers, and parents. All of these providers are given an access code to the web based survey which brings up a "youth specific" survey with a completed demographic section. They are asked to complete items that include information about the setting the child was in, what assessments were completed, what needs were identified, what services were available, which were accessed, the perceived "success" of the services and what were next steps. We expect to have the survey available on the web for 30 days and will provide computer access in the community for those who do not have access at home.

Concurrent to this effort has been an ongoing analysis of the system of care from a "systems" perspective. This study was commissioned by the Central Review Committee (CRC) a sub-committee of the State Interagency Team (SIT). The CRC is an interagency team that is comprised of Family Services, Mental Health, Developmental Services and Department of Education and reviews all cases referred for residential treatment. The study was conducted by a group of state employees enrolled in the Vermont Public Managers (VPM) training program. A draft of the report has been issued and will be finalized in August.

Using information from the web based youth specific survey and the VPM analysis the VCORP/VFAFA System of Care workgroup will develop a list of recommendations for adjusting the system of care to meet the needs of Vermont's children and youth.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION EFFORTS

Preliminary results of the April CFSR indicate that Vermont engages in "a strong system of collaboration" with a variety of stakeholders, both at the state and district level. Representation from a variety of partners, consumers and other stakeholders is sought for a variety of committees and teams. Districts involve them in their quality assurance planning and improvement process, as well as use teams to plan for the needs and permanency of children in the State's care.

The system of collaboration continues to grow and strengthen in Vermont. We utilize new and existing structures to meet federal requirements for consultation and coordination with stakeholders in developing and implementing provisions of the CFSP, CFSR and APSR. Collaborative efforts include:

- Our district review process yields valuable information on casework practice, service delivery and outcome performance from consumers and partners on the local level. This information is used for planning purposes.
- We have a strong partnership with Vermont Kin as Parents, a non-profit organization that is committed to supporting people who are raising relative children.
- Our Youth Development Coordinators and State Youth Advisory Council have received technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Youth Development on the Child & Family Services Review as well as structure and support to the newly developing Council. While the Council is in its beginning stages we have relied on them to provide input to the CFSR Statewide Assessment and have plans to engage them in PIP planning.
- The Governor's Youth Summit, held at Vermont's State House in December 2005, provided opportunities for youth to talk with policy makers about issues related to transitions from foster care. We continue to discuss these issues with youth as they were involved in developing our Statewide Assessment and will have input on the PIP.
- In 2006, Vermont Voices for Children (formerly the Vermont Children's Forum) was awarded a two-year strategic grant to create a comprehensive child welfare advocacy network. The purpose is to help improve the well-being of children and youth in the child welfare system through research and analysis and policy and budget advocacy. Several Family Services staff members are involved with this continuing effort.
- We have a long history of meaningful and productive collaboration with the Vermont Judiciary which includes identifying and working towards shared goals and activities. Several forums provide us with opportunities to work with the Courts to identify issues, set goals and determine how we will work together to achieve improved outcomes.

One forum is the Justice for Children Task Force established by the Vermont Judiciary. This statewide multidisciplinary task force includes State and local courts as well as the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services and the Deputy Commissioner of Family Services.

This task force has developed a strategic plan aimed at increasing safety, permanency and well-being of children in the child welfare system.

We will establish common goals, measures and benchmarks together as soon as we receive our CFSR Final Report.

The preliminary findings of the CFSR indicate that the Courts are invested in continuing our collaborative partnership to improve outcomes for children and families.

DILIGENT RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE HOMES

Vermont has been encouraging foster parent adoption for children who cannot return home for many years now. Throughout the 1980's and 90's, about 95% of the children freed for adoption in Vermont were adopted by their foster parents. While this approach served most of our children very well, it left about 5% of them without the permanence they needed.

In 2000, the Vermont Department for Children and Families joined forces with the Lund Family Center (our state's oldest and largest private adoption agency) to address the permanency needs of legally-freed children with no identified permanent resources. With the help of a three-year federal grant, we created Project Family -- an innovative, collaborative approach to finding and supporting adoptive families. The project focused on creative strategies for finding families for long-waiting children. Now that the federal grant is over, we have secured state funding for this project.

In the last two years, we have increased our focus on early identification, and when appropriate, placement with families or individuals who are known to the child, who may or may not be relatives. Our new case plan formats are more focused on identifying people who are important to the child.

Foster home data, compiled from our quarterly management reports (our measure of effectiveness) reflects an increase in both the number of foster homes with active licenses and the licensed capacity since our partnership with the Lund Family Center began.

Year	Licensed Homes	Licensed Capacity
2002	1247	2150
2006	1439	2439
Increase	192	289

Recruiting foster families willing to take adolescents is an ongoing challenge and requires constant time and attention. Project Family recruitment and retention activities during this reporting period include:

- Development of additional marketing materials. These materials include, clips, pens, tee shirts, buttons, wanted flyers, placemats, and fleece vests that are worn for events.
- An adoption picnic in September that 800 people attended. This was a four-hour event at a local park. We also held a family dance night in August that about 100 people attended, including Vermont's Lieutenant Governor, who is one of our strongest supporters.
- A variety of events all over the state for National Adoption Month in November, with well over four hundred families taking part.
- As a retention activity, we solicited several businesses statewide to give our adoptive families discounted admissions for events during National Adoption Month.
- We sent letters out to the towns to be included in town reports. These letters asked families to consider adopting a youth in need of a family who is currently in the care of the State.
- We co-sponsored a two-day Permanency Convening Conference with over two hundred professionals attending.
- A Radio PSA is being played on a weekly basis across the state.
- We continue to do statewide trainings for all families considering adoption in partnership with DCF and UVM. Over 280 families have been trained.
- We have had many radio interviews promoting Project Family and the need for resources for Vermont's Waiting Children from "A Day to a Lifetime." There is always a good, immediate response when people hear the need - we usually get several calls asking for additional information.
- We continue to get the word out about our project throughout the State, so that it will be supported when the grant ends and we need to access funding for the services to continue.

Project Family materials can be viewed at: <http://www.projectfamilyvt.org/>

Diligent Recruitment Goals

Goal DR1: Increase the number of resource families available to care for children in custody (foster and adoptive families) through improved recruitment and retention.

SFY 2006 Update

The next step in our grant involves hiring five family recruiters to work in communities throughout the state and producing promotional materials to support their activities. A recruitment team including the five family recruiters, the Co-Directors of Project Family, and staff from both the Lund Family Center and DCF will meet monthly to discuss issues, share information, and plan events.

SFY 2007 Update

Recruiters have been hired and are very active in their regions. Activities in this reporting period include:

Project Family Recruitment and Retention Activities	Numbers
Recruitment Activities	23
Materials Distributed	147,289
Families Contacted through Events	644
Children Served (permanency planning)	39
Families Recruited	273
Families Recruited by Project Family That Attended DCF Training	264

Goal DR2: Ensure that families who have adopted children from DCF receive a timely, respectful response when they need post-adoption assistance.

SFY 2005 Update

A steering committee comprised of DDMHS, DCF/FS, and Adoption Consortium members was formed to strategize ways to meet the needs of adoptive families who were experiencing difficulties accessing services. It was determined that all children and youth soon to be adopted would be referred to Local Interagency Teams (LIT's) for the purpose of developing a Coordinated Services Plan. Additionally, Consortium members were identified as LIT participants (previously they were not) and are now included in LIT meetings where an adoptive/pre-adoptive child's case is being staffed.

The Adoption Consortium in collaboration with the DCF/FS Adoption Unit has completed an "Adoption Handbook" which is available in both print and electronic editions.

SFY 2006 Update

The Vermont Adoption Consortium has identified a member to participate on local interagency planning teams for adopted children. Each district office has a consortium person for consultation and planning when families with adopted children request intervention.

In addition, the Division has made many changes in its delivery of adoption services. We have moved away from a small central unit to serve the state towards making each child's worker the permanency/adoption worker. The Department has also allocated 1FTE to post adoption services. This position is in process of reclassification from a social worker to a post adoption specialist.

The person that fills this position must be well experienced as a social worker in the areas of permanency and adoptive family development. The job includes: receiving requests from adoptive parents, renegotiation of the adoption subsidy agreement if needed, researching community supports, making referrals as appropriate, attending Local or State Interagency team meetings in unusual or difficult situations and connecting families to the Vermont Adoption Consortium. This position is also responsible to sit on the general member board of the Adoption Consortium. The Adoption Chief continues to sit on the executive board and development of services board of the Adoption Consortium. The Chief also continues to attend to Fair Hearings at the Human Services Board when complaints cannot be resolved.

SFY 2007 Update

During this reporting period Family Services continued to fund the Vermont Adoption Consortium. The consortium is a diverse group of therapeutic foster care agencies, community mental health centers, private adoption agencies, parents groups, private and public child welfare organizations, the Vermont Foster and Adoptive Parent Association and the University of Vermont, Social Work Program. The work of the consortium consists of:

In addition to the service of the consortium, Family Services has recently reclassified 1 FTE social work position to be the Post Adoption Coordinator. This position is the contact person for any adoptive family seeking help for their child. In addition, this SW receives and processes requests for additional or amended services to families who have an open adoption assistance agreement. This position also responds to adoptive families, mental health and/or other providers when a child requires services outside of the family home.

ICWA

Vermont does not have a federally recognized Indian Tribe within its borders. In 2006 Vermont passed legislation that recognized the Abenaki people however, just recently (June 2007) they were denied federal status upon re-application.

The department promulgated policy regarding compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act on 9/8/98. Vermont's adoption statute also supports compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act. Adoptive parents must disclose a child's membership in a tribe when they file a petition to adopt.

In September 2005 we automated a new initial case plan format which requires workers to address identity and location of all parents and specifically note if the child has Native American heritage. There are no changes in this area.

ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT

Casework and Finalization Services

Adoption services focus on children in custody. For many years, Vermont has had a very high rate of foster parent adoption, with most of the children adopted being adopted by their foster parents. We finalized 170 adoptions in 2007, up from the past two years.

With the availability of the resources of Project Family, the decentralization of the adoption unit and the development of the Permanency Team, DCF social workers are shifting emphasis towards engaging families in permanency option discussions when children enter custody and throughout the life of the case.

The main office adoption manager continues to provide overall program management and policy development for the adoption program, manages the adoption subsidy program, post-adoption services and the adoption registry. Her unit also conducts background checks on all household members age sixteen or older for pre adoptive families if the previous checks are over one year old. There are no changes in this area.

Criminal Background Checks

The Residential Care Licensing Unit obtains the background checks during the licensing or approval process. In addition the adoption assistants obtain the same checks for adopting parents prior to finalization if it has been more than one year since they were last obtained.

These checks include: VT Crime Information Center; Child Abuse Registry; Dept. of Motor Vehicles; Relief from Abuse; VT Adult Abuse Registry; Dept. of Corrections; and VT Courts. For children under the age of sixteen we only check the Child Abuse Registry.

This activity is directed by Family Services Policy #222 and can be found on our public website at <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/policy/222.html>.

All components of the Adam Walsh Bill are in place for a July 1st implementation date. We have entered into formal agreements with the sheriffs' departments and the Vermont Crime Information Center to expedite checks of foster parent applications. In addition, we have incorporated the child abuse and neglect registry check for foster and adoptive parents and any other adults living in the home if they lived outside of VT in the past 5 years.

Adoption Subsidy

The adoption subsidy is administered centrally and at the time of this report serves approximately 1493 children. This program continues to grow, both in numbers served as well as the average cost per subsidy.

Adoption subsidies are available for children in custody who have a special need that make it unlikely that any family would adopt the child without the subsidy. Also, children who are SSI eligible are eligible for adoption subsidy. While most children in custody qualify for an adoption subsidy, not all families will necessarily receive a monthly maintenance payment. The needs of the child and the ability of the adoptive family to meet those needs are taken into consideration. There are no changes in this area.

Adoption Permanency Supports

For a number of years, we have used IV-B Subpart II funds to provide post-adoption services, contracting with agencies around the state. We currently have contracts with eight agencies. Consistent with the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000, post-adoption services are available to any family needing them, not just children adopted through DCF. Post-adoption services for children formerly in custody are funded primarily by Medicaid under the Rehabilitation Option.

