

The Pinnacle Plan, if implemented well, will improve Oklahoma's foster care system. However, the number of children found in harm's way and being placed in OKDHS custody is increasing making Oklahoma's foster care system even larger. The plan initiatives are designed to ensure safety and permanency for children in the foster care system, but Oklahoma must also focus on reducing abuse and neglect of children. From SFY11 to SFY12, abuse and neglect of children increased in Oklahoma.

- The number of child abuse and neglect referrals increased by 2%.
- The number of substantiated child abuse and neglect reports increased by 20%.
- More substantiated reports resulted in an 18% increase in children removed from their homes.
- The number of children in OKDHS custody increased by 11%.
 - At the end of SFY11, there were 8,206 children in OKDHS custody.
 - At the end of SFY12, there were 9,132 children in OKDHS custody.
- Today, there are 9,797 children in OKDHS custody.

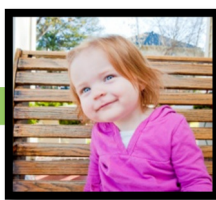
OKDHS is well underway with implementing the plan initiatives and ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of Oklahoma's children and families. Improvement is occurring at all stages beginning with the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. The hotline has increased the number answered calls vs. dropped calls and improved the wait times of callers. When exceptions occur, management is drilling down to the specific call times, identifying barriers, and implementing solutions. At the end of the process, children are being safely reunified with their parents or adopted as timely as possible. While improvement is being made, OKDHS recognizes more is expected and is focused on implementing all initiatives in the Pinnacle Plan.

PINNACLE POINT 1– We must expand quality placement options and supports to ensure safety of children in out-of-home care, reduce utilization of shelter care, improve placement stability, and achieve positive permanency outcomes.

Update – 1,376 new resource homes have been approved YTD, which is a record pace and on target to meet goal of nearly 2000 homes. This includes family foster homes (contracted, shelter host, and emergency homes) and adoptive homes, but does not include kinship homes. Seventy-three (73) therapeutic foster care (TFC) homes were approved YTD and the goal is 150. Children under the age of 2 years are no longer being cared for in shelters unless part of a large sibling group or an infant with a teen mother. We are confident the goal of placing children under 6 years old with families rather than shelters can be reached by June 30, 2013. Today's daily shelter report lists 258 children in shelters statewide with 18 children between 2-5 years old; 110 children between 6-12 years old; and 130 between 13-17 years old. On March 8, 2013, foster care recruitment contracts were awarded to 10 agencies covering 24 districts. Three districts in Northwest Oklahoma had no proposals so they will be resubmitted. The online application for prospective foster parents has been developed and is in pilot status. Reimbursement rates were increased in Fall 2012. Staff has been hired to assist with the trauma-informed system project and the pilot work continues in 6 sites around the state. This work includes trauma screenings for children entering the system and improved service coordination with providers.

Initiatives (SFY 2013 and SFY 2014)

- 9/30/12: Complete RFP for recruitment and retention of resource family homes.
- 12/31/12: Time to approval of foster parents is 60 days.
- 6/30/13: Develop an online application process for prospective foster parents
- 6/30/13: Increase reimbursement rates (over five year period)
- 6/30/13: Increase usage of Child's Passport by resource parents
- 6/30/13: Ensure resource parents have adequate information at placement



- 6/30/13: All children 6 and under will be placed in family-like setting
- 6/30/13: No children are placed in unapproved, non-relative placement
- 6/30/13: Develop a matching system for children and available homes
- 7/1/13: Increase number of FTMs to prevent placement disruptions
- 7/1/13: Increase percentage of notifications to tribes
- 9/30/13: Improve training and support of resource parents
- 12/31/13: Increase number of initial meetings being held
- 3/1/14: Submit for approval a contract for performance-based contracts
- 4/1/14: Develop a process to match children over 13 years to an appropriate level of care
- 6/30/14: All children under 13 will be placed in family-like setting
- 12/31/14: Increase percentage of children receiving trauma screenings at entry

PINNACLE POINT 2 – We must create a system with clear delineation of roles, effective lines of communication, and accountability throughout the system.

Update – Child Welfare Services is fully integrated into one division (effective October 16, 2012). Management is focused on supporting the front-line staff, implementing the Pinnacle Plan, improving leadership effectiveness and teamwork, and accountability throughout the system. All initiatives for this point were completed.

