

SFY 2015 Training Strategy Update for CFSP 2015-2019

The Division of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) cultural alignment efforts with the Practice Model Goals and Principles include creating an integrated competency based training model designed to address skill development at all levels in our Child Welfare System.

Summary:

- Current competency based training model is limited to new staff training (first year of employment) for FSW, FSW Supervisor, and Program Assistant positions.
- Defined/structured statewide training programs (beyond the first year of employment) addressing intermediate and advanced skill development for FSW and FSW Supervisors do not yet exist-even though intermediate and advanced level competencies do.
- Feedback from a variety of sources indicates supervisors and managers often do not know the competency based training model and do not consistently support the training model with new staff. Indicators of this include but are not limited to:
 - Assign heavy caseloads while an employee is still in new worker training.
 - Do not provide a thorough orientation to the office and community resources.
 - Neglect to provide sufficient supervision supporting the application of best practices taught in new worker training.
 - Inform the worker what s/he learned in the classroom does not apply “in the real world.”
- The current training system lacks defined competencies for the following positions:
 - Area Director (Central Office)
 - Program Managers (Central Office)
 - Program Administrators (Central Office)
 - Executive Staff (Central Office)
 - Resource Workers (Field Staff)
 - Program Assistants (Field Staff)
 - Transitional Services Coordinators (Field Staff).

SFY 2015 Update: New Staff Training

As reported in the 2014 Training Strategy Update for the 2009-2014 Child and Family Services Plan Close Out Report, DCFS and University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) MidSOUTH Training Academy (“MidSOUTH”) implemented a revised training format for Arkansas New Staff Training (NST) for Family Service Workers (FSWs) in February 2014. The training format consists of a five day classroom; five day OJT training format, commonly referred to as the ‘five day “On,” five day “Off” training that runs for a total of ten weeks (5 full weeks of classroom training and five full weeks of structured OJT activities). All FSWs who are not in investigative positions also continue to receive support from an Academic Partnership field trainer for the first year of employment with the agency.

This new training format included the development of a formal FSW Mentor Program. The FSW Mentor Program is designed to help support new FSWs by pairing them with a more experienced FSW in the office or neighboring county to provide peer support to the new FSW.

By implementing this revised NST training format, DCFS and MidSOUTH accomplished a short-term goal related to NST enhancements.

There are some who report that five consecutive, full days of training are simply too overwhelming to a new worker. Essentially these reports state there are some FSWs who find it difficult to fully comprehend the information presented by the end of the week due to the volume of material presented within that week.

However, overall feedback regarding the ‘five day “On,” five day “Off” training format has been positive. Many FSWs and Supervisors report that this format allows workers to fully focus on class when in the classroom and also have enough time to make a sufficient amount of progress on casework during their weeks in the office. The MidSOUTH Training Director reports that overall he has seen an improvement in terms of FSWs in NST not being asked to transport or being expected to perform other casework duties during their classroom training weeks.

MidSOUTH continues to add FSW Mentor pairings on the weekly Module Summary report they provide to the DCFS Professional Development Unit (PDU). While there had been an increase in staff being assigned mentors at the end of SFY 2014, in recent months this gain has subsided considerably. In part this decrease is related to the MidSOUTH employee responsible for preparing the weekly Module Summary going on Family Medical Leave and the DCFS PDU Manager position being vacant for several months. Nonetheless, DCFS recognizes the primary barrier to the assignment of FSW Mentors is that it is simply not a priority due largely to office capacity challenges.

During SFY 2016, PDU plans to place a renewed focus on the assignment of FSW Mentors to new FSWs. Other post implementation efforts will continue to be monitored as a part of routine quality assurance efforts within the training system structure.

The long-term goal for NST development is to collaborate with stakeholders to review and modify NST for FSWs content by January 2018. Efforts related to this long term goal took place through a NST Workgroup and various sub-committees from June - October 2014. Workgroup membership included DCFS Field Staff (FSW and FSW supervisor), DCFS Community Services (Assistant Director and Program Administrators), the PDU Manager and Administrator, and Academic Partner representatives. The following recommendations were made:

- Establish Area FSW competency review teams.
- Determine the representative roles for membership on the Area review teams.
- Create a review structure for each Area Review Team to follow.
- Research (formally and informally) training program structures in other states. Formal review assignments to be determined by TSDT.
 Informal review includes interviewing FSWs and/or supervisors who have worked in child welfare in other states within the last five years.
- Create feedback questions for informal and formal reviews.
- Conduct poll of DCFS supervisors to determine what they want staff to be able to do following the completion of New Staff Training.

