



## A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CASEWORKER TURNOVER WITHIN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

As every parent knows, children need stability and consistency. For children involved in the child welfare system, who often come from and continue to live in chaotic circumstances, a caseworker may be their only continuous and stable relationship. High caseworker turnover, however, disrupts continuity and stability. To address this problem, this policy paper analyzes turnover data on Texas' child protective services (CPS) caseworkers and makes recommendations about how turnover can be reduced.

### **Executive Summary**

Before 2008, a spate of negative publicity, legislative reform efforts, and internal restructuring combined with dropping unemployment appear to have created a “perfect storm,” severely undermining CPS’ workforce stability. And once stability was compromised, it fed on itself. High turnover led to a growing number of unfilled positions and a less experienced workforce which increased the workload for the remaining workers, begetting even more turnover. But recent trends show that things are improving. In 2008, turnover declined and workers were more satisfied with almost every aspect of CPS and their job.

Going forward, economic uncertainty and increasing unemployment rates mean that there will be fewer other job options, making individuals less likely to take a risk by quitting a good state job. The silver lining in a bad economy is that it creates a captive workforce for CPS, temporarily interrupting the self-perpetuating cycle of turnover.

But to ensure that cycle of turnover does not start up again when economic conditions improve, DFPS needs to use this window of opportunity to create a workforce that actually *wants* to stay.<sup>1</sup> To create a desire to stay, studies have consistently found that professional and organizational commitments are key.<sup>2</sup> Specific recommendations for creating a workforce that is

committed child welfare work and to CPS as an organization are discussed on page 11.

In addition to engendering an overall sense of organizational and professional commitment, DFPS needs to address specific issues with respect to the front-line functional units—investigations, family based safety services (FBSS) and conservatorship (CVS). DFPS needs to establish relative pay parity among investigators, FBSS, and CVS so new workers are not self-selecting into investigations and established workers are not transferring into investigations just because of a higher salary. DFPS also needs to further refine the type of worker who is suited to an investigative position so it can identify appropriate candidates. At the same time, DFPS must recognize that investigations is a high stress position and develop ways to encourage those who burn out to consider transferring into another CPS unit, when appropriate.

Finally, caseloads for FBSS and CVS should be reduced and caseloads for investigations should be kept at a manageable level.

### **Analysis**<sup>3</sup>

#### **How Should We Measure Turnover?**

Turnover measures how often workers leave their position while vacancies measure how many appropriated full time equivalent (FTE) positions are unfilled. Although the two measures are related and affect each other, they assess

different concepts. Turnover generally relates to workforce stability while vacancies generally relate to an organization's recruiting effectiveness. This paper focuses primarily on turnover which is more comprehensively measures an organization's workforce issues.

In its published reports, DFPS calculates turnover using the method required by the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), which calculates how many full time, regular employees left the agency either voluntarily or involuntarily.<sup>4</sup> The LBB measure, however, is limited and does not allow for a full understanding of workforce issues and how they should be addressed.

First, the LBB measure does not provide a comprehensive view of workforce stability. From a stability perspective, turnover should include every time workers with direct case management responsibilities leave their position. This "overall turnover" would include not only workers who leave the child welfare agency but also those who transfer to different positions within the agency, either laterally or through a promotion.

After all, the child or family does not care why the worker changed, only that they now must establish a relationship with someone new, which often delays or disrupts services and the case plan. Turnover also affects families with

workers who have not left. While recruiting, hiring and training new workers for the vacant positions, remaining workers must manage the cases of departing workers. This increases caseloads and reduces the time and energy spent on any individual child or family.

Second, the LBB measure does not allow insight into the different types of turnover. From an administrative perspective a certain level of turnover is unavoidable and can even be necessary. Unavoidable turnover occurs when a worker's life circumstances change such as retirement, moving or starting a family.<sup>5</sup> Necessary turnover occurs when workers who provide poor service leave either involuntarily or voluntarily.<sup>6</sup> It also includes those who leave their position because they are promoted. Finally, necessary turnover may also include lateral transfers to the extent it retains effective workers within the agency that would otherwise have left.

### CPS Turnover

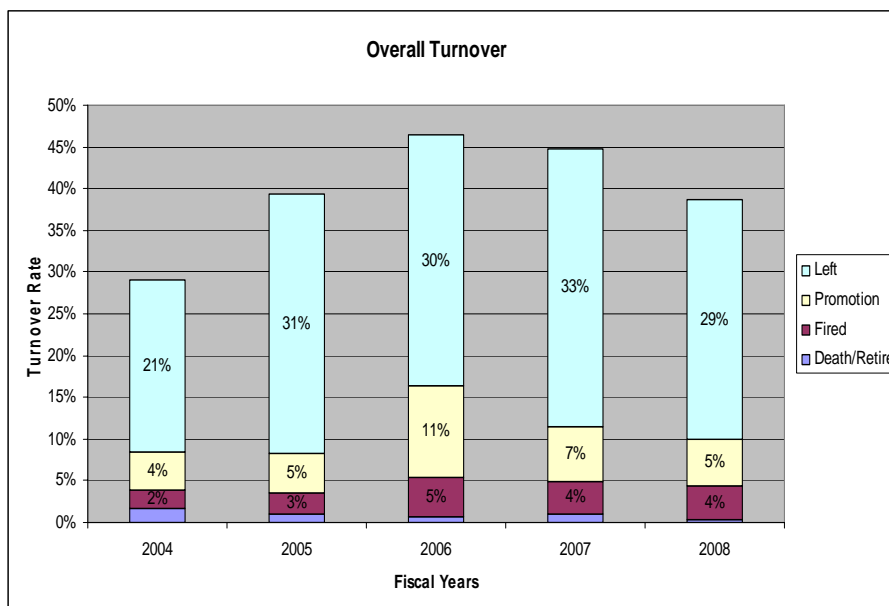
This section analyzes turnover trends both within the general CPS worker population as well as within the various front-line functional units.<sup>7</sup> Due to the geographic and demographic diversity in Texas, turnover trends among the various regions in Texas likely differ.<sup>8</sup> Such a regional analysis, however, exceeds the scope of this policy paper. We will look at regional trends separately and if

significant differences exist, we will address them in a follow up policy paper.

### Turnover Trends among CPS Workers

Prior to 2006, DFPS did not track transfers within CPS. Accordingly, for consistency, Figure 1 shows the overall turnover rate and its various components from 2004 through 2008 for all CPS caseworkers excluding transfers within CPS.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 1



In 2004, several high profile tragedies occurred regarding children involved with CPS.<sup>10</sup> These tragedies prompted the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature to initiate a comprehensive reform of CPS in 2005 through Senate Bill 6 (SB 6).<sup>11</sup> The 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature continued the reform efforts in 2007 through Senate Bill 758 (SB 758).<sup>12</sup> As Figure 1 illustrates, during this period, CPS experienced significant turnover.

After the tragedies and the accompanying negative media coverage, overall turnover increased significantly—from 29 percent in 2004 to 39 percent in 2005. After the comprehensive reforms enacted in SB 6, overall turnover increased again to 47 percent in 2006 and remained high in 2007 at 45 percent. In 2008, overall turnover declined to 39 percent, but remains much higher than in 2004.

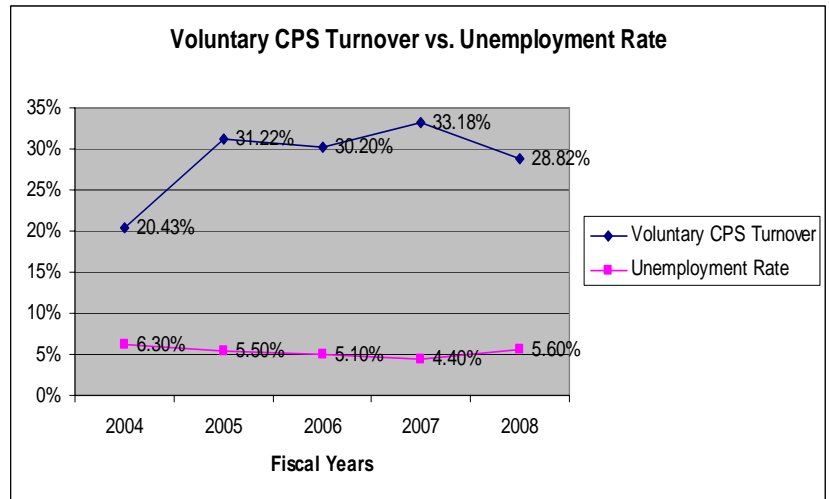
As illustrated in Figure 1, the primary component of overall turnover is voluntary turnover, which measures those who chose to leave CPS. In 2005, voluntary turnover increased 52 percent—from 20 percent in 2004 to 31 percent in 2005. The high rate of voluntary turnover continued into 2006 at 30 percent. In 2007, the rate climbed even higher to 33 percent and then in 2008 it dropped back down to 29 percent.