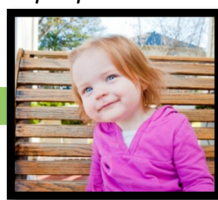
Initiatives (SFY 2013)

- 1/1/13: Clarification of roles with written job descriptions and revised performance evaluations
- 1/1/13: Examine program areas to decentralize decision making processes
- 1/1/13: Examine case consultation to ensure accountability for recommendations
- 1/1/13: Develop a schedule for regular team meetings in CWS.
- 1/1/13: Finalize annual in-service training regarding roles and responsibilities, and structure

PINNACLE POINT 3- We must increase the number of staff, reduce turnover, and continue to improve the experience level and practice competencies of staff responsible for the day-to-day work on child welfare cases.

Update – In November/December, 100 new worker positions were posted and subsequently filled. The Child Welfare Workforce Analysis document was presented and approved by the Co-Neutrals. This document explains how caseload/workload will be measured and lays out the roadmap for how OKDHS will meet the caseload standards by June 30, 2014. What is the current status of caseload standards? In December 2012, 24% of the workers were meeting caseload standards. In January 2013, 26.5% were meeting standards. In February 25.3% were meeting standards. Note: this only counts workers doing investigations, prevention and permanency cases. We are still working on the methodology for foster care and adoption workers as their caseloads are very different.

Because of this analysis, it became very apparent that hiring and training new workers must be accelerated in order to meet the timeline for caseload standards. The analysis shows the need to hire and train 78 workers per month over the next 10 months so they can be trained and ready to carry full caseloads by next summer. This includes the number of workers lost each month through regular turnover but also includes new positions that had to be allocated. Beginning February 25, 2013, 30 additional worker positions will be posted every two weeks until an additional 100 new worker positions are posted and filled. In addition to new worker positions, 60 new supervisor positions were posted in order to reach the 1:5 supervisor/worker ratio and additional supervisor positions will be posted to keep up with the additional worker positions. Next, 126 Child Welfare Assistant



positions will be posted. These positions will be very helpful in reducing the administrative burden on child welfare workers. Beginning July 2013, 95 additional worker positions will be posted. We are seeing an increase in applicants interested in positions with child welfare which is encouraging. While creating new positions is critical to meeting standards, it is also critical to improve hiring and retention of the workforce. Many initiatives are underway including assessing current turnover trends and creating a targeted recruitment campaign for child welfare specialists

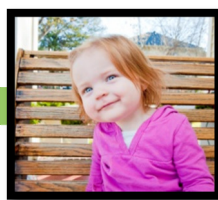
In September 2012, Hands on Testing (HOT) was implemented for all new CORE graduates. Passing this competency assessment is required prior to caseload assignment. The pass rate is high; however, 9 workers have not been successful in completing the testing even after remedial training and additional testing opportunities. They were not retained as employees. Four additional trainers were hired to assist with CORE training to accommodate the increase in new workers. The workgroup and design team is making progress on the certification for supervisors and workers. New smart phones will be rolled-out to child welfare workers and supervisors in June 2013. The specific devices have been piloted and were found to best meet the needs of field staff for email access, a camera, internet access, Map Quest, and texting. This will be very helpful to child welfare staff considering most of their work is conducted in the field. In Fall 2012, new starting salaries for child welfare workers were implemented and salaries for all staff was adjusted accordingly.

Initiatives (SFY 2013 and SFY 2014)

- 6/30/13: Set caseload standards with benchmarks to be set by Co-Neutrals
- Ongoing: Enhance practice as outlined in Oklahoma Trauma-Informed Systems Project (OTISP)
- 6/30/13: Focus on recruiting staff with social work related degrees
- 9/1/13: Develop a workload tracking system
- 6/30/13: Request additional child welfare positions
- 6/30/13: Focus on recruitment and onboarding strategies for child welfare staff
- 9/1/12: Competency evaluation prior to caseload assignment is required for all new staff
- 12/1/12: Develop an administrative support job for child welfare specialists
- 1/1/13: Stop use of secondary assignments in contiguous counties
- 6/30/13: Provide updated technology
- 6/30/13: Increase pay for child welfare staff over a five year period
- 7/1/13: Incorporate realistic job previews and selection factors for selecting workers
- 7/1/13: Create an intensive training program for child welfare supervisors
- 7/1/13: Hire licensed clinicians for Oklahoma Trauma-Informed Systems Project
- 7/1/13: Implement certification program for child welfare specialists I-IV
- 1/1/14: Eliminate secondary assignments statewide

PINNACLE POINT 4 – We must use the practice model to achieve timely and appropriate permanency for all children in out-of-home care.