Family Services have also benefited from an Adoption Opportunities grant. With funds awarded starting in 1998, DCF and Casey Family Services formed a post-adoption consortium. The consortium continues its work after the conclusion of the grant. The Vermont Post-Adoption Consortium comprised of agencies and groups from around the state that have joined together for a common purpose: to support Vermont's adoptive families. The Consortium's goals are to:

- Help families further their knowledge of topics related to adoption.
- Build the capacity of professionals, including educators, social workers, case managers, and therapists to address adoption-related issues.
- Provide adoptive families with access to quality adoption support services.

Post adoption services are listed in the Casey Family Newsletters and on the DCF website. Services available to adoptive families in Vermont can include:

- Information and referral
- Advocacy and assistance with school and community issues
- Support and discussion groups
- Reading and other educational materials
- Respite services
- Counseling
- Intensive supports

The unique value of the Consortium is that it brings together agencies and individuals from around the state who have experience and expertise working with adoptive families. This enables families to make informed decisions regarding services and supports. The Consortium was able to secure state general funds this year to continue their work. There are no changes in this area.

Adoption Incentive Payment

Vermont did not receive an Adoption Incentive Payment in FY 07.

Inter-Country Adoptions

Vermont had no children who were adopted from other countries enter State custody in FY 2007.

YOUTH JUSTICE UNIT

In addition to child protection and child welfare services, the department delivers youth justice services. Youth in custody as delinquents are placed in the Commissioner's custody. In addition, youth on juvenile probation are supervised by DCF social workers. Child protection, child welfare and youth justice services are consolidated and integrated in the state. In general, the same staff, the same service providers and the same placement resources serve all of our populations. This is a strength of our system, but also creates special challenges.

In 2002, the Vermont Legislature established a Juvenile Justice Commission consisting of the Commissioner of Corrections, the Commissioner of DCF and the Director of Juvenile Justice. The goal of the Commission is to improve the quality and coordination of youth justice services in the state.

The work of the Commission and the agency reorganization led to the creation of a Youth Justice Unit within the newly formed DCF. This unit is part of the Family Services Division. The roles and responsibilities identified for the unit were based, in part, on the legislative charge to the Juvenile Justice Commission: to monitor and coordinate all state and participating regional and local programs that deal with juvenile justice issues, including prevention, education, enforcement, adjudication and rehabilitation.

As part of Family Services, the Youth Justice Unit provides policy, training, and casework practice focus within the Division, and the Director of Youth Justice oversees Woodside, the State's 30 bed secure juvenile center.

Staff within this unit review data related to the well being of children, youth, and families, especially related to justice response and youth transition to adulthood. Staff in this unit plan new programs, make, monitor, and evaluate programmatic outcomes of grants, and plan statewide interagency system improvements with community and state partners.

Unit staff is responsible for managing the Governor's Advisory Board to prevention and is the state liaison with the OJJDP.

Current and planned activities of the Youth Justice Unit include the further development of alternatives to detention; system study of adult and juvenile court jurisdiction; new policy and practice guidelines for the supervision of probation; improvement in physical environment, quality assurance and programming at the secure juvenile center; consulting on the development of juvenile drug courts; IT improvements; oversight of the administration of a variety of federal funds that are granted to community and state entities to prevent delinquency and other problem behaviors and to support innovative programs to improve services to children, youth and families. The unit manages community-based Balanced and Restorative Justice programs that serve DCF youth who have been adjudicated delinquent.

Recently we began to plan and or implement several enhancements to our probation practices as well as alternatives to detention including:

- Electronic Voice Monitoring which became available to staff in January 2007
- The Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) on probation cases in June 2007
- Community Detention Monitors in Burlington and Brattleboro beginning in July 2007
- Response Homes, community detention foster care homes, currently under development.

We are evaluating these projects with the help of the University of Vermont, Center on Disability and Community Inclusion. We will take determine a baseline and prior to implementation and then measure again one year later.

At the writing of this report the Youth Justice Director has left this position to become the district director in our Bennington office. We will conduct a national search to fill the position; we anticipate this will take some time to complete.

Children who are transferred to the Youth Justice System

In Vermont, Family Services is both the child protection system and the State juvenile justice system, so no children or youth are transferred from one system to the other.

If, due to the commission of a delinquent act, a case type changes from custody for abuse and/or neglect to custody for delinquency, the child is likely, in most districts, to continue to have the same caseworker and will have the same case plan with delinquency related factors added. The Youth Justice system's philosophy of rehabilitation, family work, balanced and restorative justice and, for those in custody, permanency is not separable from the philosophy of the Child Welfare system.

In SFY 2007, 49 children who were in custody for either child abuse/neglect or because they were beyond the control of their parents were adjudicated delinquent.

Youth Justice Goals

Goal YJ1: Improve screening, assessment, and treatment capacity for children and families with substance abuse and/or mental health issues through collaboration with the Department of Health and through implementation of the Youth and Family Integrated Treatment Practice Guidelines

SFY 2005 Update

During the summer of 2004, statewide stakeholders met and together developed standardized principles for the practice of Integrated Treatment of substance abuse and mental health issues for youth and families.

Further work needs to be done to apply the principles to existing programs; monitor pilots on universal screening and expand projects with information gained from evaluation; further explore collaborations with the Department of Health to improve services for youth and families with mental health and/or substance abuse issues.

SFY 2006 Update

In May of this year, Family Services began collaboration with Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention (ADAP) under the new Certified Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) grant that ADAP received to boost infrastructure for the statewide adolescent substance abuse system.

Under this grant, ADAP will be disseminating the Youth and Family Integrated Treatment Practice Guidelines to their current provider network and will be requiring new sub grantees under their CSAT grant to adhere to the guidelines. In addition, ADAP will also be working with Family Services to improve the referral process to substance abuse assessment and treatment for youth connected with Family Services.

SFY 2007 Update

The Youth and Family Integrated Treatment Practice Guidelines have been disseminated to seven “Centers of Excellence”. The Centers are receiving training and support in best practices in integrated treatment including assessment tools, CBT/MET, and motivational interviewing, etc.

An MOU Service Agreement is currently under development between the Department of Health, divisions of Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and the Department for Children and Families, Family Services and Field Services.

Beginning in late FY07 and early FY08, youth who enter the secure Woodside facility will be screened immediately using MAYSIWARE.

Goal YJ2: Develop approach to assessment of risk and service needs for Youth Justice clients that is integrated with other structured decision-making tools for children and families served by the department.

SFY 2005 Update

The newly formed Youth Justice Unit has focused on reviewing the work of the Commission to determine an appropriate direction. Currently they are working on Youth Justice policies, Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles and practices and data collection.

SFY 2006 Update

Family Services will be contracting with a provider to develop a Detention Screening Tool and a Risk and Needs Assessment Tool for youth with a delinquency charge. The data will be integrated into the Family Services MIS to allow for operational and management reporting in conjunction with other Family Services assessment tools. We are on schedule to contract with a provider early in FY07, and have the screening and assessment tools online by FY08.

SFY 2007 Update

All social workers who work with delinquents on probation have been trained on the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI). YASI assesses for risk and for protective factors in ten domains. The assessment of risk and protective factors directly informs a case plan that is developed as part of the tool. Implementation instructions include recommendations for case planning and case closure.

In FY08, social workers who work with delinquents in custody will also be training on the YASI.

Goal YJ3: Promote excellence in practice of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles and programs by continuous quality improvement in implementation and collaboration

SFY 2005 Update

During the summer of 2004, statewide stakeholders met to develop standardized BARJ principles and practices. In the spring of 2005, these standards were agreed upon by the statewide BARJ steering committee.

Further work needs to be done to review current BARJ practices; develop a curriculum; improve data gathering, communication and collaboration; and monitor outcomes.

SFY 2006 Update

Currently, the Youth Justice Specialist is focusing on developing relationships with all of the BARJ directors and districts that they serve. She holds regional meetings to discuss systems, utilization, successful practices and challenges.

She attended the June supervisors meeting to discuss this role and to offer her support and expertise to the field. This will lead to developing common systems, expectations and outcomes.

SFY 2007 Update

BARJ programs comprised of Community Support and Supervision and Restorative Probation continues to be offered throughout the state. In FY07 BARJ Directors advocated very hard to the General Assembly to maintain the funding necessary for the continuation of these programs.

The Directors were successful in this important effort. BARJ programs are a valuable asset to the work being done in juvenile justice in DCF and are vital to supervision of youth on probation, community involvement and holding youth accountable.

Program staff and directors met regularly in FY07 to determine new outcomes and to continue building capacity and best practice for the BARJ framework model. The BARJ program staff are dedicated people who work hard to build relationships with youth and to help them turn their lives around.

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

Population Served

DCF Family Services provides services to prepare youth for adult living through a statewide network of contracted youth serving agencies with a minimum of 1 FTE in each district. This service, called the Youth Development Program, has been in existence for over 12 years. In SFY 07, approximately 860 youth were screened by the program, 645 of whom received some form of direct services.

Screening is conducted by administration of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment as part of the initial screening process (see 2006 APSR, p. 12) and as part of the intake to the Youth Development Program. The timing of the life skills screening was adjusted to age 14 to match the guidelines for IDEA (see APSR June, 2005 p. 20). Screening numbers are greater than those receiving services as screening is done on all youth 14 or older (upon entering custody). Not all youth screened through the initial screening process are immediately referred to the Youth Development Program as the emphasis is on older youth.

Some youth refuse services at the initial screening and contact. It is our experience in the program that many of these youth later return, seek out, and benefit from services. This is particularly true now that we provide services until age 21.

Administration

Vermont has continued to administer its Chafee Foster Care Independence funded Youth Development Program through its Central office during FFY 2007. Basic program components remain the same as in the previous APSR. Responsibility for program oversight and management has remained with the DCF Director of Program Management in partnership with district management. This has been a transition year in that it has become increasingly clear the current structure does not provide sufficient management and oversight to maximize utilization, insure program quality, and achieve youth outcomes consistently.

To address this issue, DCF Family Services has hired a full-time contracted State Youth Development Coordinator (effective 10/1/06) supervised by a member of the Program Management Unit. Details of this change and expected outcomes are covered in the goals section of the Chafee update.

Youth Development Program services

Vermont's Youth Development Program has continued to provide services similar to those described in the 2006 APSR. A more specific description of how those services are applied to meet the requirements of the Act is provided in the following section.

Dependency to self-sufficiency

Youth Development Coordinators working with youth help them to achieve self-sufficiency through:

- A formal assessment of life skills preparation
- The delivery of curriculum based life skills training
- Applying these skills in community based, real world situations (e.g. budgeting, shopping, meal planning, apartment hunting, accessing transportation, healthcare and recreation).

Education, training and services for employment

In addition to providing direct training to youth, Youth Development Coordinators maintain working relationships with local providers of other state and federally funded programs as well as local private sector employers to assist youth in preparing for and entering the workforce. There have been no changes to these components.

Helping youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions

Youth Development Coordinators help youth succeed in secondary school through advocacy for career preparation with local schools, IEP transition planning, and the development of alternative curriculums to help youth achieve traditional high school completion diplomas.

In addition to helping youth succeed in and complete secondary school education and training, YD Coordinators have strong connections with local Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) outreach counselors who provide career guidance and access to funding for youth pursuing education and training. The state director of VSAC outreach meets annually with the YD Coordinators and VSAC always has a booth at the resource fair at the FS annual statewide youth conference.

Northlands Job Corps, part of the national network of Job Corps centers, provides an important opportunity for employment preparation regardless of high school graduation status. Individual Youth Development Coordinators have solid working relationships with the Job Corps and the YD Coordinators Network meets at least once annually at the Job Corps site.

Job Corps also has a booth at the annual youth conference resource fair each year. Job Corps attended our February 2007 CFSR/Youth leadership training and brought youth from Job Corp to our annual youth conference. They also recruited a youth member to the state Youth Committee.

In October 2006, DCF Commissioner charged a task force of inter-agency and community partners to make significant commitment to fully utilizing the resources of the Northland Job Corps Center and helping them become more responsive to the needs of Vermont students. A plan was developed on May 30, 2007 and the task force is responsible for carrying this plan forward.