### Factors Contributing to Higher Turnover in 2005-2007

Part of these trends may be due to Texas' economy. The Texas State Auditor's Office found that during this period, as the unemployment rate declined, Texas' overall state worker turnover rate increased.<sup>13</sup> Figure 2 shows CPS turnover followed the same general trend.<sup>14</sup>

This inverse relationship may exist because as unemployment decreases, job opportunities increase and the risk of changing jobs may seem less, both of which can be factors in employees voluntarily leaving an organization.<sup>15</sup> But changes in the unemployment rate are not perfectly correlated to changes in voluntary turnover—

Figure 2



in 2006 the unemployment rate decreased but the voluntary turnover rate decreased as well.

Moreover, even in years where the inverse relationship holds, it seems unlikely that changes in the unemployment rate alone cause voluntary turnover rate changes. For example, in 2005 the unemployment rate dropped about 13 percent while the voluntary turnover rate increased 52 percent. As a result, several factors likely caused voluntary turnover rate changes.

With the storm of negative media coverage regarding CPS in 2004 and 2005, many caseworkers probably felt disheartened and devalued. Caseworkers often cite such feelings as a primary reason for leaving child welfare work.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, SB 6, enacted in 2005, included a mandate to privatize the majority of CPS post-investigative activities.<sup>17</sup> This probably added to caseworkers' dispirited and discouraged feelings and put them in fear of losing their jobs. But more importantly, it likely made caseworkers less committed to CPS as an organization. Low organizational commitment is an important factor in caseworker turnover.<sup>18</sup> Combine this with a dropping unemployment rate, and the mass exodus from CPS is not surprising.

Although eventually the negative publicity died down and privatization was reduced to a five percent pilot project in SB 758, 2006 and 2007 saw massive internal changes at

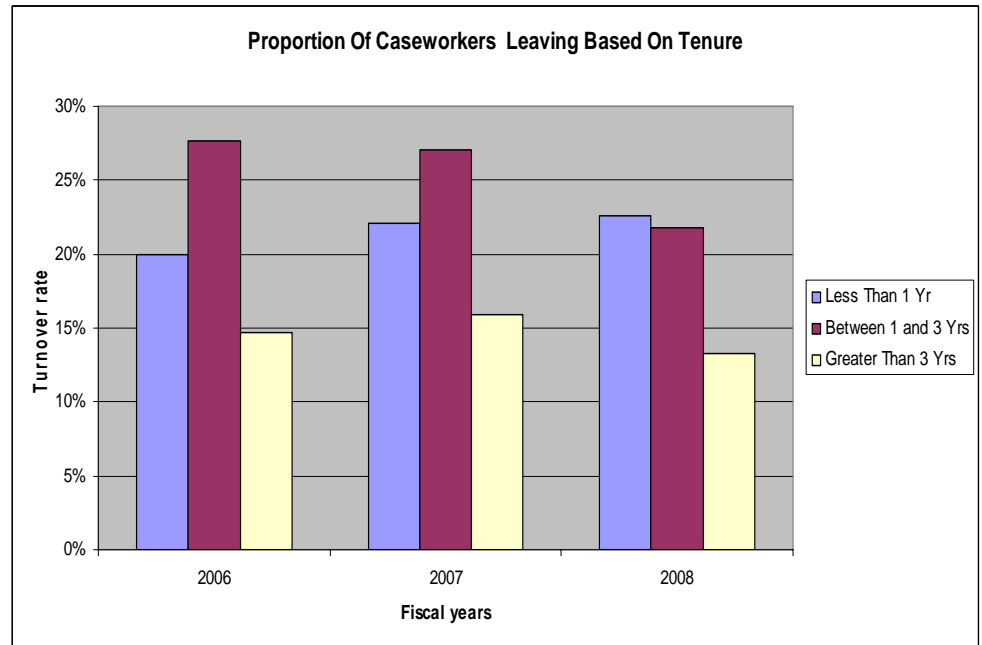
CPS. In 2006, CPS initiated a substantial restructuring, organizing its workforce into functional units.<sup>19</sup> This led to significant shuffling of personnel between the various units. In 2006, 17 percent of the caseworkers transferred between units, some more than once.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, CPS increased the average number of frontline caseworkers<sup>21</sup> and reduced the number of caseworkers assigned to each supervisor.<sup>22</sup> As a result, there was a significant need for new supervisors, increasing the rate of caseworker to supervisor promotion from 5 percent in 2005 to 11 percent in 2006. All of these moves likely created an internal atmosphere of confusion and instability which may have further undermined organizational commitment.

Due to turnover, by 2007, significantly fewer workers had CPS tenure. Looking at the tenure of those who left, as other studies have found,<sup>23</sup> the most experienced workers are least likely to voluntarily leave.<sup>24</sup>

But rebuilding their experience and tenure takes time as new workers replace the experienced ones who left. This outflow of experienced workers combined with the increase in promotions (which generally affect more tenured workers) and the expansion of the overall work force resulted in a larger proportion of the workers having a short DFPS tenure. Those with tenure of 3 years or less comprised about 52 percent of all caseworkers in 2004 versus 75 percent of all caseworkers in 2007.<sup>25</sup> Studies found that those with shorter child welfare agency tenure are more likely to leave,<sup>26</sup> presumably because they have not had time to develop both the organizational and professional commitment essential to retention.

Add a continued decline in the unemployment rate with the internal instability and growing proportion of short

Figure 3



tenured workers and it is not surprising that voluntary turnover rates remained high in 2006 and 2007.

### Factors Contributing to Lower Turnover In 2008

In 2008, however, the voluntary turnover rate fell. Part of this may have been due to the improvement in CPS employee attitudes and morale. In November 2001, DFPS and the Protective Services Training Institute (PSTI) began a comprehensive, longitudinal assessment (the PSTI assessment) that included job stability and satisfaction among caseworkers who completed the Basic Skills Development (BSD) training program which all new CPS workers attend.<sup>27</sup> Looking at employees perceptions in 2005 compared to 2008,<sup>28</sup> workers are more satisfied with their job, their workloads and the available resources and opportunities.

In addition to PSTI assessments, state agency employees participate in a Survey of Excellence (SOE) every two years.<sup>29</sup> The SOE elicits employee attitudes on five dimensions: work group, accommodations (physical worker environment, pay and benefits), organizational features, information flow, and job satisfaction.<sup>30</sup> The SOE echoes the PSTI assessment findings as scores in 2008 increased in every dimension as compared to 2006.

The efforts DFPS initiated in 2006 to improve recruitment and retention may have begun taking effect, including improved training, assignment of mentors for new caseworkers, introducing mobile technology for workers, and leadership and training programs for supervisors.<sup>31</sup> Attitudes and perceptions may also have improved with the legislature's overt commitment to CPS as an ongoing entity through increasing its budget and reducing privatization to a 5 percent pilot project.<sup>32</sup> This improvement in attitude and perceptions combined with rising unemployment likely contributed to the voluntary turnover rate decline in 2008.

### **But Workers Are Still Comparably Dissatisfied**

The voluntary turnover rate still remains much higher as compared to 2004, indicating CPS still has work to do. Based on comparable SOE responses, CPS still lags in employee perceptions. In 2008, CPS scored lower on every dimension of the SOE as compared to DFPS as a whole and as compared to other agencies with similar missions.<sup>33</sup>

Given the large proportion of short-tenured workers, it may be that CPS has not fully recovered the sense of organizational commitment lost in the recent turmoil. As organizational commitment is an important component of retention<sup>34</sup>, DFPS should focus on it in the future.

### **Possible Contributing Factors**

#### **Centralization of the Hiring Process**

In 2003, the 78<sup>th</sup> Legislature mandated a consolidation of the various health and human service agencies.<sup>35</sup> As part of the consolidation, it eliminated the human resource departments in each agency and consolidated all administrative functions into the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).<sup>36</sup> Prior to the consolidation, DFPS' human resource department took care of the administrative part of the hiring process, posting job openings, conducting an initial screening of candidates and making the official job offer.

But the supervisor for the unit in which the caseworker would be assigned interviewed potential candidates and selected the one to be hired. Consolidation computerized

the hiring process, and supervisors were required to do both the administrative and substantive parts of the process. This proved extremely cumbersome for supervisors especially given the large number of new hires.

So in 2006 DFPS started using centralized "Hiring Specialists" to post, recruit, interview, select and hire direct delivery staff.<sup>37</sup> Although this relieved an administrative burden from supervisors, it also reduced their involvement in choosing the actual caseworker who would be working in their unit.<sup>38</sup> The relationship between a supervisor and a caseworker is a crucial factor in retention.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, social support from co-workers can also affect retention.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, social support is so important that even in situations of a stressful job, social support helps maintain caseworkers' attachment to the organization.<sup>41</sup>

Personality and temperament as much as skill and ability can affect the relationship between a supervisor and other team members. By limiting the role of the supervisor in the hiring process, DFPS may be inhibiting the supervisor's ability to establish a relationship with the new worker. It also loses important insight into the social dynamics of each unit and so may inadvertently be assigning workers to a unit to which they are not personally suited. This may help explain why the SOE responses indicate that team effectiveness was an area of concern for CPS in 2008.

#### **Recruiting Issues**

DFPS has not reduced the number of new hires (those with tenure of 1 year or less) that leave, and the proportion *increased*. In 2006, 20 percent of these workers left and in 2008 23 percent left.<sup>42</sup> The rising rate of new workers leaving may indicate that DFPS hires candidates who are ill-suited for child welfare work.