Update – 325 children were identified whose parental rights were terminated; however, they did not have an adoptive family. Focus on these children has resulted in 73 children being placed with families. An adoption matching party was held this month in OKC with over 100 children and over 75 prospective adoptive parents attending. More volunteers helped than any previous party showing great community support. Efforts to work with small private agencies have been initiated. These private agencies feel they have families that would want to adopt. OKDHS is encouraged by this new partnership and is hopeful more families can be reached.



The RFP was submitted for intensive case management services for youth in group homes; however, no proposals were received. The RFP will be revised and resubmitted with the hope of attracting providers who will work diligently to help youth in group homes achieve permanency. These funds are set aside and obligated in anticipation of awards. Oklahoma County is working on their strategic plan for improving communication between courts, OKDHS, district attorney's office and other partners.

Initiatives (SFY 2013 and SFY 2014)

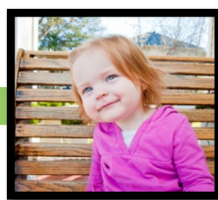
- 6/30/13: Implementation of the Casey Strategic Plan in Region 3
- Ongoing: Implementation of the Oklahoma Trauma Informed Systems Project
- 9/30/12: Identify children who are legally free with no identified placement (325)
- 6/30/13: RFP to assist with intensive case management services for older youth
- 12/31/12: Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) for youth 16 and older who are legally free
- 6/30/13: Family Team Meetings (FTMs) completed on all new permanency planning cases
- Ongoing: Increase family visitation when case plan goal is reunification
- Ongoing: Explore reinstatement of parental rights for youth in runaway status (if appropriate)
- 6/30/13: Request an interim study exploring the agency representation model
- Ongoing: Conduct analysis on cases where Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has not occurred
- Ongoing: FTM to prevent disruption of trial adoptive placements
- Ongoing: Analyses of regions 3 and 5 adoption cases. Implement strategies to shorten timeframe.
- Ongoing: Conduct a pilot for a parenting curriculum and support model for adoptive families
- 12/31/13: Use tools to evaluate engagement of families
- Ongoing: Expand use of court ordered mediation in Region 3

PINNACLE POINT 5 – We must know if the work is of good quality, be transparent about the outcomes, and hold all staff (front-line, management, and program) and providers accountable.

Update - This initiative has required the creation of 12 new quality assurance positions. The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) team spent last quarter conducting focus groups within all five regions across the state. The purpose of the groups was to assist in retention and agency development at all levels by improving communication and practice. The focus was to brainstorm ideas and obtain feedback from multiple levels of the division to strengthen the OKDHS Child Welfare continuous quality improvement processes. Additionally, a significant amount of time has been spent researching practices in other states, peer to peer networking, and on seeking input and feedback through technical assistance with the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NRCOI). A workgroup has convened to look at all five components of an effective CQI system as outlined in the Information Memorandum from Administration of Children and Families (ACF) regarding "Establishing and Maintaining CQI Systems in State Child Welfare Agencies". The work group has begun looking at the current reality of our system, strengths, weaknesses, and brainstorming of solutions related to each of the five regions with a goal of developing a comprehensive CQI Plan.

Initiatives (SFY 2013 and SFY 2014)

- 7/1/13: Submit CQI plan to Co-Neutrals and implement by 9/1/13



PINNACLE POINT 6 – We must ensure the safety of children, including children in out-of-home care. We must also ensure children receive regular visitation by the assigned child welfare specialist to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

Update – Beginning November 1, 2012, all reports are sent through the abuse and neglect hotline with prioritization and screening in accordance to Child Welfare Child Protective Services (CPS) guidelines. This includes reports involving abuse and neglect at facilities, shelters, and residential facilities that were previously processed through the Office for Client Advocacy (OCA). Protocol was established for informing facility licensing agencies, Office of Juvenile Affairs and Oklahoma Child Care Licensing to receive notice of all screened out and assigned referrals for children placed in facilities. Residential care home providers were provided training on the new process for reporting and investigation of reports to Office of Client Advocacy (OCA). Beginning December 1, 2012, OCA began efforts to initiate all reports according to CPS policy for assigned priority. This significantly shortened the required timeframe for their response.