Members of that Task Force include representatives from Adult and Technical Education, DCF Economic Services, DCF Family Services, Department of Disability Aging & Independent Living (DAIL), Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor, Department of Corrections, Community High School of VT Principal and the AHS Field Director for Addison County.

The Task Force goal is to increase successful referrals of Vermont youth, especially those who are involved with the State of Vermont, to Northlands Job Corps such that at least 70% of their total program slots or approximately 180 Vermonters, are participating at any given time in the Job Corps program.

The tasks of the group include improvement of the "front end" processes such as outreach and referral protocols; improve "middle" processes such as tracking and disseminating VT youth participation to referral sources and support mechanisms for successful retention of VT youth in the program to completion; improve "back end" processes such as successful transition back to VT communities.

YD Coordinators also maintain strong working relationships with local sites of the Community College of Vermont (CCV) which are located within 30 miles of every location in the state.

CCV and the state college system of Vermont has a strong commitment to serving current and former foster youth and targets them for non-degree scholarship funds (as a means to further explore and prepare for college) and TRIO funded programs like Gear Up (for junior high youth) and Upward Bound for high school ages. Data on access and patterns of utilization of these educational efforts needs to be collected to assess equity and insure we are maximizing these opportunities for youth in care (See YD6 Goal 2007 update).

Provision of financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other support and services to youth 18-21

The Youth Development Program has been providing the full range of services in the program to this age group since eligibility was expanded by the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (see APSR, June, 2005, p.18).

During this reporting period \$110,000 in housing support funds were disbursed to and for youth up to age 22. This reflects an increase from the projection of \$65,000 from last year.

As part of the Youth in Transition Initiative, additional funds were requested from the legislature to expand this resource. Goal YD5 provides more detail on the Youth in Transition Initiative.

Youth Development Coordinators Network

SFY 2005 Update

The 2005 APSR outlined a list of new and existing initiatives to expand training for DCF staff in youth development areas including social worker competency training developed in coordination with the University of Southern Maine.

This training has been discontinued due to limited participation and the fact that all three of the trainers no longer work in the program.

The activities listed in the June, 2005 APSR on p. 20 as being pursued by the YD Network have continued with the exception of development of training curriculums (see previous paragraph) and the continuation of quarterly regional meetings for youth governance. Program turnover and sporadic participation by some individuals in the network limited the impact of youth governance meetings to regions with committed staff. This effort was not sufficient to our needs and has been replaced with a new initiative.

In some districts, Youth Development Coordinators have partnered with youth in providing training to foster parents and FS staff. This is a limited effort at this time and is funded through state funded elements of the program.

While these activities have been characterized as on-going efforts, it is clear that adjustments will need to be made to address the inconsistency of participation by different districts.

SFY 2007 Update

This reporting cycle, our network has focused on supporting the Youth Committee's advocacy activities (as outlined in Goal YD3). Nine of twelve district coordinators are engaged in this initiative.

Other areas of focus have included bringing in guest speakers at monthly statewide network meetings to provide informational sharing and opportunities to team and collaborate on projects or events. Our network has met with Youth Development Liaison, Northland Job Corps, State PINS (Partners In Need of Service) Coordinator, University of Vermont (UVM) MSW Intern supporting the Youth Committee initiative, UVM BSW Intern on Transition Youth Website, State Permanency Coordinator, and the FS Quality Assurance Coordinator regarding data collection and how to identify helpful strategies for program outcomes.

Many of our network coordinators and youth committee members played a pivotal leadership role in presenting workshops at our April 4, 2007 annual state youth conference at Castleton State College as well as supporting afternoon activities. The workshops included:

- Hanging Out with Tough Guise: Using excerpts from the film, "Tough Guise," this workshop examined the relationship between pop cultural imagery and the construction of masculine identity in the United States.
- Queer 101: Provided a fun and interactive workshop in which everyone learned the differences and connections between one's sexual orientation and gender.

- Express Yourself: Created individualized canvases for self-expression using oil-based paints.
- Scrap booking: In this participants decorated scrap book pages using family photos. Pictures were taken at the conference if a family photo was not available.
- Youth Voices Workshop co-led by Youth Committee members in partnership with DCF Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner: In this workshop participants were given an opportunity to share youth concerns and recommendations about the foster care system.

New professional development and casework practice has been introduced around lifelong connections and permanency efforts. Six Youth Development Coordinators hired after SFY 2005 attended the recent training March 19, 2007. This training was provided through our UVM Child Welfare Training Partnership. Some districts have attended the regional focus groups for ongoing case support and supervision regarding technical support on conducting this practice.

Our network partnered with the FS Permanency Team regarding participation and youth attendance in the Permanency Convening III held May 1, 2007.

Collaboration

Following submission of the 2005 APSR, the Vermont Agency of Human Services, with the support of the Governor, established a cross agency study committee to examine the issues of foster youth entering adulthood and the resources needed to help more youth make the transition successfully. While the attention paid to this area was very welcome, the time required for participation by program staff and managers in the three study groups and related activities made it necessary to suspend efforts to impact on the efforts of the network and district programming.

Agency of Human Services Youth in Transition Study Group

There's been increased attention placed by the Agency of Human Services in the last year on issues facing youth who age out of foster care and end up in the adult corrections system.

In 2005, the Agency of Human Services Secretary Michael Smith established a cross agency study committee to examine the issues of youth entering adulthood, the services in place to address those issues and areas where services are unavailable, or ineffective. The 2006 APSR reported on this Transition Study Group which has transformed into an AHS Leadership Team. The next section summarizes H.449 Governor's Youth in Transition Initiative.

The AHS leadership team with representatives from: Department of Corrections, Department of Disabilities Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), Department of Mental Health, DCF Field Services and Department of Youth Justice convened in April to continue to facilitate the inter-departmental connections to this work. The work of this team will be linked to the work being done by Family Services.

Youth Development Committee

In February, 2006, DCF hired a Youth Development Liaison (a former custody youth) to partner with us in the development of an on-going youth advocacy effort. The Youth Development Committee (YDC) was created. The founding members attended training at the Destination Future Conference, Chevy Chase, MD in August 2006. The YDC has been meeting monthly since that time with the support of the contracted State Youth Development Coordinator.

The YDC is receiving training from the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD) on youth advocacy. (February 26-27, 2007). Two regional focus groups were held in preparation for the CFSR with 50 youth participating. The YDC will continue to provide input to the Program Improvement Plan as well as FS policy and program efforts.

In addition, the NRCYD assisted with the development of the YDC structure, mission, purpose and youth governance roles. After July 1st, elected youth will assume the assignments initially carried out by the Youth Development Liaison position. The concept for this structure change is to empower all youth in YDC to be leaders and learn important leadership skills that build resiliency.

On April 4, 2007, NRCYD trainer attended our annual statewide Youth Conference at Castleton State College. We were very fortunate to have a National Foster Club All-Star attend as well.

As a result of the youth leadership training, by-laws were drafted and adopted on May 9, 2007 at the state YDC monthly meeting. We have submitted another TA request to receive assistance in developing a strategic plan and a schedule of activities for the coming year.

Chafee Housing Support Program Process

Using a standard planning format, the youth identifies their goals in education, employment, housing and the supports they are seeking from the program.

The youth, in partnership with the adults, design a proposal including a budget, employment, health care, housing, transportation and a request for a housing subsidy. All subsidies have the expectation that the youth will cover at least some of the costs in the beginning and will assume an increasing portion on a schedule set out in the proposal made by the youth.

Most youth don't arrive with all of these areas clarified, but engage in discussions with the adults to explore these areas. In many cases, youth have to pursue additional information to complete their plan. An important part of this process is that youth will not only be asking for specific forms and support, but will be called upon to make and honor commitments to support their own success.

Once a proposal is formed by the youth and the YDC it is submitted to the State Youth Development Coordinator for review and approval. As all of the agreements are individual, approval is granted on a case by case basis. Funds are generally used to supplement support for housing needs, but may also supplement educational or training needs.

Chafee Housing Contract

Due to competing priorities in the IT arena we have not been able to meet this goal. We will be meeting with IT staff to develop this goal in the coming year.

Youth Development Goals

Goal YD1:

Develop systems for comprehensive program oversight and accountability including fiscal accountability, data reporting and analysis, contract compliance for providers.

SFY 2006 Update

DCF has assigned a staff person in the Program Management Unit responsible for compiling, reviewing, and responding to trends and issues related to the provision of this service including program quality, utilization, outcomes, and financial compliance of providers. The Program Manager for the Youth Development Program will be responsible for working with our IT staff on the development of the Chafee data outcome measures.

SFY 2007 Update

Consistent programming has been built into the infrastructure through the following methods:

- Statewide network meeting agenda structure & prompt attendance.
- Mandatory trainings such as Lifelong Connections casework practice, Permanency Convening III, CFSR/Youth Advisory Board leadership training and annual State Youth Conference, including providing ongoing informational resources on other training opportunities, community initiatives for networking and collaborating with partnering agencies. This includes Vermont's Job Corp, State Youth Worker's Conference, Vermont Mentoring Schools Project, Vermont Foster Adoptive Family Association conference, State CORE Transition Teams, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation higher education college initiative and several others.

- Life Skills competency classes/groups in all districts; this expectation was included in the new language of district Youth Development grants.
- Required record keeping and monitoring status of timely submission of monthly reports and accuracy of information provided, including procedures for developing thoughtful and adequate Chafee housing contracts with supporting documentation.

Goal YD2:

Delivery of high quality, best practice youth development services to the maximum number of eligible youth.

SFY 2006 Update

In order to provide these resources, Family Services has hired a contracted full-time staff person to provide technical support for best practices, provide training and orientation for new program staff, monitor program activities, supervise the Youth Development Liaison, and support and train the Youth Development Committee (see Goal YD3).

SFY 2007 Update

Our contracted full-time Statewide Youth Development Coordinator was hired on October 1, 2006 and has provided technical support to all twelve of our districts by conducting the following:

- District visits- meeting with our field Youth Development Coordinators, contracted agency supervisors, FS district directors and supervisors regarding reviewing Youth Development Program district grant expectations, state initiatives, role of State Coordinator as well as collecting information on service-delivery, local program development, training and special areas of strength and challenges. A state report will be submitted to Commissioner of DCF and to the State Transition Team by October 2007 to summarize the above findings and a three year strategic plan.
- Re-visited 7 of the 12 districts for follow up technical assistance and troubleshooting in the areas of case load capacity and clarity, monthly program reporting and record keeping, Chafee housing contracts and building community partnerships.
- Provided training and orientation to six new program staff.
- Provided administrative support to one district in applying for a Juvenile Services grant regarding a “life book” to assist all twelve district coordinators with community partnerships for youth in transition.
- Provided technical assistance in the development of youth accessibility for Chafee housing. Approved 23 contracts in 10 districts in the total amount of \$84,414.00. We anticipate a projection for the remainder of the federal reporting period to be another \$25,000 (July thru Sept.).

- Coordinated and facilitated monthly statewide Youth Development Coordinators Network meetings; provided leadership management, professional development, program development in core competencies. Attendance across districts is no longer sporadic; we have had consistent statewide participation and representation from all districts. There is clear group/team cohesion and direction.

Goal YD3:

Establishment of a statewide youth advisory group of current and former foster youth to inform policy, practice, and service delivery by DCF Family Services as part of the CFSR and for on-going work with youth.

SFY 2006 Update

Recruit, train, and support the (YDC) to participate in the planning and implementation of the CFSR and review of policy and services. YDC has hired a former youth in care to lead the committee's work in coordination with the State Youth Development Coordinator.

SFY 2007 Update

Impact of this initiative will be measured by the number and distribution of current and former foster youth involved in advocacy efforts and the impacts of those activities on specific services, policies, and outcomes. Specifically, it will result in significant numbers of youth statewide participating in both the CFSR process and on-going advocacy efforts regionally and on a statewide basis.