The responses to the PSTI assessment seem to support this conclusion. Part of the assessment compares responses of those who stayed with CPS versus those who subsequently left CPS.<sup>43</sup> The workers who eventually left felt less capable in almost every aspect of the job and they were less satisfied with almost every aspect of the job including

workload, advancement opportunities and organizational support.

The involuntary turnover trend seems to support this conclusion as well. If DFPS were hiring more CPS workers who were ill-suited for the job, one would expect an increase in involuntary turnover (e.g., those who were fired or dismissed). And, in fact, the involuntary turnover rate jumped from 2.5 percent in 2005 to over 4.5 percent in 2006 and remained at about 4 percent in 2007 and 2008.

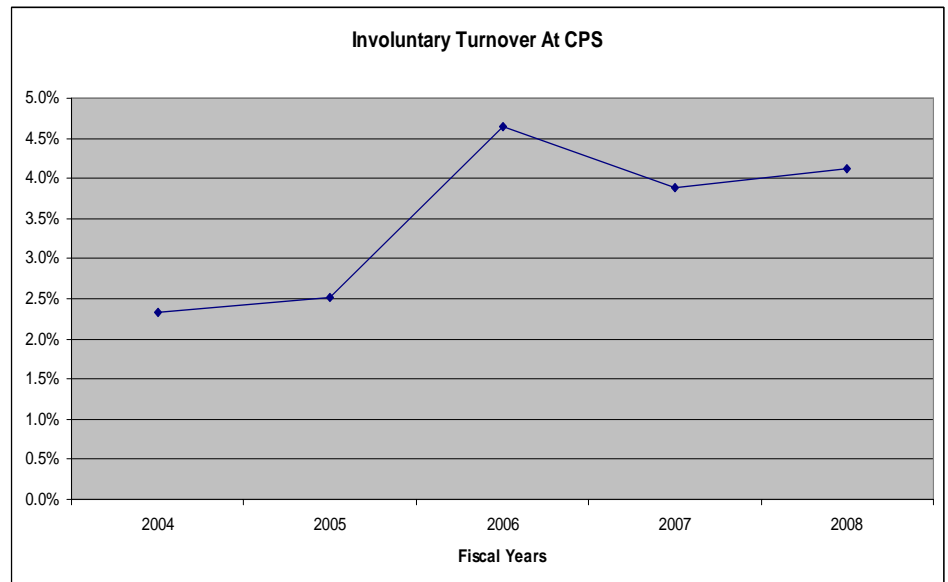
DFPS has initiated several reforms aimed at improving recruitment.<sup>44</sup>

DFPS contracts with various state universities to pay a stipend to students in social work programs who commit to working with CPS for a specified period of time.<sup>45</sup> In a 2004 national survey of child welfare agencies, more than 30 states had implemented a similar education program and 97 percent found it at least somewhat effective in improving recruitment.<sup>46</sup>

DFPS is also making proactive efforts to reach potential applicants attending job fairs and speaking engagements at colleges, universities and other community venues. DFPS also contracted with Career Builder, an employment website. DFPS proactively searches its database of resumes and notifies individuals meeting desired criteria about DFPS job openings in their areas. Individuals using Career Builders can also find DFPS job openings on the website and are directed to the HHSC's online job application portal.

Additionally, DFPS is making efforts to better identify well suited candidates. In 2006 it contracted with Performance Assessment Network (PAN) to create a pre-employment test to screen potential applicants. PAN looked at characteristics of successful CPS workers and created a test that would help identify those characteristics. The pre-employment test was subsequently validated in that individuals who scored higher on the pre-employment test

Figure 4



also scored higher on objective performance ratings. In its interviews DFPS also uses a behavioral interview guide to assess how candidates would respond in various work situations based on past experiences.

DFPS plans to create a scenario-based skills test that will expose applicants to scenarios they will likely face in the field and will require each applicant to produce a writing sample. DFPS also plans to create a realistic job preview video so applicants have an accurate overview of the job expectations and working conditions. Studies have found that employees who had realistic, clear role expectations are more likely to have a stated intention to remain.<sup>47</sup> Videos portraying a "day in the life" of a typical case worker have been found to be an effective tool for creating such expectations by helping ill-suited candidates screen themselves out.<sup>48</sup>

But at the same time, DFPS has faced difficult hiring circumstances for CPS workers. As discussed above, DFPS no longer uses supervisors to hire workers into their unit but relies on hiring specialists, who are not required to have any CPS or social work experience.<sup>49</sup> And with its high rate of voluntary turnover and growth in the overall workforce, DFPS has had to hire a large number of new

CPS caseworkers. As compared to 2004, in 2008 the number of new hires more than doubled from 875 to 2,146.<sup>50</sup>

As a result of this increased demand combined with the bad publicity, privatization mandate and structural reform discussed above, after 2004, working for CPS was probably not a highly attractive alternative, making it difficult to find enough highly qualified individuals.

### Failure to Engage Workers at the Outset

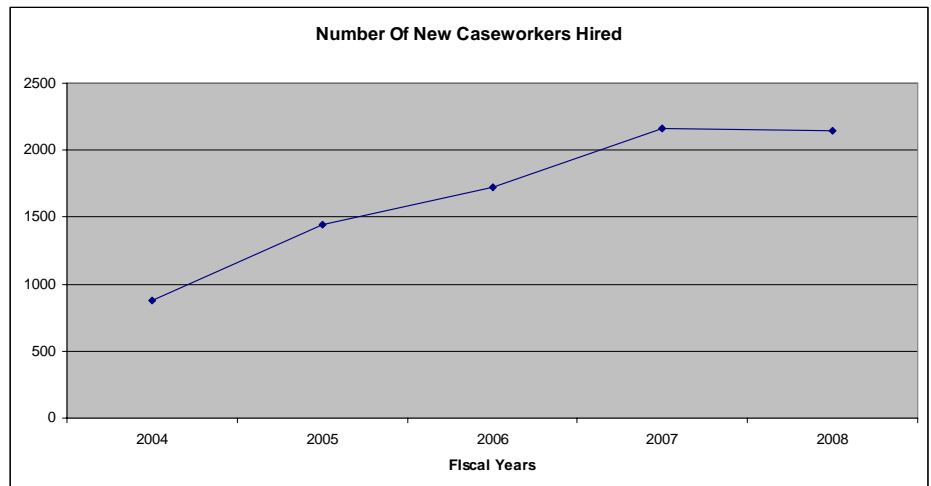
The PSTI assessment indicates that for workers who leave, CPS failed to engage them at the outset of their employment.<sup>51</sup> In the short period before the initial training began, those who subsequently left felt their supervisor, peer mentor and unit workers were less helpful in facilitating learning or creating enthusiasm for the job. This lack of connection continued through the initial training as those who completed the training but subsequently left CPS felt the trainers were less prepared and less responsive. After the initial training, the workers who eventually left continued to feel unconnected as they were less likely to feel that their supervisor, peer mentor, and unit workers facilitated learning or created enthusiasm for the job.

Some of this disengagement may reflect that workers who left are simply ill-suited to child welfare work as discussed above. But it may also demonstrate that first impressions matter and if CPS fails to engage workers at the beginning of their employment, it may never get the opportunity to do so later.

### Supervisor Effectiveness

As discussed above, a strong, supportive relationship between caseworkers and their immediate supervisors is essential for retention. In recognition of this important relationship, DFPS worked with the National Staff Development and Training Association and American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) to develop a

Figure 5



supervisor training toolkit designed to increase the effectiveness of new front-line supervisors.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to its supervisor training, since August 2007 Casey Family Programs has funded and partnered with APHSA to strengthen CPS leadership through a structured organizational continuous improvement methodology. From October, 2007 to May 2008 Casey worked with the Harris County conservatorship department which had experienced exceptionally high turnover. Then in May and June of 2008 Casey and APHSA provided leadership training and teambuilding support to leadership teams in the three regions that had new regional directors. DFPS felt that subsequent improvements in morale, communication, and leadership were so profound that it has since expanded the project to include all nine regional leadership teams.

Both the PSTI assessment and SOE responses show that scores on supervisor effectiveness improved. But supervisor effectiveness still remains an issue as caseworkers who left CPS felt their supervisor was less of a resource and that they received less guidance and emotional support as compared to caseworkers who stayed.