Progress regarding these recommendations is as follows:

- At the July and October 2014 meetings, TSDT discussed and identified potential individuals and/or groups that could serve as neutral facilitators for the structured reviews in each area. Possibilities included university faculty and/or staff as well as securing a practicum team of students from the Clinton School of Public Service.
- At the October 2014 Statewide Quarterly Supervisor meeting, the PDU Manager and a Community Services Program Administrator spoke with the audience about identifying the top skills they would like workers to possess upon completion of NST. Area Directors then helped to collect this information from their supervisors across the state and submitted the information to Central Office in November 2014.
- The workgroup developed the survey for staff who worked in other state child welfare agencies.

However, the July and October 2014 TSDT meetings also provided a forum to discuss the forthcoming, almost simultaneous implementation of four IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project interventions: Team Decision Making (TDM), the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) and Family Advocacy Support Tool (FAST) functional assessments, Nurturing the Families of Arkansas (NFA), and Targeted Recruitment via Arkansas Creating Connections for Children (ARCCC). TSDT focused particular attention to the impending October implementation of CANS/FAST in Pulaski and Miller Counties. During these conversations, TSDT with guidance from the Waiver Core Team determined the implementation of CANS/FAST would require:

- An orientation and training on these assessment tools to all FSWs, supervisors, Partnership members, and stakeholders led by the developer of the CANS/FAST, Dr. John Lyons.
- All staff, supervisors, and Partnership members to certify in CANS/FAST – staff at the 70% level and Partnership members at the 80% level with an expectation that all supervisors will certify at the 80% level by their first annual re-certification.
- Extensive enhancements to the Children’s Reporting Information System (CHRIS) to not only ensure that the CANS/FAST ratings would be entered into Arkansas’s SACWIS

system but also to completely revise the case plan screens in CHRIS in order to align the those screens with the evidence-based assessment tools.

- Development of a training to ensure all staff and Partnership members would sufficiently understand and operate all of the new CANS/FAST and case plan screens in CHRIS.
- Development of an initial training for the implementation counties (Pulaski and Miller) to learn how to complete the CANS/FAST and case plan on paper prior to the February release of the new CANS/FAST/case plan screens in CHRIS.
- Provision of ongoing technical support to the initial implementation counties regarding the completion of CANS/FAST and corresponding case plans as well as all other counties upon statewide implementation in February 2015.
- Transferring responsibility to either DCFS and/or MidSOUTH for providing the CANS/FAST orientation and training to all staff who for a variety of reasons did not attend the CANS/FAST orientation and training offered in October and January by Dr. John Lyons.
- Extensive revisions to NST to incorporate information regarding CANS/FAST and the new case plans in both the classroom and On-the-Job Training curricula.
- Development of a CANS/FAST engagement training for all FSWs and supervisors to help staff learn how to effectively and appropriately gather information from families and stakeholders in order to successfully complete the CANS/FAST.
- Creation and dissemination of corresponding CANS/FAST engagement tools to assist staff in appropriately collecting and recording information from families and stakeholders.

Due to the significant training and technical assistance described above and needed to help facilitate the implementation of CANS/FAST in Pulaski and Miller Counties at the end of October 2014 and the statewide implementation of these tools in February 2015, TSDT decided at its October 2014 meeting to put the NST Workgroup on hold. This would allow everyone to focus on the curricula revisions and other activities needed for a successful implementation of CANS/FAST as well as the other IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project interventions.

On May 22, 2015 the NST Workgroup met again for the first time since 2014. The purpose of this meeting was to identify what had been accomplished prior to placing the workgroup on hold and determine next steps for the NST Workgroup. At this meeting the group revisited the decision to use neutral facilitators for the structured reviews of NST competencies. Rather than securing neutral facilitators, the group decided to have MidSOUTH and Academic Partnership Field Trainers co-facilitate and use the MidSOUTH Training Academies as the venue for the competency reviews. See Attachment A for group composition and step by step plan.