Initially the state YDC membership consisted of five to seven members in May of 2006. Membership has grown to twenty-nine youth participants. YDC activities include:

- Participation in CFSR regional focus groups November & December 2006: 12 youth participants and 6 adult partners. CFSR youth involvement surveys completed by 50 youth.
- Youth provided direct testimony to legislators at the State House on February 20, 2007 regarding Bill H.449: 4 youth.
- CFSR/youth board leadership training February 26, 2007: 30 youth with 33 adult partners participating.
- Times Argus article/interview with reporter February 26, 2007: 2 youth.
- Vermont Foster Adoptive Family Association Annual Conference "Youth Voices" workshop panel held March 24, 2007: 7 youth.
- NRCYD TA YDC training April 3, 2007: 16 youth.
- Annual State Youth Conference held April 4, 2007: 191 youth.
- CFSR Federal Review statewide youth focus group April 11, 2007: 5 youth.
- Permanency Convening III held May 1, 2007: 24 youth.

- Vermont Public Radio one-hour foster care special May 23, 2007: 1 youth via phone interview during the show and 1 former foster youth on the show.
- FS Quality Assurance Coordinator attended the June 13th Youth Committee meeting to gather input on CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP): 16 youth.
- Working in partnership with the DCF marketing team to develop the first phase of the Transition Youth website.
- Providing feedback for the revision of the statewide foster parent PRIDE training curriculum.

Goal YD4:

Incorporate Permanent Connections work in CFCIP Youth Development Program and offer periodic training for current and new YDC's. Impact of this initiative will be measured by tracking the number of districts practicing connections work, the number of youth receiving this component of the program, case specific outcomes related to this effort and integration of lessons learned regarding program implementation.

SFY 2007 Update:

New language has been added into the YDP grants requiring districts to integrate lifelong connections best practices in current programming casework with each youth by following through with the first four phases of the lifelong connections model. In addition they will review youth's eco-maps and/or genograms and use that information to develop initial connections work plans with youth when identifying potential natural supports.

The Child Welfare training Partnership (CWTP) provided a lifelong connections training on March 19, 2007 in which six new YDC's attended who were hired after SFY 2005.

Currently, two of the twelve districts report that lifelong connections work is actively being practiced. There are twenty-one youth receiving these services from the two districts. One of the two districts reported one case specific outcome; the Youth Development Coordinator attended a Family Group Conference on one of their cases, where a plan was developed for the youth to return home.

Coordinators have identified challenges with the initial screening process and the timely access to eco-maps and genograms. Our Program Manager will work with the contracted screeners to clarify their role in submitting copies of these screening tools to the YDCs, including providing additional district troubleshooting and training where appropriate to address this challenge.

Goal YD5:

Continuation and expansion of youth housing support efforts by increasing funding for CFCIP Independent Living Housing Program and expanding funding support for foster care up to age 22

SFY 2007 Update:

The Youth in Transition Initiative Task Force proposed recommendations to the DCF Commissioner on September 1, 2006. The Commissioner submitted a proposed budget to the Governor on October 1, 2006:

Extension of Foster Care supports

This creates the possibility for youth to continue to be supported in their foster care settings, potentially up to their 22nd birthday, on a voluntary basis with the expectation that the youth work or attend some kind of educational or vocational training program. Youth who are working will help pay for the cost of care on a sliding scale. Youth will also be able to voluntarily return to some level of support if they leave the system and decide to return later. Funding in FY'08 will cover approximately 60 youth at any one point in time. We would expect the number of youth to increase in '09 and '10, perhaps to 150, at a cost of \$1.2 million. Proposed: \$500,000

Housing Supports/Homelessness Prevention

This provides limited funding to assist youth in paying security deposits and other costs associated with gaining housing. Funds may also be used to address issues which contribute to homelessness. Proposed: \$100,000

Driver's License Assistance Funds

This provides a small fund to support foster families in supporting youth to obtain their driver's license just prior to the 18th birthday. It is very difficult to secure and hold a job in our state without the ability to drive. Funds are earmarked for driver's education and assistance with insurance costs. Proposed: \$30,000

Education Transportation Funds

This funds transportation to and from educational settings in districts other than the district the foster parent resides in. DCF is working with the Department of Education to allow foster youth to remain in schools where they were experiencing success, even if their foster care placement crosses district lines. Proposed: \$30,000

Additional Youth Development Staff

This helps provide continued case management support beyond age 18. These funds will allow for a 1.5 FTE expansion of the current capacity, which consists of 13.5 FTEs. This is especially important with the expanded responsibilities that will be carried by this system as we support more young adults. Proposed: \$81,000

In January 2007, legislation was drafted into Bill H. 449. In response to the passage of H.449, the State Youth Development Coordinator and Program Manager are spearheading a statewide work group to do the following:

Identify and track students graduating June 2007 who want to enter an agreement. The first statewide workgroup meeting is planned to meet in July. In these meetings we will be looking at:

- Our current Family Services over 18 agreement and Chafee guidelines as a framework reference.
- Other states that provide extended foster care services beyond age 18.

Bill H.449 was passed and signed by the Governor on June 6, 2007, it will bring important new resources to young adults who wish to remain in foster care through the Partnership Foster Care Program. This initiative is designed to provide young adults in stable foster placements and their foster parents the option to receive continued payments to support the youth remaining in the home beyond the youth's 18th birthday. It is called "Partnership Foster Care" to recognize the new relationship between the young adult and the foster "parent".

The department will provide financial support for the continuation of family-based foster care (or continued independent living) to youth who request this support, provided the youth is:

- Working or actively participates in training or education, and;
- Willing to contribute to the cost of their support based on their ability to pay.

Vermont spends the entire \$500,000 small state grant as part of the funds for providing the basic services of the Youth Development Program statewide.

Room and board funds for the housing support component are provided from the additional \$282,032 (SFY 07) in state funds allocated to the program. During FFY 2007, \$110,000 in state funds was spent to support housing for former foster youth.

Educational Training and Vouchers Program

Goal YD6:

Improve preparation and access for current and former foster youth to post-secondary education and training and establish data reporting and tracking system for foster youth accessing post-secondary preparation and training funds.

SFY 2007 Update

Family Services and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) have partnered to develop a memorandum of understanding that will create a mechanism allowing the exchange of information for the purpose of outreach for post-secondary planning for youth in or formerly in foster care. Outreach will begin at age eleven.

The MOU was finalized on May 9, 2007. This will allow FS to share the names of our youth in foster care so VSAC can begin working with them to help them with higher education and vocational planning through such programs as Gear Up, Trio and Upward Bound. FS will be developing internal policies and cooperative procedures.

Goal YD7:

Outreach, follow-through and retention of youth accessing Chafee ETV funds will be identified and tracked by program, region and statewide to improve program outcomes.

SFY 05

Vermont’s ETV funds are being administered prospectively so that they are included in the youth’s overall financial aid package. We do not have a trust fund. In addition to the Chafee ETV Program, Vermont has a small grant program established by the Legislature in honor of its sponsor Emily Lester which can provide up to \$5,000 per year per youth from a small pool of \$23,000 per year.

SFY 2007 Update

As part of consistent programming within Youth Development Programs across districts, standardized forms were established. The YDP monthly summary report includes data collection on youth receiving Chafee ETV funds as part of higher education.

ETV Funds Distribution

State Fiscal Year	New participants	Continuing participants	Total Participants	Total funds expended
FFY 05	34	12	46	\$118,187
FFY 06	37	19	56	\$79,278
FFY 07	17	32	49	\$101,624
FFY 08*	15	30	45	\$120,00

***Projections for FFY 08:** Assumptions underlying FFY 08 projections are:

- % of new and ongoing for FFY 08 = historical pattern 78% of total # awarded actually disbursed;
- \$ disbursed = historical 69% of total funds awarded actually disbursed

Program Budget

The Youth Development Program budget is comprised primarily of funds to support youth development positions in each of the twelve regions of Vermont. The bulk of the contract funds for each district are allocated to personnel costs (14.5 FTE / averaging \$45,000 per FTE including all admin costs, program materials, mileage, phone, etc). Housing support funds are held centrally (as noted before), other central costs of training, youth conference are small and also administered centrally.

SFY 2007 Update

With the passage of bill H.449 we anticipate hiring new staff.

Program Expenditures	FFY04	FFY 05	FFY 06	FFY 07
Program Grants	\$642,790	\$682,032	\$682,032	\$738,032
Housing support funds	\$ 45,000	\$58,000	\$ 65,000	\$110,000
Central office functions*	<u>\$ 17,750</u>	<u>\$18,500</u>	<u>\$ 24,000</u>	<u>\$45,000</u>
Total	\$705,540	\$758,532	\$771,032	\$893,032

*Annual youth conference, contracted staff training, support of youth advocacy

Budget for Chafee Foster Care Independence FFY 2008

VT IV-E Transitional Independent Living Program October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008	
16.0 District Contracts for Youth Development	\$819,032*
* dollar amount includes anticipated staff increase 1.5fte	
Youth Activities (teen advisory board, youth conference, local youth projects)	\$38,000
Central Administrative Support (training, program evaluation, youth assessment)	\$45,000
Community Living Housing Support	\$210,000
Total	\$1,112,032
IV-E Federal Grant/Match Funds	
IV-E Small State Minimum Allocation	\$500,000
*State General Fund Direct Program Expenditures	\$330,032
Total	\$830,032

State general fund is department money applied directly to the operating costs of the program.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PLAN

The Department's Human Resources Development Unit (HRD) is responsible for the development and delivery of comprehensive education and training programs for agency staff and foster/adoptive parents. This is accomplished in collaboration with the University of Vermont (UVM) Department of Social Work through our Child Welfare Training Partnership (CWTP). Additional training for agency staff is developed and provided through the Agency of Human Services Department for Children and Families new Human Resources Division and through the State of Vermont Department of Human Resources Cyprian Learning Center.

Long-term Training

Our Child Welfare Training Partnership with UVM supports up to five current child welfare workers/supervisors and up to five potential employees to obtain a Master or Bachelor of Social Work degree at UVM each year.

Employees are selected based on experience in public child welfare, job performance and commitment to children and families. They contract to work for the Department for 2-4 years following graduation, depending on the level of support provided. Potential employees are selected from a pool of applicants accepted into the MSW/BSW programs based on their work experience and suitability for and commitment to public child welfare work. They contract to work for the Department for 3 years following graduation. There are no changes to the MSW/BSW training opportunities.

Bachelor of Social Work Program

Trainees must complete the first two years of their Bachelor's degree to be eligible for participation. This includes most of the General Education courses required by UVM.

Trainees receive in-state tuition and fees while they take the child and family series of courses in the second two years of the BSW program, as well as a small reimbursement for books and a living stipend. The BSW Social Work curriculum prepares students for generalist social work practice. Social work theory, knowledge, values and skills are taught through classroom and community field experiences.

The field experience occurs under the supervision of an MSW level child welfare professional in the Department. Field instructors receive training and support from UVM staff as well as compensation for their time and efforts.

All BSW trainees are required to enroll in the course SWSS 200 Practice: Child Protection, Family and Youth Services during the fall semester of their junior or senior year. BSW trainees are required to complete a minimum of nine credits (3 of which must be SWSS 224: Child Abuse and Neglect), which will enhance the trainee's understanding of child welfare related issues. Some examples of approved courses include courses focused on youth and delinquency (SOC 214), child psychology (PSYC 265, EDEC 63), crime (SOC 115, SOC 118, SOC 217) and chemical dependency (PSYC 259).

Every trainee in the BSW program is required to satisfactorily complete 12 credits in field education, which are tailored toward professional practice in child welfare. Child welfare trainees without prior DCF experience complete their senior year field practicum in a DCF district office under the supervision of a practicing MSW child welfare professional. BSW students who are DCF employees will embark on the BSW student field readiness assessment which determines whether these employee trainees will do their senior field practicum in a DCF district office or in another community based child and family centered agency.

Master of Social Work Program

MSW Trainees follow the typical course enrollment for the MSW program. They are required to take specific electives and engage in field work relevant to working with children and families. MSW Child Welfare Trainees are required to enroll in the course SWSS 224: Child Abuse and Neglect as their first year elective. Advanced standing MSW trainees must take Child Abuse and Neglect in the fall semester prior to the spring in which they begin the MSW program full time.

All MSW students select a practice concentration at the end of the foundation year. Trainees are required to select the Social Work with Children and Families practice concentration with course and fieldwork geared toward working with children and families in a child welfare setting. Selection of this practice concentration does not preclude a student from enrolling in health and mental health-related course work.