## Salaries and Turnover

No clear consensus exists regarding whether or how pay affects child welfare worker turnover.<sup>53</sup> In Texas, CPS minimum entry salary increased since 2006. The entry level salary was \$28,740 in 2006 for all caseworkers compared to \$35,202 for an investigator and \$31,640 for other caseworkers in 2008.<sup>54</sup> But despite these increases, both the SOE responses and the PSTI assessment indicate that CPS workers are less satisfied with pay in 2008 as compared to 2006. There is some basis for their dissatisfaction. The HHSC 2010-2011 consolidated budget report finds that average protective service worker salary<sup>55</sup> is \$34,216 versus a comparable market salary of \$39,669.<sup>56</sup>

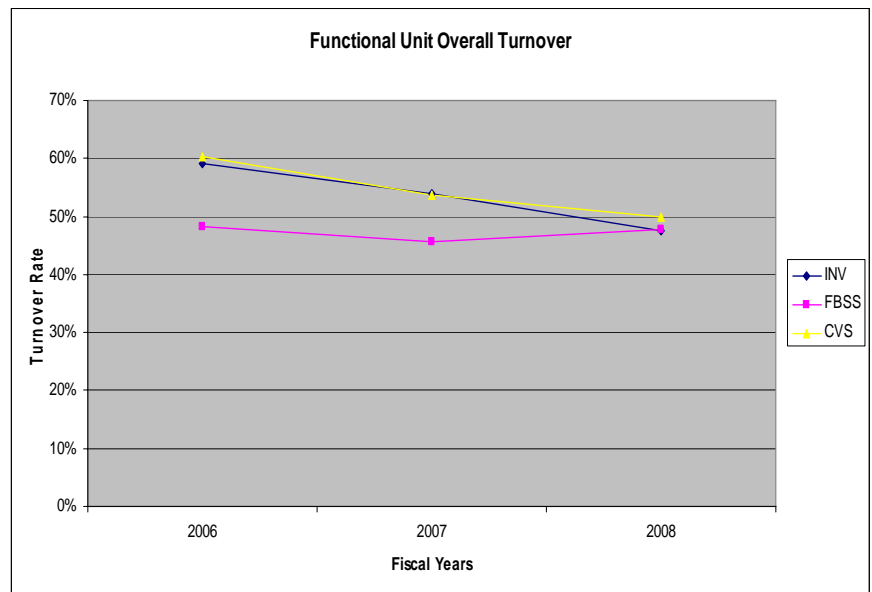
But the PSTI assessment suggests that pay does not directly cause caseworkers to leave. Those who stay at CPS are just as dissatisfied with their pay as those who leave.<sup>57</sup> CPS workers have a difficult job and, as a result, they may never feel adequately compensated for their efforts. But child welfare workers generally do not enter the field for the money. Instead, they choose the work so they can make a difference in people's lives.<sup>58</sup> This may help explain why workers appear dissatisfied with their pay but generally do not leave CPS because of it.

Although low salaries do not seem to be a direct force driving CPS workers to leave, they may still indirectly affect turnover. To some extent, salary reflects how much an organization values an employee. As a result, a low salary may make caseworkers feel CPS does not value their work and effort which may reduce caseworkers' organizational commitment.

## Functional Unit Turnover

In 2006, DFPS initiated a substantial administrative restructuring, dividing and reorganizing CPS' direct delivery staff into various functional units including investigations, FBSS and CVS.<sup>59</sup> Investigators determine whether to substantiate the initial allegation of abuse or

Figure 6



neglect, whether the family needs ongoing services and whether the child should be removed from the parent.<sup>60</sup> For families receiving ongoing services, FBSS workers manage cases where the child has not been removed, while CVS workers manage cases where the child has been removed and is in DFPS custody.<sup>61</sup>

Investigations and CVS had the highest overall turnover rate (which does include transfers within CPS) in 2006. But over time, the overall turnover rate for investigations and CVS declined, while overall turnover for FBSS remained relatively flat, so that in 2008, the overall turnover rate for all the functional units was essentially the same.

But the various components of overall turnover for the functional units are different, revealing different work force issues within each.

## Investigations

All investigative workers receive a \$5,000/year stipend not paid to other CPS workers.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, the average daily investigative caseload fell from 34.7 in 2006 to 21.9 in 2008—a 37 percent decline.<sup>63</sup> Concurrently, the average daily FBSS caseload remained stable at about 20.3 and the average daily CVS caseload declined from 44.5 to 37.3—a 16 percent decline.<sup>64</sup> But despite higher pay and



a greater reduction in caseloads<sup>65</sup>, investigative workers seem to be more unhappy with their work.

As the Figure 7 illustrates, investigators are more likely to voluntarily leave as compared to FBSS and CVS workers. Indeed, investigative voluntary turnover has not improved since 2006. In 2008 it was 33 percent—the same rate as in 2006.

Unfortunately, neither the PSTI assessment nor the SOE responses provide scores based on functional units so we lack direct evidence regarding investigators' attitudes. But investigations is a difficult job.<sup>66</sup> It is intense and can involve dangerous and volatile family situations and work after hours or on the weekends. And given that investigators make the decision about whether to remove the child, their interaction with the family can be combative and adversarial. As a result, investigators may experience more stress and emotional exhaustion compared to FBSS and CVS workers. Emotional exhaustion consistently predicts an intention to leave in caseworkers,<sup>67</sup> which may help explain the higher rate.

Part of the problem may also be a difficulty in finding candidates who are well suited to the position. Investigators are almost twice as likely to be fired or dismissed as compared to FBSS and CVS workers.

Given the job description, those with a law enforcement or criminal justice background might seem well-suited for the position. But both DFPS' recent experiences and academic research show that this is not the case. As part of its attempt to improve investigations, DFPS hired "special investigators" with a law enforcement background.<sup>68</sup> The

Figure 7

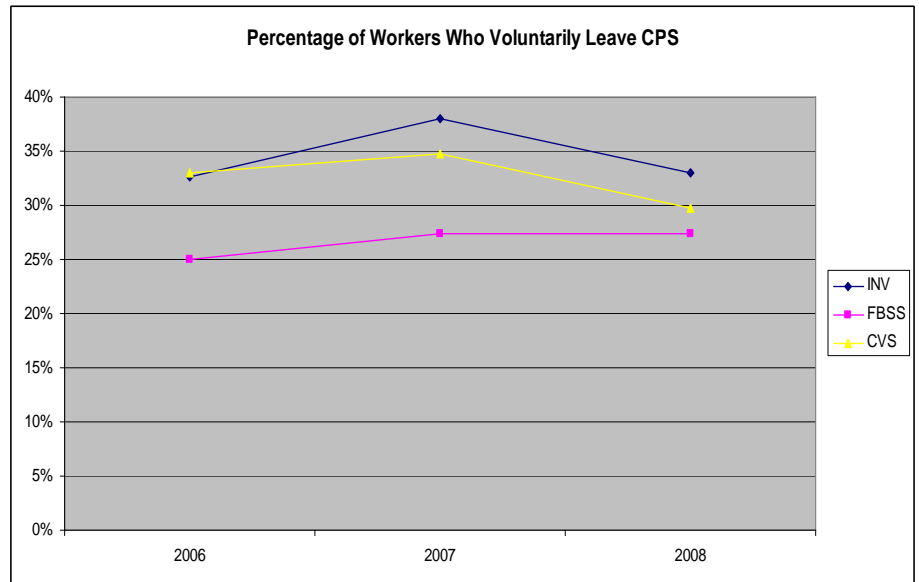
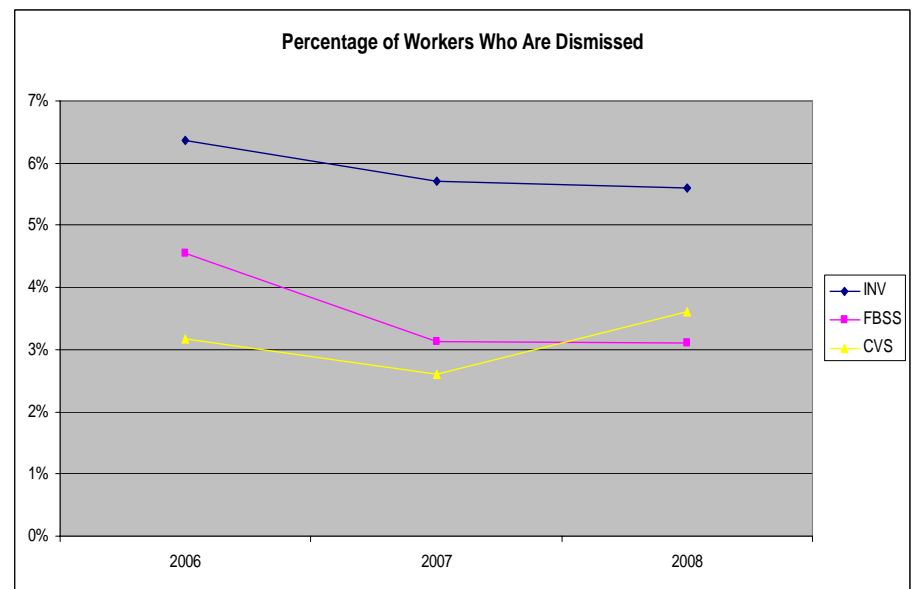


Figure 8



turnover for these individuals, however, has been even higher than that for regular investigators.<sup>69</sup> As a result, DFPS centralized the special investigators into a special unit that does not carry an actual caseload but acts in a consulting role.<sup>70</sup> DFPS' experience conforms to academic research finding that assigning investigations to law enforcement personnel generally did not improve outcomes.<sup>71</sup>

Those with an interest in social work also may not be suited to investigations. Traditional social work focuses on establishing ongoing relationships with families and children to improve outcomes. It also involves a collaborative effort working with families on a long-term basis to identify and resolve their underlying problems. For those looking for such work, investigations may not be a good fit because investigations focuses on a short-term assessment of risk to a child often in an intense and adversarial circumstance.