The NST Workgroup also decided to move forward with administering the survey (that had been developed in 2014) to staff who have worked in other states' child welfare agencies. In June 2014, the PDU Administrator worked with Area Directors to identify those staff who had worked in other states. On June 17, 2015 the PDU Administrator emailed the survey to the identified

staff. The PDU Administrator requested staff who received the survey to submit their responses by June 30, 2015.

The NST Workgroup plans to meet again in July to review information from the surveys as well as the information DCFS supervisors submitted in November 2014 regarding the top skills they would like workers to possess upon completion of NST.

SFY 2015 Update: Development of Intermediate Level Training for FSWs:

Recognizing the need for continued professional development for FSWs after NST, in the past DCFS has discussed developing an Intermediate Level Training, or “call back,” for FSWs. Upon the completion of NST and after practicing in the field for 12–18 months, all FSWs would be required (“called back”) to return for a standard curriculum of classroom training to receive further instruction and advance their practice skills with families.

To this end, the Division initiated an assessment based on QSPR results related to case management practices on a statewide level during the 2009-2014 CFSP.

Activities included:

- Reviewed training content in a previous intermediate level training (referred to as “call back” training).
- Discussed the barriers encountered in implementing the previous model. The primary barrier was identified as the lack of DCFS staff participation/support. The subject of DCFS Supervisors supporting an intermediate level training by sending staff as defined in the training program remains a concern.
- Reviewed and discussed practice issues noted in QSPR reviews during the last 3 years.
- Tentatively agreed family engagement is a component in all intermediate level training topics. In addition, substance abuse and domestic violence can be incorporated no matter what the training topic may be.

The Quality Assurance Manager also created a Practice Trends summary listing the five primary topics in which staff could benefit from additional training. This data was taken from QSPR reviews and related coaching sessions:

1. Substance Abuse
2. Family Engagement
3. Individualizing Services
4. Time Management/Prioritization
5. Caseworker Visitation

However, efforts related to the development of a formal Intermediate Level Training Program for FSWs have been suspended in order to allow the Division and Academic Partners (reported in previous sections) to complete the implementation of the 5 Day On/5 Day Off training format for new FSWs (short term goal) as well as assist with and participate in all required IV-E Waiver-related trainings.

The Division will use the above information and information gained during the review/update process to the New Staff Training program for FSWs to assess intermediate level training needs and strategies that need to be incorporated in either the 2015-2019 CFSP and/or the 2021-2026 CFSP.

In addition to the above foundational work, the Training Skills and Development Team (TSDT) has initiated the development of a Casework Practice Profile tool(s) Development of a Casework Practice Profile (CFSP 2015-2019) tool is intended to help supervisors/managers, as well as staff, recognize practices at different behavioral levels and to serve as a guide for ongoing skill development within the Division.

An initial workgroup has been established to review the Ohio Differential Response Practice Profile and provide the following adaptation recommendations to TSDT:

- How do we link this back to the AR Practice Model principles?
- What needs to come out (simply can't do based on AR law and/or policy)?
- What needs to be added?
- What are recommended processes and/or considerations for creating and implementing this in Arkansas?

This Practice Profile Workgroup plans to reconvene in FY 2016.

SFY 2015 Update: Field Supervisor OJT Program

DCFS and the Academic Partnership implemented the three-month long Supervisor OJT Program in September 2013. This OJT curriculum was developed in part to provide a “bridge” between a new supervisor’s hire date and the time that new supervisor participated in the classroom-based New Supervisor Training since typically the New Supervisor classroom training is only offered up to three times each contract year provided there are a minimum of eight participants for the classroom New Supervisor Training.

Between July 1, 2014 and May 31, 2015, 35 new Supervisors have completed, partially completed or are still participating in the OJT program (*29 supervisors have been hired or promoted from FSW positions since July 1, 2014, so some of these 35 supervisors who completed New Supervisor OJT in SFY 2015 were hired and began the OJT program prior to July 1, 2014*).