MSW trainees must enroll in advanced elective courses that are approved by the faculty advisor and related to child welfare work. Students and faculty advisors collaborate to select appropriate advanced year electives during the spring semester of the foundation year. Often students choose to complete these electives in the summer session. Trainees are provided with tuition, fees and book reimbursement to take up to six credits of approved summer session courses.

MSW trainees must complete the analytical paper/portfolio requirement. For those students who choose to complete an analytical paper, an extra copy of the paper must be submitted to the Project Coordinator at the Department of Social Work. These copies are shared with the Human Resource Development Unit at DCF. In previous years, DCF management and staff have found the papers to be helpful to their work. Students who select the portfolio option are not required to share a copy of their work with the project.

Every trainee in the MSW program is required to satisfactorily complete 12 credits in field education, which are tailored toward professional practice in child welfare. Child Welfare Trainees without prior DCF experience complete their concentration year field practicum in a DCF district office under the supervision of a practicing MSW child welfare professional.

MSW students who are DCF employees complete their foundation field education at other agencies, which provide services to children and families. Concentration year placements take into consideration a student's strengths and interests in working with children and families.

Students must be in field practicum 225-300 hours per semester in order to receive a grade. Exact hours required per week are negotiated with the Field Instructor. Students placed at DCF typically complete 20 hours per week in the field.

Short-term Training

The short-term training program includes classroom and on-the-job training for new employees, core training required within 18 months of hire, district team based training focused on best practice, and supervisor training. All short-term training is carefully designed to support the Family Services Division mission, core principles and system outcome priorities. Family Services Core Practice Principles can be viewed at <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/pubs&reports/index.html>

New Employee Training

New employees complete the NEET (New and Existing Employee Training) Program during their first six months on the job. NEET is offered 3 days a month, and links to the Field Practice Manual designed to assist supervisors to support the development of new employees. Formerly called NEST (New Employee Service Training), NEET has been restructured to encourage long term employees to attend sections which include new and emerging best practice material, at the request of the Division Management Team.

Field Practice Manual

A workgroup of FSD and CWTP employees met regularly over the past two years to research and develop a manual designed to assist supervisors to orient, train and support new employees using a wide variety of approaches.

The manual outlines a structured program of reading, shadowing exercises, interviewing activities, self reflective activities, review of policy and statutes and so on. It provides a structured on-the-job training program which links with the New and Existing Employee Training (NEET) and the core training program. After piloting a draft in several districts, the manual is scheduled to be implemented system-wide this fall.

Supervisors will be trained in the effective use of the manual this fall. In addition, CWTP staff will meet with each new employee and their supervisor within their first month of hire to support commitment to professional development for all employees.

New and Existing Employee Training (NEET)

NEET has once again been restructured. Next year, new employees will receive three days of classroom training a month for four months, separated by time spent in on the job training. NEET will continue to be offered twice annually.

All components of NEET are delivered to current child welfare workers within their first six months of hire in a formal classroom setting. Trainees additionally receive intensive supervision and on-the-job training in one of 12 district offices.

All components of NEET are also available to experienced employees. The following sessions include new best practice material, designated as important for experienced employees to attend to keep up to date in child welfare practice: Child Abuse and Neglect; Working with Youth and Families; Facilitating Placements; Child and Adolescent Development and Attachment; Permanency, Connections and Adoption and Solution Focused Skills.

All courses listed in NEET are offered twice annually. All are delivered by CWTP staff in collaboration with DCF staff, except Medical Aspects of Child Abuse/Neglect/Sexual abuse, which is delivered by experts from the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

New and Existing Employee Training (NEET)

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Orientation Intake & Assessment	Overview of law, policy & practice; taking thorough intakes; Structured Decision Making process from report through case determination; intake as social work; public relations & consumer satisfaction	Referral to service; preparation for judicial determinations; placement of the child; development of case plan for children at risk of foster care; case management and supervision	5 hours	\$210	100% CAPTA
Child Abuse & Neglect	Identify risk and protective factors and review the research on child abuse and neglect. Learn to build solutions with mandated clients. Explore safety plans for children and youth to avoid the need for foster care. Overview of procedures to initiate emergency custody for a child who is unsafe.	Preparation for judicial determinations; placement of the child; development of case plan for children at risk of foster care; case management and supervision	5 hours	\$210	50% CAPTA 50% IV-E
Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents	Understand a range of emotional and behavioral outcomes of sexual abuse. Explore dynamics and characteristics of incestuous families. Identify characteristics and behavioral changes of children and youth who have been sexually abused. Learn healthy and helpful ways to work with children and youth who have a history of being sexual abuse victims.	Preparation for judicial determinations; Placement of the child; Development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care; Case management and supervision; Referral to service	5 hours	\$210	100% IV-E
Medical Aspects of Child Abuse and Neglect and Medical Aspects of Sexual Abuse of Children and Adolescents	Learn the background of medical aspects of child abuse and neglect, learn conditions associated with physical abuse and neglect and about conditions commonly mistaken for physical abuse and neglect and medical decision making. Understand what to expect of the medical workup of children or youth who have been sexually abused. Learn the behavioral indicators of sexual abuse; understand the normal, abnormal and uncertain findings as a result of an exam. Understand the importance and value of teamwork across disciplines.	Preparation for judicial determinations; Placement of the child; Development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care; Case management and supervision; Referral to service	5 hours	\$2400	50% CAPTA 50% IV-E

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Working with Youth and Families	Develop strategies for working with youth and their families. Understand how family centered and child/youth focused practice supports permanency for children/adolescents. Understand the value of lifelong connections for youth. Learn the process of Family Finding. Understand the outcomes for youth who age out of custody without safe, stable, loving and lasting relationships. Learn and practice using tools for youth led/youth driven lifelong connections work to eliminate the possibility of youth aging out of custody with no identified permanent, nurturing lifelong relationship.	Preparation for judicial determinations; Placement of the child for children in foster care; Development of case plan; Case management and supervision; Permanency Planning Referral to service	7.5 hours	\$320	100% IV-E
Facilitating Placements	Understand the importance of stability; secure attachments and the impact of separation/ loss on child/adolescent development. Understand the importance of family connections, and how to support kinship placements. Identify strategies for concurrent permanency planning for/ with children/adolescents. Explore ways to make placement transitions for adolescents/children a positive experience. Identify stages of grief/ separation trauma for children/youth and parents adjusting to placements.	Placement of child; preparation for judicial determinations; permanency planning; case management and supervision	5 hours	\$395	100% IV-E
Child & Adolescent Development and Attachment	Increase knowledge of the latest research and understanding of child development from infancy through adolescence. Understand how the concepts of risk and resiliency affect the healthy development of children and youth. Discover concrete tools that you can use to support children, youth and families struggling with attachment issues. Learn the impact of trauma on the development of children and youth.	Preparation for judicial determinations; Placement of the child; Development of case plan for children in foster care/ at risk of foster care; Permanency planning; Case management and supervision; Referral to service	5 hours	\$285	100% IV-E

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Responding to Domestic Violence in CPS Case Planning	Develop a greater understanding of domestic violence and its overlap with child abuse. Understand the impact domestic violence has on children, its relationship to child abuse, and the DCF response to child witnessing. Increase strategies for an effective response to domestic violence/child abuse cases. Understand why responding to domestic violence in child abuse/neglect cases is essential to child protection efforts. Increase knowledge and skills in case planning that enhances victim safety, provides for batterer accountability and increases youth and child safety.	Referral to service, development of case plan for children in foster care or at risk of foster care, case management and supervision, permanency planning	5 hours	\$75	100% IV-E
Juvenile Delinquency & Probation	Review the legal and court process for youth services. Develop strategies for supervising youth on probation and explore interventions for non-compliance. Learn the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice. Learn the YASI instrument for assessment of strengths and risks and for case planning with youth and families.	Preparation for judicial determinations; Referral to services; Development of the case plan for children in foster care or at risk of foster care; Case management and supervision	5 hours	\$210	70% IV-E 30% General Fund
Case Planning With Families	Identify the ethical and legal basis for comprehensive case planning. Clarify case plan goal identification and how the goal relates to the overall plan of services. Prioritize issues to be addressed by the case plan. Learn components of effective team building. Identify and develop clear, measurable goals and strategies for various treatment issues. Review the initial and 6 month case plan formats.	Development of the case plan; referral to service; case management and supervision	5 hours	\$210	100% IV-E
Permanency, Connections and Adoption	Understand the different permanency options including reunification, adoption, guardianship and permanent guardianship. Learn the value and the process of finding family and fictive kin for children and youth in the child welfare system. Learn the basics of family group decision making and family group conferencing as a tool to support safety, permanency, well-being and law abidance for youth.	Preparation for judicial determinations; Placement of the child; Development of case plan for children in foster care/ at risk of foster care; Permanency planning Case management and supervision; Referral to service	5 hours	\$210	100% IV-E

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Solution Focused Skills	Identify the basic language of solution focused child protection work and how to engage the family in creating and building their own solutions. Learn to develop plans which focus on strengths and exceptions, leading the client to identify hidden resources and past successes. Practice the language of open-ended solution focused questions and develop a plan for ways to engage families with these tools.	Development of case plan for children in foster care/ at risk of foster care; Permanency planning; Case management and supervision; Referral to service	5 hours	\$210	100% IV-E
Resources for Best Practice	Develop thinking and tools of practice to identify and apply evidence based strategies. Identify ethical standards for child welfare practice. Understand the dynamics of power in the context of families and the relationship between the family and Family Services Division staff.	Case management and consultation; referral to service, development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care	5 hours	\$210	100% IV-E

Core Training

Subsequent to NEET, but while in trainee status during their first 18 months of hire, new employees complete the following short term classroom training. All are coordinated by the CWTP. Subject experts are hired for some, and experts within the Department provide others in collaboration with CWTP trainers. Each is offered once annually, except that *Understanding Substance Use Disorders, Treatment and Family Recovery: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals* is completed online while the employee is in the NEET program, and the YASI Screening and Assessment will be offered three times.

CORE TRAINING

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Provider	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Understanding Substance Use Disorders, Treatment and Family Recovery: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals	This tutorial will provide a primer on alcohol and drug addiction, substance abuse treatment and recovery, enhancing treatment readiness and treatment effectiveness, as well as discuss cross-system communication and collaboration, as well as provide contact information for other national resources. Provided online by NCSACW: http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/tutorials/index.asp	Referral to service; placement of the child; preparation for judicial determination; development of the case plan for children in foster care and children at risk of foster care; case management and supervision; permanency planning	National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare	10 hours	free	Not applicable
Court and Legal Skills	Become familiar with Vermont laws, including Chapter 49 and Chapter 55 of Title 33 which guide us in meeting ASFA and Title IV-E requirements, how to work with the courts to provide safety, well being, and permanence for children/youth. Understand the court process (including the appeal process) and your role in documenting pertinent evidence, preparing a case for filing, meeting a standard of proof and moving for protective orders from the court.	Preparation for and participation in judicial determination; permanency planning	DCF subject experts in collaboration with CWTP trainer	16 hours	\$500	100% IV-E

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Provider	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Shaken Baby Syndrome	Identify what Shaken Baby Syndrome is, (SBS) its history and why it is considered a syndrome. Understand how injuries are diagnosed as SBS. Walk through the investigation process of an SBS case study. Discuss the challenges in court and with SBS cases.	Preparation for and participation in judicial determinations, development of case plan, case management and supervision	DCF subject experts	5 hours	\$210	50% CAPTA 50% IV-E
Witnessing Skills	Understand your role in the presentation of a case in court, the judges expectations, and the tactics lawyers employ including direct and cross examination. Learn how to prepare testimony and testify in court effectively through demonstration and actual practice in a courtroom setting.	Preparation for and participation in judicial determinations	DCF subject experts	10 hours	\$345	100% IV-E
Investigation Skills	Learn skills for engaging families and communities right from the start. Understand our legal mandates. Understand forensic interview techniques.	Preparation/ participation in judicial determinations, development of case plan, case management and supervision	DCF subject experts	10 hours	\$420	50% CAPTA 50% IV-E
Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)	Learn how to complete the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI), pre-screen and full assessment, to assess risk and needs of youth on probation. Practice motivational interviewing skills. Understand how the assessment results inform case planning and assists in determining case closure.	Development of case plan, referral to services, case management and supervision for children in or at risk of foster care	Orbis Partners, Inc. and DCF subject experts	10 hours		JABG

Specialized Training

The Child Welfare Training Partnership offers specialized classroom training in the 2007/2008 training calendar. Some of it is provided in collaboration with other groups, especially where it is in the form of a one or two day conference with multiple simultaneous workshops. This is all short-term training delivered in a formal classroom setting. All the workshops below are designed for child welfare social workers, supervisors and managers. All the training listed below is offered once annually except: Casework /Supervision Consultation and Training Groups: offered once a month in 6-8 locations. Groups consist of 6-10 people. Signs of Safety: of the 40 total hours, 10 are the same 5 hour course offered in 2 locations of the state. Most employees will attend one. The remaining 30 hours are advanced courses offered to caseworkers and supervisors using the Signs of Safety consultation model. Permanency Options is offered once each in four regions of the state.