In addition to the problem of finding well-suited candidates, the financial disparity between investigations, on the one hand, and FBSS and CVS, on the other hand, may actually entice potential candidates better suited to an FBSS or CVS position to self-select into investigations. With the stipend, in 2008, an entry level FBSS or CVS worker makes \$31,640 and an entry level investigator makes \$35,202 – an 11 percent difference. Once in investigations, those ill-suited may still be less likely to transfer into another CPS position even though it may better meet their needs and skills because of the attendant loss of the \$5,000 stipend. And, in fact, investigators are much less likely than FBSS or CVS workers to transfer within CPS. In 2008, less than 4 percent of investigators transferred to another CPS unit while almost 10 percent of FBSS workers and almost 12 percent of CVS workers transferred.

Figure 9

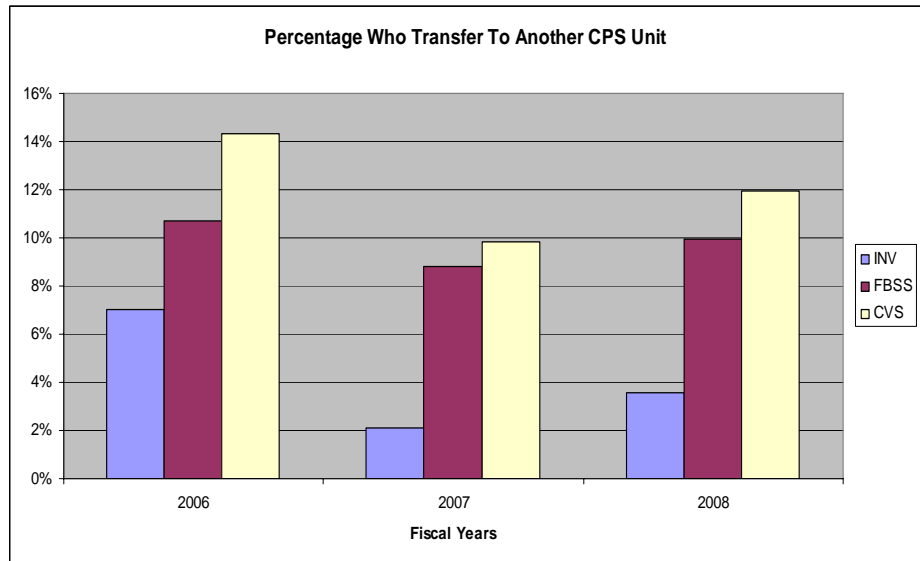
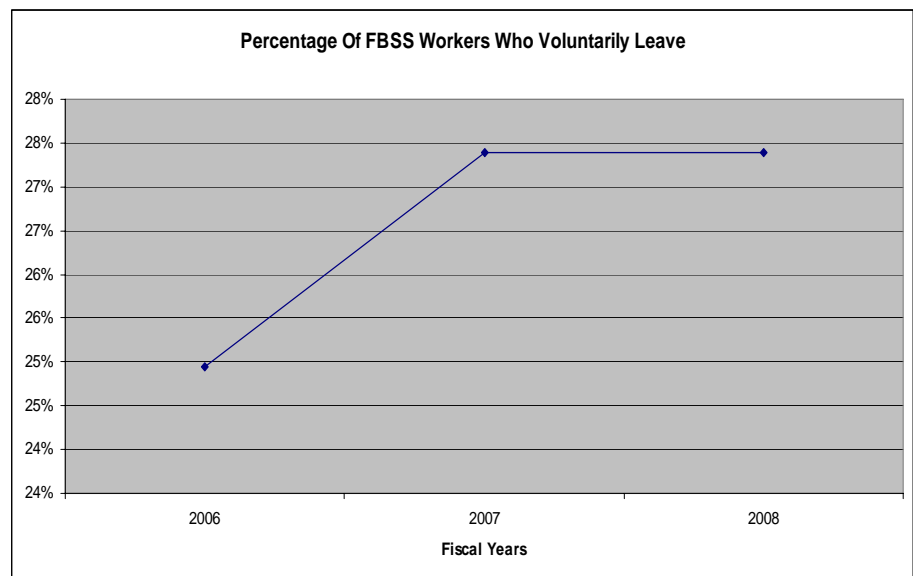


Figure 10



### FBSS and CVS

FBSS workers seem most satisfied with their job. As illustrated in Figure 7, they have the lowest level of voluntary turnover and as illustrated above, a lower level of transfers within CPS (as compared to CVS). They also have the lowest caseload. In 2008, they had a caseload of 20.3 compared to a CVS caseload of 37.3 and an investigative caseload of 21.9. In addition to their lower caseload, the cases they handle may be less complex than CVS cases. As the child has not been removed, the families' problems are arguably less difficult than those in

CVS. Additionally, the lack of court involvement means FBSS workers have less paperwork to complete and do not have to attend or testify at court hearings.

But the voluntary turnover rate for FBSS is increasing.

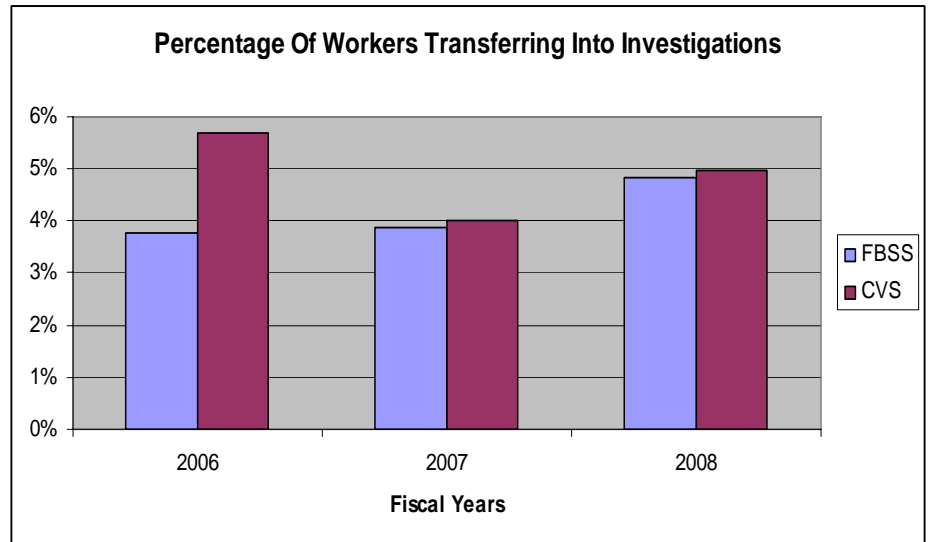
Given the limitations of the PSTI assessment and the SOE, we lack direct evidence regarding FBSS worker attitudes. But a greater proportion of newly opened cases are being referred to FBSS. Seventy-seven percent of newly opened cases in 2008 went to FBSS versus 67 percent in 2006.<sup>72</sup>

Given this trend, cases which previously would have been deemed difficult enough to warrant removal likely are now being handled in FBSS instead. If so, the average FBSS case is more complex so that even with caseloads remaining stable, the overall workload for an FBSS worker actually increased. This may help explain the increase in voluntary turnover.

With the increased workload, FBSS workers may also feel that they cannot adequately support and supervise their cases, which puts the children in these families at an increased risk of harm. As a result, workers may choose to leave CPS rather than take the risk that a child on their caseload will be harmed because they did not have adequate resources to do their job. Although the PSTI assessment does not look at FBSS workers specifically, the general responses do indicate that workers who leave CPS felt they had fewer resources to do an adequate job as compared to those that stay.

With respect to CVS, historically, a fairly direct relationship exists between caseloads and voluntary turnover. CVS caseloads declined 16 percent from 2006 to 2008 and during that same time CVS voluntary turnover declined 10 percent.

Figure 11



As with investigators and FBSS workers, there is no direct evidence of CVS worker attitudes. But given their ongoing involvement with the courts, CVS workers have the heaviest paperwork burden. As a result, when caseloads are high, CVS workers may not be able to do real social work because they must spend all their time completing paperwork and complying with administrative requirements. Lower caseloads reduce the paperwork load and allow CVS workers to spend more time helping families and children. A study of New York caseworkers seems to confirm the paperwork/turnover connection as it found lower turnover in areas where workers spent more time on direct services and less time on paperwork.<sup>73</sup>

But transfers from CVS remained high at about 12 percent in 2008, an increase from 2007. A similar trend exists in FBSS which had a transfer rate of about 10 percent in 2008, up from about 9 percent in 2007. To the extent these intra-unit transfers retain effective CVS or FBSS workers who otherwise would have left CPS, they may constitute necessary turnover. But there is a cost. The transfers disrupt services to families and children as it takes time for a new worker to learn the family's history and establish the necessary relationships. The transfers also seem to deplete FBSS and CVS of their most experienced workers. In 2008, almost 10 percent of FBSS workers and almost 12 percent of CVS workers with more than 3 years of experience transferred into other units.

Perhaps most troubling are the transfers into investigations. In 2008, almost 5 percent of FBSS workers and almost 5 percent of CVS workers transferred into investigations.