- 19 New Supervisors currently participating
- 13 New Supervisors completed program
- 3 New Supervisors did not complete program due to resignation.

There are some concerns about the length of time it has taken some supervisors to complete New Supervisor OJT, particularly given that this curriculum was developed, in part, as a “stop-gap” measure to support new supervisors until they are able to participate in the classroom-based New Supervisor Training. Based on informal conversations with the Academic Partnership, it is generally thought the New Supervisor OJT Program does not take precedence over other supervisory duties. PDU plans to work with TSDT during SFY 2016 to more formally review existing information as well as identify and collect other needed information regarding the

implementation, sustainability, and enhancement of the New Supervisor OJT Program from both Academic Partnership members and DCFS Supervisors.

Current program evaluation tools include pre and post assessments for each OJT section (Safety, Permanency and Well Being) completed by the participating supervisor, followed by discussion with the Field Trainer -- including identifying additional training needs. Along with the pre and post assessment, participating supervisors complete a program evaluation.

OJT Participant Materials are posted to Knowledge Net, the online Knowledge Management website.

Feedback gathered from Field Trainers assigned to work with supervisors in this program will also be used to help further define preferred skill sets for field trainers working with supervisors.

Work related to improving the evaluation methodologies to assess transfer of learning into supervisory practices (led by DCFS Supervisors and Area Directors) along with the effectiveness of the program structure (led by Academic Partners) will continue into the 2015-2019 CSFP.

SFY 2015 Update: Other Professional Development Activities for Field Supervisors

As previously mentioned, several Area Directors continue to coordinate local training events for supervisors with the Academic Partnership and ODT.

The request for MidSOUTH to develop a supervisor training targeting supervisory practices related to the parent education activities Program Assistants provide to families was put on hold due to the roll-out of several IV-E Waiver interventions during similar time periods. PDU plans to revisit the development of this training in SFY 2016.

Additional training topics being considered for supervisors in the 2015-2019 CFSP include but are not limited to:

- Working with staff on the engagement of families while completing home visits.
- Expansion/application of New Supervisor OJT activities for experienced Supervisors.
- Coaching Skills for Supervisors and FSW Mentors

Data management consultations for each DCFS service area continue. Administrative Managers and designated Academic Partners meet with area Supervisors to review and discuss the meaning of specific data reports in the daily management of Area/County performance. The QSPR, Meta-Analysis, CPS and Quarterly Performance Reports are examples of reports reviewed in these consultations.

SFY 2015 Update: Continuing Education for FSWs and Field Supervisors

As in the past, Area Directors and Supervisors initiate training requests with MidSOUTH trainers, Field Trainers, Office of Chief Counsel (OCC), Organizational Development and Training (ODT), and/or community partners in their area/county.

Each Area Director is encouraged to use a variety of factors when determining training needs in his/her area:

- Area improvement plans.
- QSPR and other analysis findings.
- CHRIS data reports and/or case reviews.
- Direct observations of staff interactions with families and/or community partners.
- Case consultations with staff.
- Feedback from community partners such as judges, System of Care partners, mental health providers, etc.
- Requests from staff.
- Individual training needs assessments (ITNA) with Academy and Field Trainers.

Trauma-Informed Training

Trauma-informed training meets the legislative requirement for DCFS staff to receive annual training on grief and loss. During SFY 2015, the Division and Academic Partnership continued to collaborate with UAMS to provide trauma informed training to field staff (Program Assistants, FSWs, and Supervisors). During FY 2015, the Academic Partnership and UAMS provided *A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Trauma Assessment* training to DCFS staff. Once again, a web based presentation allowed Dr. Terry Kramer with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) to provide training from Little Rock to several remote locations while Field Trainers managed the classroom dynamics. A recording of the presentation was also completed to help manage resources and provide make up sessions when needed.

The Academic Partnership works with local Area Directors to schedule the trauma informed care training for DCFS staff during each calendar year.