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Provider	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Casework/ Reflective Supervision Training Groups	Monthly groups, designed to facilitate professional growth through collaborative discussions regarding prevention of foster care, case planning, facilitated case consultations, family group conferencing, permanency, case management and the work of Child, Youth & Family workers.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	Faculty from UVM Dept. of Social Work, hired subject experts	2 hours each month	\$5,000	100% IV-E
Annual Child Sexual Abuse Conference	This conference provides not only current best practice information but also an opportunity to network with colleagues and explore ways to successfully address child sexual abuse. We bring together the team players of community multidisciplinary teams: law enforcement, advocates, child protection, clinicians, educators, community members, and families. The 2007 Conference will provide opportunities for basic and advanced training, presentation on prevention programs and strategies, and lectures on the latest research regarding the community response to child sexual abuse.	Referral to service, preparation for and participation in judicial determinations, placement of child, development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care, case management and supervision	Professionals from across the country will present 30 workshops from five disciplinary perspectives.	10 hours	\$6,636	33% CAPTA 33% CJA 33% IV-E

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Provider	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Annual Collaboration Conference on Children, Youth and Families	Features workshops in areas such as youth development and engaging youth culture; family voices in the system of care; strengths-based solution-focused practice; communication skills for successful collaboration; and substance abuse prevention and screening.	Referral to service, preparation for and participation in judicial determinations, placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	Hired subject experts	5 hours	\$1,500	100% IV-E
Annual Working with Youth Conference	The Working with Youth Conference offers a unique learning and networking opportunity targeted specifically to those who work with young people ages 10-21 across all aspects of human, social, and educational services with the aim of energizing, advancing and uniting the field.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	Hired subject experts and CWTP trainers	5 hours	\$1,500	Child welfare supervisors: 100% IV-E Others have own funding sources.
Vermont Foster and Adoptive Families Association Annual Conference	This conference allows Family Services staff and foster/kin/adoptive families to learn together about the wide range of issues effecting children and youth in foster care, and promising approaches to improve outcomes for these children and youth.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	Hired subject expert and CWTP trainers	12 hours	\$7,650	Child welfare supervisors: 100% IV-E Others have own funding sources.
Kin as Parents Conference	Numerous workshops for staff and families focused on the use and support of kinship care.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	DCF staff, CWTP trainers and hired subject experts	5 hours	\$2,500	Child welfare supervisors: 100% IV-E Others have own funding sources.

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Provider	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Vermont Coalition of Residential Programs Conference	This annual conference invites Family Services staff to join staff from Vermont's residential programs to learn about a range of issues related to youth in group homes, including building and maintaining family connections, permanency and after care planning.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	DCF staff, CWTP trainers and hired subject experts	5 hours	\$1500	100 % IV-E
“Signs of Safety” Balanced Family Consultation	Skills training in an inclusive consultation process to assist with decision making and case planning with families and their teams using a balanced focus on both risk and safety factors. Effective group supervision and team building. Explore evidence for the efficacy of family focused consultation process.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care, case management and supervision	Sue Lohrbach, MS, LICSW and Rob Sawyer, Dir Olmstead County, MN Child and Family Services	10 hours	\$3,430	100% IV-E
“Signs of Safety” Advanced Facilitation Skills	Skills training focused on special topics such as facilitation of family meetings where domestic violence is an issue; deepening our understanding of balanced assessment and safety planning, solution focused practice, etc.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care, case management and supervision	Sue Lohrbach, MS, LICSW and Rob Sawyer, Dir Olmstead County, MN Child and Family Services	30 hours	\$10,290	100% IV-E
Juvenile Services Day	Understand the CRC process; probation management and VOPs; probation detention; Woodside 8 day hearings; juvenile restorative probation programs and the ICJ/ICPC	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care, case management and supervision	DCF staff and CWTP	5 hours	\$210	100% General Fund

Course	Syllabus	IV-E Functions addressed	Provider	Duration	Est. Cost	Cost allocation methodology
Supervising Youth with Sexually Offending Behaviors in the Community	Understand the behaviors, emotional indicators and dynamics of youth with sexually offending behaviors. Know how to work with adolescents, family members, victims and the community in case planning to prevent relapse. Know how to use information from psychosexual evaluations to measure risk of re-offense and support case planning. Understand the relapse prevention model.	Referral to service, placement of child, development of case plan for children in foster care and at risk of foster care, case management and supervision	Hired subject expert	5 hours	\$1200	50% IV-E 50% CAPTA
Data Informs Practice	Improve the organization's ability to become results oriented, use outcome data to inform practice, and decision making. Review safety, permanence, well being outcomes/data from the CFSR. Assure that supervisors and managers will be able to analyze data and design creative plans to impact practice positively.	Case management and supervision	CWTP trainers and DCF staff	5 hours	\$325	100% IV-E
Permanency Options	Explore the options for permanency for youth in custody, including reunification, adoption, guardianship and permanent guardianship.	Placement of child, development of case plan, case management and supervision	CWTP trainers and DCF staff	3 hours	free	

District Team-based Training

The Child Welfare Training Partnership (CWTP) increasingly provides targeted, skills-based training and consultation for teams in districts. This model has proven both popular and effective in enhancing the professional development of FSD staff, supporting efforts at systems change, and spreading knowledge and practice skills based on evidence.

Courses offered in 2006-2007 in each district are this year incorporated into the NEET program. Staff who missed either of these workshops last year may attend the appropriate NEET day. These include Evidence Based Practice and Solution Focused Engagement Skills.

Training offered in districts in 2007-2008 will include:

- Management consultation; team building; strategic planning – on request
- Signs of Safety facilitated case consultation – on request
- Enhancing Parent-Child contact – required in each district
- Other PIP related topics – required in each district
- Family Group Decision Making – on request
- Family Finding – on request
- Intake, the First Voice – on request

Delivery of training and consultation services is mutually agreed upon by CWTP, the IV-E Executive Committee, and each district. Community partners and other DCF department staff are invited and welcome at the discretion of the district. For some topics, we may decide it more effective to deliver training for a half day every three months, to allow staff to learn and then practice new skills, in a developmental progression.

Since the FSD is implementing a new set of practice principles which highlight family and child centered, strength and evidence based practice, we anticipate developing courses which would support this practice to deliver in each district. Over time, we hope to develop a growing menu of workshops readily available, which districts may request as part of their professional development program. Naturally, we will want to develop and tailor courses to meet district specific needs on an ongoing basis.

Supervisor Development Program

CWTP staff will be working with supervisors at their monthly meeting to agree on standards of practice for supervisors and to assess training needs based on these standards. Most courses will be delivered in the context of the monthly supervisor meetings. They will include:

- Effective use of the Field Practice Manual to enhance worker performance
- Behavioral Interviewing (delivered by Freda Bernotavicz of the Maine Muskie School of Public Service)
- PIP related training

- Training identified by the standards and needs assessment process.

Training for IV-E System of Care Service Providers

Most of the above trainings are also available to foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in residential programs, case managers, state employees in other departments, and other community practitioners providing services to children in custody. Our training calendar is mailed annually to programs and practitioners who provide services to abused and neglected children around the state, and is available on the web.

Cost Allocation Methodology

The Title IV-E eligibility statistics are compiled quarterly from Family Services MIS, using data on all children in custody, including their custody category, and then indicating their Title IV-E eligibility status, also by custody and category. The number of Title IV-E eligible children is divided by the total number of children in custody to determine the Title IV-E eligibility rate (penetration rate).

The same information is provided for the children on adoption subsidy, which are categorized as Title IV-E eligible children. The number of Title IV-E eligible children is divided by the total number of children on adoption subsidies to determine the Title IV-E eligibility rate.

UVM Contract and Foster Parent Training

For the purposes of determining the penetration rate to be applied to the UVM contract and foster parent training, the raw data for children in custody and on adoption subsidies, the combined number of Title IV-E eligible children in custody, and the number of Title IV-E eligible children on adoption subsidies is divided by the total population of custody children and total children on adoption subsidies, to determine the combined custody and adoptions Title IV-E eligibility rate (penetration rate). The penetration rate is then multiplied by the applicable rate: training (75%) and administration (50%).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The following technical assistance requests have either been made or are under discussion for SFY 2008.

- Technical assistance to provide guidance in the rewrite of our child abuse and neglect policy and include an alternative response. We may require assistance in researching other state's related laws and alternative response procedures and in determining how to best foster political support for these changes. We have no particular NRC in mind at this time. A request form was submitted to our Regional office on June 19, 2006.
- Continued TA for Recruitment, Development and Support of Youth Advocacy from the NRC for Youth Development.

- Consultation on family engagement and permanency from the NRC for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and other NRC's as appropriate to the topic.
- Technical assistance for a statewide conference focusing on the needs of children impacted by parental incarceration. This Conference will lay the foundation for systemic change in regards to working with children and families affected by parental incarceration.
- Technical assistance to assist State leaders and supervisors in understanding supervisors' critical roles as change agents and develop plans to implement these roles.
- Technical assistance was requested in November 2006 from the NCSACW to provide on-site methamphetamine training primarily for child protection staff, law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health and substance abuse providers, and medical professionals.

CAPTA PROGRAM EMPHASIS

We have selected the following areas of emphasis for our CAPTA program.

Section 106 (a) (1) - Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect

The Child Safety Unit has been responsible for supervising staff that supervise investigation functions in each of the 12 district offices since July 2005. The Child Safety Assessment Manager uses supervision techniques that include face-to-face supervisory sessions occurring approximately every 4 – 6 weeks with the district office intake/investigation supervisor. In addition, quarterly group meetings with all intake/investigation supervisors around the state are held for the purpose of providing group supervision while at the same time ensuring that intake/investigation supervisors are receiving consistent messages about intake and investigation policy and practice.

In addition, the Child Safety Assessment Manager provides on-going formal and informal training, regular case consultation and quality assurance. These strategies have been maintained throughout this period.

In June of 2007, the Child Safety Assessment Manager provided a two day statewide training on Investigation Skills. In addition, training on investigation practice was provided to new employees during the New Employee Service Training in September of 2006 and June of 2007. Training related to the investigation of serious physical abuse cases (including Shaken Baby Syndrome) was offered in April 2007. Training related to the medical aspects of child abuse and neglect was offered in October 2006.

In 2006, investigative tools including digital cameras and voice recorders were purchased for all 12 district offices to ensure proper documentation during investigations.

The Child Safety Unit completed a rewrite of policies related to intake and investigation practices. Several significant changes were implemented as a result of these policy changes including the addition of clear timelines for supervisory review of intakes and clarification about investigation activities required during the life of the investigation.

Section 106 (a) (2) (B) (i) - Improving procedures for appealing and responding to appeals of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect

DCF Family Services advocated for an update of the state's child protection statute during the 2007 legislative session. H.148 requires that the division make significant changes to the appeal process that is currently in operation. Specifically, the legislation states that substantiations will no longer be entered into the state's Central Registry absent the perpetrator having access to upfront due process. The DCF Family Services Deputy Commissioner, Child Protection Director and Review Specialist have worked closely the Assistant Attorney General to ensure that the legislature had information necessary while considering these improvements. Work in the area of implementation continues at this time.