As discussed above, investigations can be a difficult job that may not be compatible with those interested in the more traditional social work activities involved with FBSS and CVS. As a result, the transfers into investigations may not be keeping workers who would otherwise leave. Instead, the transfers may be prompted by the \$5,000 stipend for investigators. If so, such transfers are unnecessarily disruptive.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Establish Relative Pay Parity among Investigations, FBSS, and CVS**

As discussed above, the pay disparity with investigations may be a factor contributing to turnover. Although pay parity is not a legislative mandate, DFPS must ensure that caseworkers and supervisors not in investigations “are paid appropriately to increase employee retention.”<sup>74</sup> One way to do so is to create a stipend for FBSS and CVS caseworkers and supervisors that would make their overall compensation comparable to investigations.

Providing a \$5,000 stipend to FBSS and CVS workers and direct supervisors would cost roughly \$11.9 million per year or \$23.8 million for the biennium, using the average number of FBSS and CVS workers in 2008 and the current supervisor to worker ratio of 5:1 for FBSS and 6:1 for CVS.

One way to fund this stipend is through the \$26.9 million exceptional item in DFPS’ legislative appropriations request (LAR). Currently, DFPS plans to use the requested money for a \$3,000 recruiting bonus for all new workers and a \$3,000 retention bonus that would be available to all workers after they work at CPS at least one year. But as currently structured, it would significantly favor new workers, who would receive \$6,000 for their first two years of service as compared to long tenured workers who would only receive \$3,000 for their many years of service. Perversely, this sends a message that CPS does not

reward long-term organizational commitment and may actually result in an increase in turnover among long-tenured staff. As a result, the requested money would be better spent funding a comparable stipend for FBSS and CVS so there is relative pay parity among all the front-line functional units.

But any stipend, including those for investigations, should not be paid until a new worker successfully completes initial training. Once completed, the worker should receive only part of the stipend with additional amounts paid every year. For example, with a \$5,000 stipend, after completing initial training, the worker should receive a \$2,500 stipend for the remainder of the first year. During the second year, the stipend would be increased to \$4,000 and then again to \$5,000 for the third year and beyond. This should achieve the same results for new hires as intended with the retention and recruitment bonuses and still adequately reward those with long-tenure. Paying the stipends on a graduated basis will also reduce the initial cost.

### **2. Encourage Retention among Investigators through Non-Monetary Means**

DFPS should focus on ways to build investigators’ organizational commitment as historical trends demonstrate that simply paying investigators more money does not seem to fully solve the turnover problem.

- **Better Identify Individuals Suited to Investigations**

The first step in building organizational commitment is finding the right person for the job. To do so, DFPS must further refine its efforts to identify candidates suited to investigations without simply focusing on those with a law enforcement or social work background. The current pre-employment screening test and behavioral interview guide, predicated on identifying good candidates for social work, may not be useful for identifying good candidates for investigations. DFPS needs to adapt these tools to the reality of investigations as different from traditional social work. DFPS should also create a specialized “day in the

life” video for investigators as well as an investigator-based scenario skills test.

- **Educational Stipends for Investigators**

DFPS should invest in investigators’ professional development. For example, DFPS could encourage and support investigators’ pursuit of additional education. Currently, DFPS cannot as its educational stipend program receives federal money that can only be used for post-investigation positions. But in the LAR, DFPS requested \$10.6 million to fund educational stipends for investigators and other DFPS workers. By using state money to extend to the program to investigators, it should help investigators feel CPS invests in their professional development which, in turn, should increase investigators’ organizational commitment to CPS. Providing educational stipends for investigators will also help fulfill the statutory mandate that DFPS provide incentives for investigators.<sup>75</sup>

- **Create an Internal Career Path for Investigators**

Even with better recruitment, investigations may have a higher rate of burnout due to the stress inherent in the position. The higher burnout potential in investigations should be addressed in workers’ initial training with education about different possible career paths at CPS after investigations. Supervisors should also identify workers burning out with investigations but who still may be suited to other CPS work and counsel them about opportunities in other CPS units. This process should be easier with the pay parity discussed in Recommendation 1, which will eliminate the financial disincentive for investigators to transfer within CPS.

### 3. Improve All Workers’ Organizational Commitment

- **Greater Involvement of Supervisors in the Hiring Process**

DFPS centralized the hiring process to alleviate supervisors’ administrative burden. The centralization may do more harm than good. Although centralization can

improve efficiency and uniformity, it can also alienate front-line workers.<sup>76</sup>

DFPS should find an appropriate approach that centralizes administrative tasks such as selecting the pool of candidates for a position but leaves hiring decision for a particular unit to the unit supervisor. This will create additional work for supervisors. But supervisors’ units have become smaller so they should have more time to hire than in 2006 when the hiring specialists were introduced. It also will make the hiring process less streamlined but in return, it should improve the fit between new workers and their assigned unit which will make it easier to engage workers at the outset. It should also make front-line staff feel more involved and so increase their overall organizational commitment. If so, this will help reduce turnover, and the resulting cost savings should more than offset any additional administrative costs.

- **Expand Casey Family Program’s Project to Include Supervisors<sup>77</sup>**

Currently, some supervisors are being included in some aspects of the Casey leadership program in some regions. DFPS should look for ways to expand supervisors’ participation as a supplement to its other training since the leadership program has shown significant promise in improving morale, communication, and leadership, all of which are essential elements in reducing turnover.

- **Create an Expedited Certification Process for More Qualified Candidates**

CPS employs all new hires at an entry level Child Protective Services Worker II position<sup>78</sup>, regardless of their education or background.<sup>79</sup> To advance to the next position, they must be “certified” through PSTI based on specific requirements for experience, training, and performance.<sup>80</sup> It takes a minimum of 18 months to qualify for certification.<sup>81</sup> To attract and retain workers with advanced degrees or social work or other relevant experience, CPS should create an expedited advancement track for such candidates.

- **Raise Public Awareness about Positive CPS Outcomes**

The National Governor's Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices recently released an issue brief regarding actions governors can take to build a strong child welfare system.<sup>82</sup> One of their recommendations was for governors to encourage public support for workers.

Most of the general public lacks experience with the child welfare system. As a result, they only get information about the system from news stories which inevitably report on the flaws and failures of the system and its workers. But those who actually work in the system know a multitude of stories where a social worker's efforts transformed the lives of children and families for the better. These stories should be shared as well so workers feel acknowledged in their communities for the work they do and are proud to be associated with CPS.

The Governor, HHSC commissioner, DFPS commissioner, CPS assistant commissioner and other high ranking public officials should use their media contacts to inform the public about how workers often go above and beyond to help families and children and the positive outcomes they often achieve. Articles could depict a day in the life of a CPS worker or highlight CPS' most successful and dedicated workers. Or DFPS can create a video to promote caseworkers good work and share it with the public like Alabama has done.<sup>83</sup>

- **Increase CPS Salaries**

The first priority with respect to salaries should be to achieve the pay parity discussed in Recommendation 1. But to the extent possible, overall salaries should be increased as well so that all caseworkers feel that CPS appropriately values their work.

#### **4. Keep Investigators' Caseloads Manageable**

Given the nature of investigations, it likely will always have higher turnover and a less experienced workforce. Consequently, DFPS must keep caseloads to a manageable level so that even less experienced workers have time to properly assess a case. In 2006 with an average investigative caseload of 34.7, 22 percent of alleged victims

with a case disposition had their case closed as unconfirmed because the investigator could not complete the investigation.<sup>84</sup> By 2008, despite the relatively high turnover in investigations, with an average caseload of 21.9, only 14 percent of alleged victims with a case disposition had their case closed as unconfirmed because the investigator could not complete the investigation.<sup>85</sup>

In its LAR, DFPS requested \$1.7 million for two new investigative units, which translates into 10 investigators. As DFPS projects continued growth in the next two years in the number of reports assigned to investigators, the new investigators are necessary to maintain investigator caseloads at 22.3, slightly above the average caseload in 2008.

#### **5. Lower FBSS and CVS Caseloads**

As the recent NGA issue brief acknowledges, lower caseloads help workers have more time to interact with and provide services to children and families.<sup>86</sup> As a result, caseworkers feel more fulfilled in their job which leads to greater professional and organizational commitment.<sup>87</sup>

The Texas legislature acknowledges that reducing caseloads is important but past legislative sessions focused on investigations. Improving investigative outcomes, however, is only the first step. To ensure that the gains made through improved investigations persist as a case progresses through FBSS or CVS, caseloads in these areas also must be reduced. In its LAR, DFPS requested \$21.2 million to fund additional FTEs to reduce FBSS and CVS caseloads.

- **FBSS**

While the average number of cases an FBSS worker handles remains stable, in terms of actual work, the effective caseload may have increased. This may drive more FBSS workers to leave CPS rather than risk that a child on their caseload will be harmed because they did not have adequate resources to do their job.

In its LAR, DFPS requested funds for 10 new FBSS units, which translates into 50 new workers. In doing so, DFPS projects that the average FBSS caseload will fall to 17.1 by 2011.<sup>88</sup> This should help FBSS workers better manage the

growing complexity of the cases they handle and, thereby, help reduce FBSS voluntary turnover and improve outcomes for families and children.

- **CVS**

Although the number of children in DFPS custody recently declined, it is unclear whether this trend will continue, especially given the economic downturn. As more families slip into poverty, they become more likely to become involved in the child welfare system<sup>89</sup> so the trend may slow or reverse.

But even if the number of children in DFPS custody remained relatively flat, CVS caseloads are too high and above recommended standards.<sup>90</sup> Caseloads need to be reduced to keep paperwork manageable, allowing CVS workers to focus on helping and providing services to children and their families.