To date for SFY 2015 (fourth quarter not reflected):

- 95 of 207 Program Assistants completed *A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Trauma Assessment*
- 314 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) of 606 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) completed *A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Trauma Assessment*

In SFY 2015 the PDU Administrator also asked UAMS to continue its collaboration with the Academic Partnership. More specifically, UAMS and the Academic Partnership are developing a new trauma-informed training for staff that incorporates information related to trauma elements on the CANS and FAST assessments into the new training. This Train-the-Trainer (TOT) for this newest version of trauma-informed training for staff will be presented to Field Trainers at the July 30-31, 2015 Academic Partnership Meeting and Training.

Managing Difficult Encounters Training

The Managing Difficult Encounters (MDE) Training was also provided to staff (Program Assistants, FSWs, and Supervisors) during SFY 2015 to continue to ensure staff safety and well-being. Participants discuss basic stages of crisis development and its prevention by using preventative communication skills, discussing and demonstrating cultural sensitivity, and trying to gain a better understanding of client stressors.

The Academic Partnership works with local Area Directors to schedule the MDE Training for DCFS staff during each calendar year.

To date for SFY 2015 (fourth quarter not reflected):

- 43 of 207 Program Assistants completed MDE
- 177 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) of 606 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) completed MDE

These attendance numbers are low in part because PDU allowed the Academic Partnership to put the MDE Training on hold during the spring of 2015 due to the implementation of numerous IV-E Waiver interventions.

For the upcoming year, the Academic Partnership has developed an MDE Training with a domestic violence focus that will be provided to staff.

Other Continuing Education Trainings Offered Through the Academic Partnership

MidSOUTH continues to provide quarterly continuing education classes open to Division staff and resource families. The scheduled trainings are focused on topics of interest identified from feedback on participant evaluations and survey responses. Several Area Directors, in collaboration with Academic Partners, have also established quarterly trainings for field staff.

The following highlights some of the collaborative training efforts implemented by the Academic Partners and Area Directors/supervisors in SFY 15:

- Areas 7 and 10, with support from the University of Arkansas at Monticello, held an Area Supervisor Education Day on August 5, 2014. Using a round table discussion format, Area Supervisors reviewed supervisory tools and began identifying shared leadership expectations related to practice in different program areas.
- MidSOUTH Training Academy also provided continuing education for Areas 7 and 10 at the Supervisor Education Day on August 5, 2014 regarding case documentation in CHRIS. Using examples of typical CHRIS contact entries, the class identified the missing elements and discussed how to improve the quality of documentation related to the purpose of a contact and how the contact related back to the case plan goals.
- Arkansas Technical University provided a training on the topic of Human Trafficking for the Area 5 Quarterly Training in September 2014.
- Southern Arkansas University, with assistance from OCC, sponsored a training for Area 4 staff on how to complete a 30-day Petition and improve court reports in November 2014.

- Arkansas Technical University held a training for Area 5 Supervisors on April 2, 2015 entitled, *Quality Home Visits; Ethics in Leadership*. The training included the review of the Quality Home Visit checklist as well as the debut of a video developed by one of the ATU field trainers.

SFY 2015 Update: Best Practice and Program [Development] Related Training and Supports for FSWs and Field Supervisors

DCFS staff, in conjunction with various technical assistants, implemented revisions to standing best practice and program related trainings as well as additions to this category of training and professional development.

Structured Decision Making

In the past, DCFS contracted with Ed Cotton through Hornby Zeller Associates (HZA) to develop and provide Structured Decision Making (SDM) Training for all DCFS FSWs and supervisors as well as Crimes Against Children Division (CACD) investigators and supervisors. A version for investigators and a version for caseworkers was developed with the primary difference being a somewhat more detailed segment on interviewing for the investigative SDM class.

While Mr. Cotton's expertise in SDM was invaluable, consistently keeping new staff trained became a challenge given that Mr. Cotton lives outside of Arkansas and provides technical assistance to several other states as well. As a result, several months would often pass before a new round of SDM training could be offered to staff, thereby leaving a significant number of FSWs not thoroughly trained in the philosophy and elements of SDM and protection planning.

As a result, DCFS decided to provide SDM training in-house. Chantel Barber, an HZA contractor who had co-trained with Mr. Cotton in the past, took over the primary duty of administering SDM Training on July 1, 2014. Given that an FSW may, over the course of his or her tenure with DCFS serve in several different roles, the Division also determined that two separate version of SDM are unnecessary. The SDM Training that is now presented to staff by Ms. Barber is a combination of the investigator and caseworker versions of SDM previously offered.