Section 106 (a) (5) - Developing and updating systems of technology that support the program and track reports of child abuse and neglect from intake through final disposition and allow interstate and intrastate information exchange

In 2006, DCF Family Services redeployed employee resources in an effort to address the development and updating of information technology systems to track reports of child abuse and neglect. The Child Safety Assessment Manager worked with Information Services Division to develop reports to track the acceptance of reports as well as the disposition of accepted reports of abuse and neglect. These reports are available to all staff in all 12 district offices. Training related to these reports was offered to the Division Management Team and intake/investigation supervisors statewide.

Section 106 (a) (6) (A) - Developing, strengthening and facilitating training including training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families

DCF Family Services has worked closely with the Child Welfare Training Partnership to strengthen and facilitate research-based trainings throughout the state. The Child Welfare Training Partnership has provided half day trainings in 12 district offices and the Central Office in the areas of Evidence Based Practice and Solution Focused Engagement Strategies.

In addition, the Child Welfare Training Partnership has worked with the division to access technical assistance in the area of Family Search and Engagement and the use of Signs of Safety in casework practice. Several trainings have been offered throughout the state related to both of these strategies.

Section 106 (a) (9) - Developing and facilitating research-based strategies for training individuals mandated to report child abuse or neglect

In September of 2006, DCF Family Services provided a “train the trainers” training for those staff members identified as providing training to individuals mandated to report child abuse or neglect. This training was offered in collaboration with the Child Safety Unit and the Child Welfare Training Partnership.

In May of 2007, the Child Safety Assessment Manager convened a group to discuss and consider the varied approaches currently used throughout the state in the training of mandatory reporters. The group is currently working to compile resources that will be made available via the intranet web site to all staff that provide these trainings. This work is intended to support district staff in delivering effective, research-based trainings that offer consistent messages to the community.

Identify the activities that the State intends to implement with its CAPTA State grant funds and any changes in activities for FY 2007

The state intends to utilize CAPTA grant funds to secure technical assistance for in-depth review of current child welfare practices as a result of H. 148. In particular, the state intends to examine the state of current child abuse and neglect investigation practices and determine the ways in which a differential response model could be implemented.

The Child Safety Unit intends to utilize CAPTA grant funds to provide training for investigative staff throughout the state in the areas of forensic interviewing skills and the medical aspects of child abuse and neglect.

DCF Family Services intends to advocate for centralization of the intake process. CAPTA grant funds may be utilized to implement a centralized intake program during FY 2008.

Describe any updates to the services and training to be provided under the CAPTA State grant as required by Section 106 (b) (2) (C)

In September of 2006, DCF Family Services provided a “train the trainers” training for those staff members identified as providing training to individuals mandated to report child abuse or neglect. This training was offered in collaboration with the Child Safety Unit and the Child Welfare Training Partnership.

The Child Safety Assessment Manager has provided training to the staff in five district offices related to taking intake phone calls and adequate documentation of these phone calls. These districts include the St. Johnsbury, Burlington, Bennington, Barre and Hartford district offices.

In June of 2007, the Child Safety Assessment Manager provided a two day statewide training on Investigation Skills. In addition, training on investigation practice was provided to new employees during the New Employee Service Training in September of 2006 and June of 2007. Training related to the investigation of serious physical abuse cases (including Shaken Baby Syndrome) were offered in April of 2007. Training related to the medical aspects of child abuse and neglect was offered in October of 2006.

CHANGES IN STATE STATUTE RELATED TO CAPTA

There have been no changes to state statute affecting CAPTA eligibility. During the 2007 legislative session, the legislature required that DCF Family Services perform a study prior to November of 2007 for the purpose of considering issues related to allegations of abuse or neglect of a child, including a tiered approach to the investigation and substantiation of child abuse or neglect that is based upon the severity of the behavior and the risk to children and the community and that establishes appropriate corresponding consequences and protections.

CHILD WELFARE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Vermont has one child welfare demonstration grant; the goals of the Rural Recruitment grant are to:

- Assure that VT has families for all children waiting to be adopted
- Assure adopted families have the support they need in order to thrive
- Assist other rural communities with replicating this project
- Develop the capacity to continue the project after funding ends.

The grant cycle is October 2003 to September 2008.

CURRENT FEDERAL INITIATIVES

The Department for Children and Families does not receive any funding for Healthy Marriage, Fatherhood, Rural Development, Positive Youth Development, or Faithbased/Community Services Projects.

AVAILABILITY OF PLAN TO PUBLIC

This plan will be made available to any member of the public on request. It will also be posted on our public web page at <http://www.dcf.state.vt.us/fsd/Plans/index.html>.

NON SUPPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENT

In FY 1992 the family preservation and support line items were known as "placement prevention". Vermont spent \$29,671 on placement prevention in FY 1992. In FY 2005, Vermont expended \$162,059 on IV-B, subpart 2 programs.

MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

No IV-B subpart 1 funds were used for Foster Care, Adoption Assistance or Child Care related to Employment and Training in 2005.

IV-B SUBPART 2 EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2005

Program	Proposed Spending	Actual Spending
Family Preservation	\$338,340	\$168,969
Family Support	\$193,337	\$98,121
Time Limited Reunification	\$193,337	\$98,569
Adoption Promotion/Support	\$193,337	\$88,323
Planning	\$48,334	\$31,162
Total	\$966,685	\$485,144

The differences between proposed spending and actual spending are not programmatic. In the past, the Business office has calculated the proposed spending on the amount we are able to request instead of using past expenditures. In this report we based the proposed spending on the most recent past expenditures, hopefully creating a more accurate prediction.

Populations, Geographic Areas, and Numbers Served

In reference to the CFS 101 Part II, Column (h), Number to be Served. Vermont still does not have a mechanism in place to track the numbers of individuals or families served by this individual funding stream, therefore we can not provide the estimation required.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. CFS 101Part I
- B. CFS 101Part II
- C. CFS 101Part III
- D. Assurance
- E. VCAB Annual Report
- F. DCF/Family Services Continuity of Operations Plan

Attachment A
CFS-101, Part I: Fiscal Year 2008, October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008

1. State or ITO: Vermont	2. EIN: 036000274
3. Address: 103 South Main St. Waterbury, VT 05671	4. Submission: [X] New [] Revision
5. Total estimated Federal title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds.	\$604,737
6. Total Estimated Federal title IV-B, Subpart 2 Funds. (This amount should equal the sum of lines a – g)	\$526,728
a) Total Family Preservation Services.	\$150,501
b) Total Family Support Services.	\$105,345
c) Total Time-Limited Family Reunification Services.	\$105,345
d) Total Adoption Promotion and Support Services.	\$105,345
e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning).	\$31,200
f) Total Administration (not to exceed 10% of estimated allotment).	\$900
g) Caseworker visits	\$28,092
7. Re-allotment of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds for State and Indian Tribal Organizations	
a) Indicate the amount of the State's/Tribe's allotment that will not be required to carry out the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. \$ <u>0</u>	
b) If additional funds become available to States and ITOs, specify the amount of additional funds the State or Tribes is requesting. \$ <u>2000000</u>	
8. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) State Grant (no State match required) Estimated Amount \$ <u>93014</u> , plus additional allocation, as available.	
9. Estimated Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds.	\$710,367
10. Estimated Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds.	\$127,107
11. Re-allotment of CFCIP and ETV Program Funds:	
a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out CFCIP \$ <u>0</u> .	
b) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out ETV \$ <u>0</u> .	
c) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting for CFCIP \$ <u>2000000</u> for ETV program \$ _____.	
12. Certification by State Agency and/or Indian Tribal Organization. The State agency or Indian Tribe submits the above estimates and request for funds under title IV-B, subpart 1 and/or 2, of the Social Security Act, CAPTA State Grant, CFCIP and ETV programs, and agrees that expenditures will be made in accordance with the Child and Family Services Plan, which has been jointly developed with, and approved by, the ACF Regional Office, for the Fiscal Year ending September 30.	
Signature and Title of State/Tribal Agency Official	Signature and Title of Regional Office Official

SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	TITLE IV-B		(c) CAPTA*	(d) CFCIP*	(e) ETV*	(f) TITLE IV-E	(g) State Local Donated Funds	(h) NUMBER TO BE SERVED		(i) POPULATION TO BE SERVED	(j) GEOG. AREA TO BE SERVED (Include both # and type of areas to be served)
	(a) I-CWS	(b) II-PSSF						Individuals	Families		
1) PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES (FAMILY SUPPORT)		105,345					35,115			All eligible children/families	Statewide
2) PROTECTIVE SERVICES	604,737		93,014				201,579			All eligible children/families	Statewide
3) CRISIS INTERVENTION (FAMILY PRESERVATION)		150,501					50,167			All eligible children/families	Statewide
4) TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES		105,345					35,115			All eligible children/families	Statewide
5.) ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES		105,345					35,115			All eligible children/families	Statewide
6) FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE: (A) FOSTER FAMILY & RELATIVE FOSTER CARE						4,838,433	3,311,960			All eligible children/families	Statewide
(B) GROUP/INST CARE						5,069,065	5,579,306			All eligible children/families	Statewide
7) ADOPTION SUBSIDY PMTS.						3,787,749	1,424,016			All eligible children/families	Statewide
8) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES				500000			210,367			Youth 18-21	
9) EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS					130,794					Youth 18-21	
10) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS		900				3,600,467	3,600,483				
11) STAFF TRAINING						2,016,101					
12) FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING						142,645					
13) ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING											
14) CHILD CARE RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT/TRAINING						894,568	5,126,041			Adoptive Parents	Statewide
15) MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISITS		28092								All eligible children/families	
16) TOTAL	604,737	495,567		500,000	130,794	20,349,028	19,599,277				

CFS 101, Part III: Expenditures for Title IV-B, Subpart 1 & 2 Funds, Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) for Grant Year FY 2005

1. State or ITO: Vermont		2. EIN: 036000274		3. Address: 103 South Main St Waterbury, VT 05671		
4. Submission: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Revision						
<i>Description of Funds</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Number served</i>		<i>Population served</i>	<i>Geographic area</i>
			<i>Individuals</i>	<i>Families</i>		
5. Federal Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds	\$953,333	\$714,800			All eligible children/families	Statewide
6. Total Federal title IV-B, Subpart 2 Funds. (This amount should equal the sum of lines a – f).	\$966,685	\$486,177			All eligible children/families	Statewide
a) Family Preservation Services	\$338,340	\$168,969			All eligible children/families	Statewide
b) Family Support Services	\$193,337	\$98,121			All eligible children/families	Statewide
c) Time-Limited Family Reunification Services	\$193,337	\$98,569			All eligible children/families	Statewide
d) Adoption Promotion and Support Services	\$193,337	\$88,323			All eligible children/families	Statewide
e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning).	\$48,334	\$31,162				
f) Total Administrative Costs (not to exceed 10% of total allotment after October 1, 2007)	\$0	\$1033				
7. Total Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funds	\$710,367	\$743,570			Youth 18-21	Statewide
a) Indicate the amount of State's allotment spent on room and board for eligible youth (not to exceed 30% of CFCIP allotment).	\$0	\$0				
8. Total Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds.	\$130,794	\$120,794			Youth 18-21	Statewide
9. Certification by State Agency or Indian Tribal Organization (ITO). The State agency or ITO agrees that expenditures were made in accordance with the Child and Family Services Plan, which has been jointly developed with, and approved by, the Children's Bureau, for the Fiscal Year ending September 30.						
<i>Signature and Title of State/Tribal Agency Official</i>		<i>Date</i>		<i>Signature and Title of Regional Office Official</i>		<i>Date</i>



At its first meeting on September 30, 1999, board members decided that the board's success will be measured by answering the following questions.

These questions have continued to guide us.

- ◆ Does Board feel informed and understand the Department in the broad sense?
- ◆ Does the Department get leadership from the Board and feel that it is a good use of time?
- ◆ Has Board reviewed child fatalities or near fatalities and/or other issues referred?
- ◆ Has Board examined the strengths and weaknesses of the SRS system and made recommendations for improvement?
- ◆ Has Board evaluated data around trends/issues and discussed implications for future planning?
- ◆ Has Board offered useful and significant recommendations to the department?
- ◆ Has Board produced annual report?