DFPS requested funding for 17 new CVS units which translates into 102 new workers. DFPS forecasts that the additional workers will help reduce caseloads to 29.6 by 2011. Based on historical trends, this reduction in caseloads should help to further reduce CVS turnover. With smaller caseloads and lower turnover, CVS workers can spend more time finding permanent homes for the children in DFPS care.

## 6. Hire Ahead Of Vacancies

As part of the reform efforts in 2005, the legislature required DFPS “hire ahead” or to start its recruiting process in anticipation of a vacancy rather than waiting until the worker actually leaves.<sup>91</sup> For example, if it is likely that a caseworker will be promoted to supervisor, DFPS should recruit for that position before the promotion so that when the caseworker actually leaves, a new caseworker immediately steps into the position. It is like keeping a lake full at all times—there needs to be an extra store of water that can instantly add to the lake when the water level is low. But such a strategy can only work if the lake is reasonably full. In other words, when vacancy rates are very high, the agency is left constantly filling vacant positions and cannot effectively hire ahead.

Due to high turnover, difficult recruiting circumstances and a significant increase in appropriated FTEs, DFPS had a high vacancy rate in recent years. But as turnover improved, vacancy rates improved as well from six percent in 2006 to three percent in 2008.<sup>92</sup> Assuming that the economic downturn and continued reform efforts further reduce CPS turnover and vacancies, DFPS can begin to hire ahead.

To truly hire ahead, however, DFPS would need to start the recruiting process several months before a position becomes vacant because caseworkers do not carry any cases until after completing the 3 month initial training program and thereafter do not immediately carry a full caseload. As a result, such a program would require additional appropriations as CPS would pay the salary of both the old worker and the new worker for some period of time. The “hire ahead” statute recognizes the need for additional appropriations, requiring DFPS to hire ahead only “to the extent that funding is available.”<sup>93</sup>

## Conclusion

With the current economic uncertainty, DFPS should capitalize on a captive workforce to create caseworkers who *want* to stay at CPS. It should build a commitment to child welfare work and CPS as an organization and address the specific issues within each functional unit. In doing so, it can help prevent the turnover cycle from beginning anew when economic conditions improve.



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<sup>1</sup> Ellett AJ, Ellis JI, Westbrook TM, Dews D. *A qualitative study of 369 child welfare professionals' perspectives about factors contributing to employee retention and turnover*. Children and Youth Services Review 29: 264-281, 2007 (focus groups of child welfare workers in Georgia).

<sup>2</sup> Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effects of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions*. Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006 (literature review); Rugutt JK. *A Study of Personal and Organizational Factors Contributing to Employee Retention and Turnover in Child Welfare in Georgia*. March 2003 (study on Georgia caseworkers); Strolin-Goltzman J, Auerbach C, McGowan BG, McCarthy ML. *The Relationship Between Organizational Characteristics and Workforce Turnover Among Rural, Urban and Suburban Public Child Welfare Systems*. Administration in Social Work 32(1): 77-97. 2008 (intention to leave among child welfare employees in 25 systems in a Northeastern state); Mor Barak ME, Leven A, Nissly JA, Lane CJ. *Why do they leave? Modeling child welfare workers' turnover intentions*. Children and Youth Services Review 28: 548-577. 2006 (intention to leave among workers in a large urban child welfare agency); Ellett (2007).

<sup>3</sup> All of the analysis in this paper is based solely on historical trends and none of the analysis establishes direct causal relationships.

<sup>4</sup> DFPS Rider 13 - Human Resources Management Plan. October 19, 2007. The exact calculation is: number of full time, regular employees who left during the period and did not return)/(average number of full time, regular active employees on the last day of each quarter in the period).

<sup>5</sup> Cyphers G. *Report from the Child Welfare Workforce Survey: State and County Data and Findings*. American Public Human Services Association. May 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effect of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions*. Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006.

<sup>7</sup> DFPS provided de-identified individual level data on all CPS workers who left their position in the relevant fiscal years including the worker's previous and new position both functionally (i.e., FBSS) and administratively (e.g., CPS Worker II), the worker's age at the time of the change, the worker's race, the worker's tenure with DFPS, the reason for the change and the worker's previous and new county of employment. Unless otherwise noted, all years refer to the state fiscal year beginning September 1 and ending August 31.

<sup>8</sup> A recent report on Bexar County child welfare workforce found that vacancies and turnover there were higher than state averages but the conclusions regarding some of the underlying problems were similar to what we found. David J. Reilly and Lynne Wilkerson. *2007 Compliance Review, Report to Honorable Andy Mireles, 73<sup>rd</sup> District Court, Bexar County, Texas*. February 8, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> The proportions are calculated as follows: all workers in the relevant category (e.g., those who voluntarily left)/average number of full time, regular active employees on the last day of each quarter in the fiscal year.

<sup>10</sup> 2004 Interim Report to the House of Representatives, 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature.

<sup>11</sup> Senate Bill 6 180-Day Progress Report, March 1, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> SB 758 Implementation Progress Report, September 1, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> State Auditor's Office *An Annual Report on Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2007*. SAO Report No. 08-703. December 2007.

<sup>14</sup> The unemployment data for 2004-2007 is from the State Auditor's Office *An Annual Report on Classified Employee Turnover for Fiscal Year 2007*. SAO Report No. 08-703. December 2007. The unemployment data for 2008 is a preliminary estimate of the unemployment rate in October 2008 from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics available at: <http://www.bls.gov/LAU/> (accessed on December 1, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Mitchell TR, Lee TW. *The Unfolding Model of Voluntary Turnover and Job Embeddedness: Foundations for a Comprehensive Theory of Attachment*. Research in Organizational Behavior 23: 189-246. 2001.

<sup>16</sup> National Council on Crime and Delinquency. *Job Turnover in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: The Voices of Former Frontline Workers*. Cornerstones for Kids, The Human Services Workforce Initiative. 2006. (interviews with caseworkers who had left child welfare agencies).

<sup>17</sup> Ryan SM. *Texas Foster Care: Current Issues, reform Efforts and Remaining Problems*. Texas Applesseed, September 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Mor Barak ME, Leven A, Nissly JA, Lane CJ. *Why do they leave? Modeling child welfare workers' turnover intentions* Children and Youth Services Review 28: 548-577. 2006. Study looked at intention to leave among caseworkers in a large urban child welfare agency.

<sup>19</sup> DFPS 2006 Annual Report.

<sup>20</sup> The proportion was calculated as follows: number of workers transferring to a different unit/ average number of full time, regular active workers at the end of each quarter in the fiscal year. Given the lack of functional unit designation prior to 2006, it may be that some of the transfers were in name only and did not result in caseload shifts.

<sup>21</sup> The average number of caseworkers is the average number of full time, regular active workers at the end of each quarter in the fiscal year. DFPS provided the data in response to a special data request.

<sup>22</sup> DFPS 2006 Annual Report.

<sup>23</sup> Mor Barak ME, Leven A, Nissly JA, Lane CJ. *Why do they leave? Modeling child welfare workers' turnover intentions* Children and Youth Services Review 28: 548-577. 2006. Study looked at intention to leave in a large urban child welfare agency.

<sup>24</sup> The proportion for tenured workers is calculated as follows: number of workers with certain tenure/number of workers with that tenure at the fiscal year end plus those with that tenure whose employment at CPS ended during the fiscal year.

<sup>25</sup> The proportion is calculated as follows: number of workers who left in a fiscal year/number of workers employed at the fiscal year end plus those with that tenure whose employment at CPS ended during the fiscal year.

<sup>26</sup> Mor Barak ME, Leven A, Nissly JA, Lane CJ. *Why do they leave? Modeling child welfare workers' turnover intentions* Children and Youth Services Review 28: 548-577. 2006 (intention to leave in an urban child welfare agency).

<sup>27</sup> DFPS provided the annual reports of the assessments from 2005 through 2008 in response to a special data request. The assessment consists of a survey new caseworkers complete right after finishing the BSD survey along with an 18 month and 3 year follow up survey for those still employed. Completion of the survey is voluntary and so captures only the responses of those who completed it. As a result, the responses may not be an accurate reflection of the entire CPS worker population. We did not have data regarding the percentage of workers who completed the assessment.



<sup>28</sup> The PSTI assessment is based only on the sample of workers who completed it and the differences noted have not been tested for statistical significance as we did not have the necessary data.

<sup>29</sup> DFPS provided the 2006 and 2008 SOE executive summaries for DFPS and CPS in response to a special data request.

<sup>30</sup> Like the PSTI Assessment, completion of the SOE is voluntary so captures only the responses of those who completed it. As a result, the responses may not be an accurate reflection of the entire CPS worker population. In 2006, 67 percent completed the survey and 67 percent completed the survey in 2008.

<sup>31</sup> DFPS Rider 13 - Human Resources Management Plan. October 19, 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Texas Family Code §264.106(c).

<sup>33</sup> The SOE is based only on the sample of workers who completed it and the differences have not been tested for statistical significance as we did not have the necessary data.

<sup>34</sup> Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effects of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions.* Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006 (a literature review).