Beginning January 1, 2013, notification to assigned child welfare specialist is being provided by OCA when report is accepted. Previously the child welfare specialist did not receive any notification when a child was alleged to be maltreated in higher levels of care. The child welfare computer system (KIDS) is being modified so this information can be documented, tracked, and reported to the federal government. These modifications are expected to be completed in April 2013.

Beginning January 1, 2013, secondary caseworkers were eliminated for children in contiguous counties impacting over 1500 children. The children are now visited by their primary worker who also has responsibility to report their progress to the court.

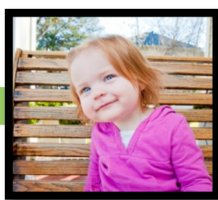
Initiatives (SFY 2013 and SFY 2014)

- Ensure consistency in response to allegations of abuse or neglect when child is in out of home care by making changes in OCA practice and policy to align with CPS policy
- 7/1/13: Children in out of home care are visited at least two times in placement during the first month of placement
- 12/1/13: Children in out of home care are visited at least two times in placement during the first two months of placement

PINNACLE POINT 7 – We must engage community partners, other state agencies, the private sector, and Tribes in supporting children and families involved in the child welfare system. OKDHS cannot do it alone.

Update – The focus is on strengthening current partnerships and building new ones. As mentioned in Pinnacle Point 4, a new partnership has been created with private adoption agencies to assist with matching families with children. New partnerships were created with 9 agencies for recruiting and supporting new foster families moving forward, but two additional partnerships were created outside the bidding process. One group, Count Me In 4 KIDS, is comprised of Oklahoma leaders focused on bringing awareness and support to children in foster care. They are currently building their membership and vision. Another group, Wait No More, is a national group supporting child welfare agencies in holding large recruitment events that have proven successful in other states. These events are supported by faith and business communities. Oklahoma's event is in the early planning stages so hopefully this will turn into an amazing event at no cost to the agency.

OKDHS staff continues to focus on closer collaboration with Tribes and is in the process of hiring tribal liaisons for every region to strengthen the local relationships and improve compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act.



OKDHS is working closely with the District Attorney's Council and law enforcement entities in reexamining the joint response protocols for any needed updates or adjustments. OKDHS continues working closely with the youth services agencies to identify the greatest need for services in the local communities as they shift their business model anticipating a reduction in shelter usage. They have been great partners and are willing to meet identified needs moving forward. There is also ongoing work with the TFC agencies to improve recruitment and retention efforts of TFC families.

The statewide services collaborative (a partnership between OCCY and OKDHS) is focused heavily on the first site (Pottawatomie County) in bringing the community together to meet the needs of families. A community assessment group has formed with strong leadership from the Judge and other leaders in the community. This local group will identify service gaps and find a way to meet those needs. The statewide group is providing technical assistance and support to their efforts. This model brings great hope to how services can be improved at the local level while also supporting efforts through the statewide leadership team.

OKDHS is creating a survey for all child welfare staff to help with identifying service needs in their communities. This information will be critical to understanding the gaps at a statewide level and crafting a plan for how to meet the needs. The Comprehensive Home-Based Services (CHBS) program was also expanded this SFY to ensure families are served timely. CHBS is the in-home services model available statewide serving over 1200 families per year. Their focus is on safely maintaining children in their homes by preventing removal and ensuring safe reunifications. The program is designed around the well-researched SafeCare Model.

Initiatives (SFY 2013 and SFY 2014)

- Collaborate with ODMHSAS to increase the number of children involved in Systems of Care
- Finalize two-year strategic plan focused on recruitment and support of resource families
- Conduct online survey to child welfare staff to assess service gaps, conduct analyses, and develop strategies
- With youth services agencies and other agencies, create a statewide plan to identify more effective services for families.
- Annually assess the need to expand Comprehensive Home-Based Services (CHBS)
- Partner with Oklahoma Child Welfare Stakeholder Collaboration State Advisory Board for Improving Services, and during year one conduct a study in two communities to determine existing service gaps
- 6/30/13: Update joint response protocols
- (SFY 2014): Collaborate with Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Association (OICWA) for strategic plan for improving outcomes for Native American children
- Finalize protocols to coordinate services for victims of domestic violence
- Explore possibility of offering community services to families involved in screened out Hotline referrals
- Work with Oklahoma Schools of Social to increase the number of students enrolled in Child Welfare Professional Enhancement Program (CWPEP)