In a continued effort to ensure all new staff participated in SDM Training within a reasonable timeframe, DCFS has, in effect, linked SDM Training to NST as of March 2015. Each time a NST ends, Ms. Barber schedules an SDM Training for that NST class approximately two weeks thereafter. If there are other staff who for whatever reason have not previously attended SDM, they may attend one of the NST SDM Trainings.

Ms. Barber, PDU, and MidSOUTH are also working to implement an OJT activity related to SDM that staff will complete between the last week of NST and their SDM Training. This OJT activity will include asking staff to review and critique a sample protection plan. Staff will then share and discuss these critiques during the SDM Training as well as sharing information they have heard about SDM and protection planning in their local county offices. This will potentially give Ms. Barber the opportunity to address misinformation that has been given at the local county office level regarding SDM and protection planning. Given legislative changes impacting

protection plans, the implementation of this OJT activity is currently on hold until further discussions regarding the implementation of the law can be held.

In SFY 2015, a total of 143 DCFS Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) completed Structured Decision Making Training.

In addition, in an effort to increase understanding of SDM for the DHS Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) attorneys who represent DCFS, the Division established a purchase order with Mr. Cotton to conduct four SDM trainings for OCC in October and November of 2014. A total of 40 OCC attorneys out of 49 OCC attorney positions completed Structured Decision Making Training in SFY 2015.

Team Decision Making

While initial training for Team Decision Making (TDM) began in SFY 2014, training and other support for this IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project intervention augmented significantly in SFY 2015 with the implementation of TDM in a total of 18 counties from September through May 2015.

Annie E. Casey held the three-day TDM Facilitator Training for newly hired DCFS TDM Facilitators, back-up Facilitators from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Bowen School of Law, and selected DCFS Central Office Managers. This intensive training goes into detail about how to move the TDM meeting through the six-stage TDM process and otherwise prepares staff to serve in the facilitator role.

With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Division also continued to offer the Team Decision Making (TDM) Staff and Stakeholder Orientations in Arkansas as this TDM IV-E Waiver intervention was implemented in additional counties. The TDM Orientations provided staff with an introduction to the philosophy and values of TDM as well as the basic components of a TDM meeting.

DCFS Central Office Staff and the two DCFS TDM Facilitators also developed a half-day, information-based training to ensure staff in the counties in which TDM is implemented understand TDM policy and procedures as well as the TDM referral process. All counties received this training prior to TDM implementation in their counties.

Annie E. Casey also provided the three-day TDM Facilitator Training to the newly hired DCFS TDM Facilitators as well as selected DCFS Central Office Managers and back-up facilitators from the UALR Bowen School of Law. Annie E. Casey technical assistants also conducted monthly day-long TDM consultation meetings for the TDM facilitators, back-up facilitators, and selected DCFS Central Office Managers. The consultations provided forums for the participants to learn about best practices related to TDM, share local successes, discuss and problem-solve local challenges, and otherwise hone their facilitation skills. All TDM Facilitators participated in the TDM Consultations.

Finally, in order to ensure the sustainability of the TDM Facilitator Training, the Annie E. Casey Foundation also provided a TDM Train-the-Trainer to DCFS and MidSOUTH staff. This two-day curriculum is designed to prepare facilitators and identified community partners as trainers for the TDM Facilitator Training.

- 115 Staff (Program Assistants, FSWs, and Supervisors) out of the 126 Staff in the TDM counties in which the TDM Orientations were offered in SFY 2015 completed the TDM Staff Orientation
- All seven DCFS TDM Facilitators completed the 3-day TDM Facilitator Training along with three DCFS Central Office Managers, five back-up TDM Facilitators from UALR Bowen School of Law, and one MidSOUTH Trainer

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS)/Family Advocacy Support Tool (FAST)

In October 2015, Dr. John Lyons, the developer of CANS/FAST, offered two full-day CANS/FAST Orientation and Trainings to staff from Pulaski and Miller Counties, the CANS/FAST implementation counties, as well as all Academic Partnership members, all DCFS Area Directors, and DCFS Central Office staff. Community stakeholders also attended the first two-hours of these trainings for the initial overview and philosophy of CANS/FAST. The full six-hour training described the six key components of functional assessments and explained how to utilize the CANS/FAST to complete a family assessment and service planning activities. Participants had the option to sit for certification at the end of the training. A score of 70% is required to certify at the user level while an 80% is required to certify at the trainer/supervisor level.