Child Protection Advisory Board 2006 - 2007

Background

In 1999, consistent with the provisions of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), DCF Family Services (then SRS) formed the Child Protection Advisory Board. In December of 2004, the board was renamed the Vermont Citizen's Advisory Board (VCAB) in By-Laws that were adopted by the board on December 8, 2004. The Board meets quarterly to discuss a broad variety of issues related to child protection in Vermont.

Members

Joseph Hagan, M.D. - Co-chair, Pediatrician
 Judge George Belcher - Judge, Washington Probate Court
 Rev. Stephen G. Berry - Foster and Adoptive Parent, Pastor
 Charlie Biss - Director of Children's Services, VT Dept of Health
 Linda Johnson - Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
 Lt. Edward Ledo - Dept of Public Safety
 Amy Torchia - VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
 Alice Siegriest - VT Children's Aid Society
 Michael Macadoo - ADAP, VT Dept of Health
 Gary Schaedel - VT Dept of Health
 Lynn Granger - Kinship Care
 Sue Cano - Lamoille County Supervisory Union
 Stacey Edmunds - Victim Treatment Services Coordinator

DCF Staff: Steve Dale – Commissioner for DCF, Cindy Walcott – Deputy Commissioner for Family Services, Frederick Ober – Child Protection Director for Family Services, Karen Shea – Child Safety Assessment Manager for Family Services, Priscilla White – Administrative Assistant



FY 2007 Board Meetings

Vermont's Citizen Advisory Board met four times in FY 2007, on 9/6/2006, 12/6/2006, 3/7/2007 and 6/13/2007.

The following issues, among others, were discussed at our meetings:

- **Policy**

ACTION: The board provided review of Policy 51 (Accepting Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect), Policy 52 (Investigating Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect), Policy 55 (Risk of Harm), Policy 56 (Substantiating Child Abuse and Neglect), Policy 60 (Chapter 55 Assessments) prior to implementation and provided input into the final policies adopted on 1/1/07. The board was involved in the development of Policy 63 (Investigating Reports of Methamphetamine Manufacturing and Caretaker Methamphetamine Use).

- **Legislation**

ACTION: The board reviewed changes in state law that impact DCF Family Services. Specifically, the board reviewed:

- H.148 An Act Relating To The Child Abuse Registry

Substantial time was spent reviewing this bill during the December and March meetings of the board. Specific recommendations were made to the Commissioner regarding the right to due process for alleged offenders prior to their entry into the Central Registry. In addition, the board supported the Department's efforts to seek a change in legislation that would allow a perpetrator to be removed from the Central Registry if they demonstrated a reduced risk to child. The board provided the Commissioner with specific recommendation for language within the law related to removal from the registry due to risk reduction. The board approved of the Commissioner's proposed definition of the Central Registry and supported the removal of substantiations entered into the Central Registry prior to 1992.

The board requested that the Department consider the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law more comprehensively in the next legislative session. The board moved to have the Commissioner propose language within H. 148 that would require the Department to conduct a study and engage community partners related to current child abuse and neglect definitions, the approach to investigations, the potential usefulness of a differential response model being implemented in Vermont and the utility of a tiered Central Registry that creates a correspondence between length of time in the Central Registry and the severity of the abuse or neglect. This language was approved by the legislature and the Department is in the process of conducting this study with an anticipated completion date of November 2007. Recommendations to the legislature will be based on the findings of this study.

- **Agency of Human Service Child Protection Emphasis**

ACTION: In 2006, DCF Family Services implemented Policy 62 (Promoting Child Safety in High Risk Families). This policy sets forth expectation related to social worker activity in investigations that will be unsubstantiated but that have an identified risk level that is high or very high. The board reviewed the Agency of Human Services efforts to reinforce this message and supported the initiative. In August of 2006, the Secretary of the Agency of Human Services released a statement recognizing child protection to be within the scope of any Agency of Human Services employees' job duties. The board commended this approach.

- **Baby Safe Haven**

ACTION: In May of 2006, S.27 (A Safe Haven Defense To The Crime Of Abandoning A Baby) was signed into state law. The law provided immunity to any person who gives up a baby to an identified safe haven within 30 days of the baby's birth. The board reviewed this law and resultant division policy. Further, the board reviewed DCF Family Services efforts to comply with the public awareness elements of the legislation. In particular, the board reviewed print media create for the campaign as well as the distribution plan. The board reviewed the divisions plans for public training efforts related to this legislation.

- **Child and Family Services Review**

ACTION: The board reviewed the Child and Family Services Review process. The board was made aware of the locations selected for the review, the scope of the review and the anticipated outcome of the review in terms of program improvement expectations.

- **Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners Program**

ACTION: The board reviewed DCF Family Services involvement in the SANE Program development in Vermont and reviewed the program as it relates to child sexual abuse investigations. An overview of current funding and protocol development was offered.

- **Health Intake Questionnaire**

ACTION: The board reviewed DCF Family Services partnership with the Vermont Department of Health and the development of the Health Intake Questionnaire that is completed at the time children enter DCF Family Services custody. The board reviewed the current process involved in the evaluation of health needs related to children in custody. The board made suggestions related to additional elements that could be added to further bolster the usefulness of this process.

- **Family Services Core Principles**

ACTION: The board endorsed the Core Practice Principles adopted by DCF Family Services. The board reviewed the Core Practice Principles as they related to the divisions involvement with children and families and commended the division the work on articulating an approach to practice that focuses on family and engagement throughout the life of the case.

- **Intake and Investigation Data**

ACTION: The board was updated on the division's work to create web-based tools for districts staff and the community at large that are directly connected to intake and investigation information. The board reviewed the data that was generated as a result of these reports.

- **Membership**

ACTION: The board reviewed membership and empanelment and discussed the current membership as well as expanding membership to more comprehensively represent the varied interests of consumers and members of the community at large.

DCF/FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

Duration	Critical Functions	Plan of Action	Staffing Needs	Equipment and System Needs	Services Suspended	Resources Available for Reassignment
0-72 hours						
<p>Assumptions: Incident is so unique, severe and widespread that ESP cannot be relied on to fulfill critical functions.</p> <p>If incident is district(s)/Woodside specific critical functions remain the same and other available district staff resources may need to be reassigned.</p> <p>If incident is district(s) specific Central Office will defer to the local command structure (if in place) but communication/updates to Central Office would be frequent (hourly) and comprehensive.</p> <p>Woodside will always fall under the COCC</p>	<p>Staff and set - up Central Office Command Center (COCC) location.</p> <p>Primary location: Large 3rd floor conference room</p> <p>Re-location back-up: Barre district office</p>	<p>Operationalize and staff Command Center to coordinate implementation and coverage of critical functions (role assignment determined and filled by available on-site managers): Incident Commander; Operations Commander; Communications Commander; Business Commander; Develop scope and schedule for ongoing communications. Assign staff to work in “call center(s).” Receive full staff lists and make assignments, re-assignments as needed (or delegate this function to local Command Center(s) and set up schedule for reporting back to COCC.</p>	<p>COCC staffing needs will be dependent on type/geographical impact/extent of incident, but at a minimum there will be an Incident Commander and a Communications Commander.</p>	<p>Access to land lines or cell phones, laptops or desktops with access to State LAN, flat workspace, 2-way radios, battery powered radio, pens, pencils, paper tablets, water bottles.</p> <p>(If sheltering in place additional food, water, medications, medical kit, etc. may be necessary and will be available).</p>	<p>Non-essential meetings, program, policy or administrative work, unless related to command structure and coordination activities.</p>	<p>All available CO and/or district staff not in the command center or impacted district(s) or performing other functions will be made available for reassignment as needed/necessary, as determined by the Command Center Operations Commander or their local designee.</p>

	Critical Functions	Plan of Action	Staffing Needs	Equipment and System Needs	Services Suspended	Resources Available for Reassignment
	Contact and locate staff (all staff should be accounted for) from designated "call center."	Ascertain staff (Central Office and/or district staff) current location and possible future location; advise of potential re-assignment, or reassignment location if known, and emergency coverage role if appropriate. Advise suspension of non-critical activities (i.e. meetings, non-emergency casework activities, etc.) Document and present list of staff and their locations to COCC.	Would be determined by scope/locations of incident. Staff will be assigned to perform call center function by COCC Operations Commander or their local designee.	Access to land lines or cell phones, laptops or desktops with access to State LAN; flat workspace, 2-way radios, battery powered radio; pens; pencils; paper tablets; paper copy back-up of staff lists, and contact information (If sheltering in place additional food, water, medications, medical kit, etc. may be necessary and will be available).	Non-essential placement changes; court hearings, permanency hearings, visitation, case plan meetings, and any other non-critical casework activities and/or travel	Same as above.
	Identify and verify location of children/youth in foster homes and residential placements (in-state and out-of-state) by contacting foster parents/caregivers.	Document current location,; advise that they implement their emergency plan including evacuation if necessary; explain how and in what timeframes to contact agency staff with updated location information; assess and	Same as above.	Same as above. In addition: Format for electronic information collection (such as spreadsheet, Access program that can be shared across systems).	Non-essential placement changes; court hearings, permanency hearings, visitation, case plan meetings, and any other non-critical meetings and/or travel.	Same as above.

		record any new urgent needs (such as hospitalization, re-location to Woodside, medication) and develop plan to address new urgent needs.* RLU staff to conduct background checks for additional emergency placement re-location resources and waive restrictions on licensed capacity where appropriate/essential.		2-way radios, battery powered radio, pens, pencils, paper tablets, Paper copy back up of client lists, essential ongoing needs, foster parent contact information.		
	Locate and contact biological/primary parents of children/youth in out of home care	Provide situation update/appropriate additional information, such as staff assignment, reassurance and/or child location to parents, inform parent/caretaker of suspension of non-critical services (see Services Suspended column)	(Same as above)	(Same as above with the addition of: parent contact information.)	Non-essential conversation on case plan, custody issues, specific schedule for visitation after emergency ends, etc. Provide additional responses to any other anticipated questions specific to the event as developed and provided by the COCC Communications Commander.	Same as above

	Critical Functions	Plan of Action	Staffing Needs	Equipment and System Needs	Services Suspended	Resources Available for Reassignment
	Protocol/access for incoming calls from staff, parents, foster parents, residential care providers	Exploring option of mutual agreement with 2-1-1- system for managing incoming consumer concern and informational calls. Disseminate incident communications/talking points to staff manning incoming calls.	(Same as above)	Access to State LAN for foster care payroll, client information etc. format for information collection (such as spreadsheet, Access program that can be shared across systems). Paper copy back up of client lists, essential ongoing needs, foster parent information.	.(Same as above)	(Same as above)
	Intake and Investigative function	Ascertain if circumstances are life threatening. If so take report and staff to respond. Record all other contact information for later follow-up. If known, communicate when full operations will be back in place. If not known, strategize a brief safety/follow-up plan with caller.	Would be determined by scope/locations of incident. Staff will be assigned by COCC Operations Commander or their local designee	Access to land lines or cell phones, laptops or desktops with access to State LAN for foster care payroll, client information etc. Format for electronic information collection (such as spreadsheet, Access program that can be shared across systems). 2-way radios, battery powered radio, pens,	Limited to life-threatening threshold defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traumatic physical injury • Inter-familial sexual abuse 	(See above)

				pencils, paper tablets, Paper copy back up of client lists, essential ongoing needs, foster parent contact information.		
Over 72 hours						
All previous assumptions and critical functions apply, with the addition of:						
	Foster care Payroll Adoption subsidies	Coordinate with Business Office to implement previously-developed plan for continuation of payments. Assure receipt of foster parent contact information (either electronic if available, or paper lists) from staff responsible for verifying foster parent location(s) and payment amounts.	Would be determined by scope/locations of incident. Staff will be assigned by COCC Operations Commander or their local designee	Access to land lines or cell phones, laptops or desktops with access to State LAN for foster care payroll, client information etc.	Negotiation of new rates, reimbursement of expenses related to emergency and relocation expenses, etc.	(See above)