<sup>35</sup> Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Overview of HB 2292, June 18, 2003. Available at: [http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/News/post78/HB2292\\_Summary.html](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/News/post78/HB2292_Summary.html) (Accessed on November 12, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> HHSC Transition Plan for HB 2292, November 3, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> DFPS 2007 Annual Report.

<sup>38</sup> Supervisors do sometimes participate in the interview process but it may not be the supervisor for whom the candidate will work.

<sup>39</sup> Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effects of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions.* Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006 (a literature review).

<sup>40</sup> Kim H, Stoner M. *Burnout and Turnover Intention Among Social Workers: Effects of Role Stress, Job Autonomy and Social Support.* Administration in Social Work 32(3): 5-25. 2008 (study of social workers' intention to leave in California).

<sup>41</sup> Kim H, Stoner M. *Burnout and Turnover Intention Among Social Workers: Effects of Role Stress, Job Autonomy and Social Support.* Administration in Social Work, 32(3): 5-25. 2008 Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effect of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions.* Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006.

<sup>42</sup> The proportion is calculated as follows: number of workers who left in a fiscal year/number of workers employed at the fiscal year end plus those with that tenure whose employment at CPS ended during the fiscal year.

<sup>43</sup> The differences in responses between those who left and those who stayed were statistically tested. The differences discussed were found to be statistically significant.

<sup>44</sup> Rider 13 – DFPS Human Resources Management Plan, October 1, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> In exchange for the stipend, the student agrees to work for DFPS for 8 months for every semester of tuition paid.

<sup>46</sup> *Report From the 2004 Child Welfare Workforce Survey: State Agency Findings.* American Public Human Services Association. February 2005.

<sup>47</sup> *Grant Projects Focus on Workforce Recruitment and Retention: Grantee Lessons Learned.* Child Welfare Information Gateway. October 1, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> *Grant Projects Focus on Workforce Recruitment and Retention: Grantee Lessons Learned.* Child Welfare Information Gateway. October 1, 2008.

<sup>49</sup> Based on a recent job posting available at: [https://rm.accesshr.hhsc.state.tx.us/ENG/careerportal/Job\\_Profile.cfm?zOrderID=108292&szReturnToSearch=1&szWordsToHighlight](https://rm.accesshr.hhsc.state.tx.us/ENG/careerportal/Job_Profile.cfm?zOrderID=108292&szReturnToSearch=1&szWordsToHighlight) (Accessed on November 18, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> DFPS provided the number of new hires in response to a special data request.

<sup>51</sup> Based on a test looking at statistical significance.

<sup>52</sup> Rider 13 – DFPS Human Resources Management Plan, October 1, 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Strolin-Goltzman J, Auerbach C, McGowan BG, McCarthy ML. *The Relationship Between Organizational Characteristics and Workforce Turnover Among Rural, Urban and Suburban Public Child Welfare Systems.* Administration in Social Work 32(1): 77-97. 2008 (satisfaction with salary and benefits not related to an intention to leave among rural, urban or suburban child welfare workers); National Council on Crime and Delinquency. *Job Turnover in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: The Voices of Former Frontline Workers.* Cornerstones for Kids, The Human Services Workforce Initiative. 2006 (survey of child welfare workers who left found that only 5 percent would have stayed if offered more money and only 9 percent went onto higher paying jobs); Mitchell TR, Lee TW. *The Unfolding Model Of Voluntary Turnover And Job Embeddedness: Foundations For A Comprehensive Theory Of Attachment.* Research in Organizational Behavior 23: 189-246. 2001 (low salary did not initiate leaving process) but see Kim H, Stoner M. *Burnout and Turnover Intention Among Social Workers: Effects of Role Stress, Job Autonomy and Social Support.* Administration in Social Work 32(3): 5-25. 2008 (child welfare workers in California with a lower salary had a higher intention to leave); Lawson HA, Claiborne N. *Retention Planning to Reduce Workforce Turnover in New York State's Public Child Welfare System.* University of Albany, School of Social Work. September 2005 (child welfare workers in New York in low turnover areas had higher salaries)

<sup>54</sup> DFPS 2006 databook and a DFPS estimate for 2008.

<sup>55</sup> This includes Adult Protective Service workers and Community Care Licensing workers who on average make less than CPS workers. As a result, the average CPS worker salary is likely slightly higher.

<sup>56</sup> Health and Human Services Commission Consolidated Budget Fiscal Years 2020-2011. October 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Based on a test looking at statistical significance.

<sup>58</sup> Strolin-Goltzman J, Auerbach C, McGowan BG, McCarthy ML. *The Relationship Between Organizational Characteristics and Workforce Turnover Among Rural, Urban and Suburban Public Child Welfare Systems.* Administration in Social Work 32(1): 77-97. 2008.

<sup>59</sup> DFPS 2006 Annual Report.

<sup>60</sup> DFPS 2007 Annual Report.

<sup>61</sup> DFPS 2007 Annual Report.

<sup>62</sup> DFPS 2007 databook.

<sup>63</sup> The figures for 2006 and 2007 are from the 2007 DFPS data book and the figures for 2008 are preliminary estimates DFPS provided based on a special data request.

<sup>64</sup> The figures for 2006 and 2007 are from the 2007 DFPS data book and the figures for 2008 are preliminary estimates DFPS provided based on a special data request.

<sup>65</sup> For investigators and FBSS workers, caseloads are calculated per family (e.g., one family equals one case). For a CVS worker, caseloads are calculated per child and per parent (e.g., one family with 2 children equals three cases).

<sup>66</sup> The description of a CPS Investigator's duties are based on the position description found on DFPS' website at: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/ComeWorkForUs/cpsinv.asp>.

<sup>67</sup> Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effects of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions*. Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006

<sup>68</sup> DFPS 2007 Annual Report.

<sup>69</sup> The data DFPS provided did not specifically identify the special investigators. As a result, this comparison is based on the LBB formulation of turnover found in DFPS' Rider 13 Human Resources Management Plan dated October 1, 2008.

<sup>70</sup> The description of a CPS Special Investigator's duties are based on the position description found on DFPS' website at: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/ComeWorkForUs/specialjobs.asp>. Accessed on December 11, 2008.

<sup>71</sup> Kinnevy S, Huang V, Dichter M, Gelles R. *The Transfer of Responsibility for Child Protective Investigations to Law Enforcement in Florida: A Supplemental Study Final Report*. Penn Social Work. February 2005.

<sup>72</sup> DCFS 2006 databook and a DCFS estimate for 2008.

<sup>73</sup> Lawson HA, Claiborne N. *Retention Planning to Reduce Workforce Turnover in New York State's Public Child Welfare System*. University of Albany, School of Social Work. September 2005.

<sup>74</sup> Human Resources Code §40.0528(b)(5).

<sup>75</sup> Human Resources Code §40.0528(b)(4).

<sup>76</sup> Dehart-Davis L., Pandey SK. *Red Tape and Public Employees: Does Perceived Rule Dysfunction Alienate Managers?* Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Vol. 15, 2005

<sup>77</sup> Rider 13 – DFPS Human Resources Management Plan, October 1, 2008.

<sup>78</sup> Workers who previously worked at DFPS may re-enter at the level at which they left

<sup>79</sup> Workers with advanced degrees or social work experience may receive a higher base salary.

<sup>80</sup> Protective Services Training Institute website: <http://www2.uta.edu/ssw/ccw/psti/fps.html>. Accessed on December 11, 2008.

<sup>81</sup> Protective Services Training Institute website: <http://www2.uta.edu/ssw/ccw/psti/html/cps/specialist/requirements.html>. Accessed on December 11, 2008.

<sup>82</sup> *Nine Things Governors Can Do to Build a Strong Child Welfare System*. NGA Center for Best Practices, November 12, 2008. Available at

<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0811CHILDWELFARE.PDF> (Accessed on December 17, 2008).

<sup>83</sup> *Nine Things Governors Can Do to Build a Strong Child Welfare System*. NGA Center for Best Practices, November 12, 2008. Available at <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0811CHILDWELFARE.PDF> (Accessed on December 17, 2008).

<sup>84</sup> 2006 DCFS databook.

<sup>85</sup> Based on 2008 estimates DCFS provided in response to a special data request.

<sup>86</sup> *Nine Things Governors Can Do to Build a Strong Child Welfare System*. NGA Center for Best Practices, November 12, 2008. Available at <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0811CHILDWELFARE.PDF> (Accessed on December 17, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. *Causes and Effects of Child Welfare Workforce Turnover: Current state of knowledge and future directions*. Journal of Public Child Welfare, 1(2): 29-52. 2006.

<sup>88</sup> DFPS 2008 LAR.

<sup>89</sup> Barth RP, Wildfire J, Green RL. *Placement Into Foster Care and the Interplay of Urbanicity, Child Behavior Problems, and Poverty*. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 76(3): 358-366. 2006.

<sup>90</sup> *HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff*. General Accounting Office. March 2008. GAO-03-357.

<sup>91</sup> Human Resources Code §40.0324.

<sup>92</sup> Based on DFPS estimates provided in response to a special data request. Effective vacancy rates are even higher as an FTE may be filled but not functional as workers do not carry any cases until after completing the 3 month initial training program and thereafter do not immediately carry a full caseload.

<sup>93</sup> Human Resources Code §40.0324.