On October 27, 2015 Dr. Lyons conducted a CANS/FAST Train-the-Trainer (TOT) Session for Academic Partnership members and DCFS Central Office Managers. This training is designed to prepare participants to train and support DCFS staff who are responsible for using the CANS/FAST. Participants demonstrated their understanding of the functional assessment tools through vignette development, scoring, and application descriptions.

A Community Services Program Administrator (who later became the CANS/FAST Program Manager) then spent a significant amount of time in Pulaski and Miller counties providing technical assistance to staff as well as well as a Division-developed training that taught staff how to use the paper versions of the CANS/FAST assessments and corresponding case plan documents. This same Community Services Program Administrator completed reviews of submitted CANS/FAST assessments and associated case plans and regularly provided feedback to staff.

From January 5-12, 2015 Dr. John Lyons returned to Arkansas and traveled the state to provide six additional CANS/FAST Orientation Trainings to remaining DCFS staff and Academic Partnership members. Dr. Lyons also delivered a final CANS/FAST TOT to Area Directors and Academic Partnership members on January 13, 2015.

In preparation for the statewide launch of CANS/FAST on February 12, 2015, MidSOUTH provided the CHRIS Enhancement 22.0 CANS/FAST/Case Plan Training. This training focused almost exclusively on the new case plan screens in CHRIS that were revised to correlate with the CANS/FAST assessments. This half-day training was offered twice daily at each of the five MidSOUTH Training Academies from February 9-13, 2015. Additional CHRIS Enhancement 22.0 CANS/FAST/Case Plan Training were offered at the various academies on an as needed basis.

Finally, as previously mentioned, TSDT discussed at length the need for additional supports to staff when utilizing CANS/FAST. Team members realized that if staff did not effectively engage

families when completing the CANS/FAST, these new evidence-based assessments would function no differently from the previous assessment tool (the Family Strengths, Needs, and Risk Assessment (FSNRA)) and, consequently, fail to produce improved outcomes for children and families.

As a result, the CANS/FAST Program Manager led a workgroup of TSMT members to develop engagement tools designed to assist staff in gathering the information needed to appropriately rate the various CANS/FAST items. These engagement tools provide a suggested menu of possible conversation starters related to CANS/FAST items from which staff may pick and choose. The various prompts are designed to bring out information to help FSWs complete the CANS/FAST assessments and also provide space to take notes. Each county office was provided with a supply of these engagement tools at the April 24, 2015 DCFS Statewide Quarterly Supervisor Meeting. An electronic version of the documents was also sent to all DCFS staff via email and the engagement tools have also been posted to CHRIS Public.

In SFY 2015:

- 624 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) of 606 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) completed CANS/FAST Orientation and Training (*as staff have left, new staff have been trained thereby creating a larger number of FSWs trained than the actual number of FSWs positions filled at any one point in time*)
- 70 Community Stakeholders completed the CANS/FAST Stakeholder Orientation
- 64 DCFS Central Office Managers, Area Directors, Supervisors, and Academic Partnership Members completed the CANS/FAST TOT
- 558 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) of 606 Staff (FSWs and Supervisors) completed the CHRIS Enhancement 22.0 CANS/FAST Case Plan Training

Nurturing the Families of Arkansas

On December 8, 2014 Dr. Stephen Bavolek, the developer of the Nurturing Parenting Program, provided a day-long orientation to Program Assistants, Area Directors, and Central Office Staff to familiarize participants with Nurturing Parenting Program and debut the Arkansas-specific Nurturing the Families of Arkansas video series.

From January 20-23, Dr. Bavolek, DCFS Central Office Managers, and MidSOUTH NFA Staff conducted an NFA Training-of-the-Trainer (TOT) for 35 Program Assistants who were assigned to also serve as NFA Parent Coaches as office capacity allowed and their direct supervisors. Initially only 35 PAs were trained as Parent Coaches since not all Program Assistants across the state could be in the same training for 3.5 days as that would severely limit the Division's daily operations (additional NFA TOTs for the remaining Program Assistant staff and their direct supervisors are scheduled for SFY 2016).

The January NFA TOT allowed participants to learn the specifics about the NFA referral process as well as roles and responsibilities of DCFS and MidSOUTH as related to NFA. In addition, Dr. Bavolek and MidSOUTH NFA Programmatic Lead, Sharon Long, taught portions of the Nurturing the Families of Arkansas curriculum to further the audience's understanding of the information and activities families will receive. The fourth day of the NFA TOT provided the PAs a chance to focus on their role as Parent Coach by offering facilitated role plays and debriefing sessions. This last day of the NFA TOT also featured small focus groups of the

supervisors in attendance to discuss potential opportunities and challenges related to NFA and how they will support the PAs as Parent Coaches.

In January and February 2015, DCFS Central Office Managers and MidSOUTH NFA staff traveled the state to provide 19 half-day regional NFA Orientations to Family Service Workers (FSWs) and any supervisor or PA who did not participate in the NFA TOT. The objective of this orientation was to ensure that FSWs and Supervisors have a thorough understanding of the NFA referral process, DCFS and MidSOUTH roles and responsibilities as they relate to NFA, and a basic concept of the NFA parenting constructs and values.

- 109 Staff (Program Assistants, Supervisors, Central Office Staff) completed the December NFA Orientation
- 68 Staff (Program Assistants and Supervisors) completed the January NFA TOT
- 407 Staff (Program Assistants, FSWs, Supervisors, Central Office Staff) and 34 Academic Partnership Members completed the NFA Regional Orientation

Arkansas Creating Connections for Children

The Arkansas Creating Connections for Children (ARCCC) Program Manager developed a two-hour orientation regarding Arkansas's recruitment activities within the IV-E Waiver Project and Diligent Recruitment Grant. The orientation was first provided at the April 24, 2015 DCFS Statewide Quarterly Supervisor Meeting and then at Area 1 and 10 staff education days before then providing a total of 23 additional ARCCC Orientations at the MidSOUTH Training Academies. This orientation aimed to introduce staff to strategies that can be used to augment current practice and integrate recruitment into daily job duties in order to achieve better, measurable outcomes for children and families. To date, over 500 staff have participated in the ARCCC Orientations. Nine other ARCCC Orientations are scheduled for SFY 2016.

Differential Response

The DCFS Differential Response (DR) Manager provides regular training for newly hired DR workers to ensure they thoroughly understand all aspects of the DR Program and related policy as well as have an opportunity to practice engagement skills needed to successfully sustain the DR Program in Arkansas. Three New DR Worker trainings were provided in SFY 2015:

- September 24-25, 2014
- February 10-11, 2015
- May 6-7, 2015

Permanency Roundtables

With support from a technical assistant contracted through Casey Family Programs, the Permanency Roundtable (PRT) Specialist provided the Achieving Permanency through Roundtables (APR) to staff and stakeholders on August 14, 2014. The APR Training provided insight to DCFS employees as well as external stakeholders regarding the importance of having forever homes and families to provide a permanent foundation for youth who are in foster care. The training also explained why maintaining legal permanency for youth is vital to DCFS practices.

The PRT Specialist and PRT Technical Assistant also provided the Permanency Roundtable Skills Training to selected staff on August 25, 2014. This training provided technical skills and information needed to conduct PRTs.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

The DCFS Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Program Specialist provided several in-service trainings to staff that provided an overview of FASD and DCFS policies and procedures regarding the FASD Program (e.g., referrals, assessments, service delivery, etc.). These trainings were provide to:

- Miller County Staff July 21, 2014
- Lenoke County Staff March 12, 2015
- Area 7 Staff March 31, 2015
- Area 7 Staff April 1, 2015 (two area staff meetings were held to allow approximately 50% of staff to attend on meeting and the remaining 50% to attend the alternate date to ensure office coverage)
- White County Staff April 15, 2015
- Area 1 Staff June 23, 2015

In addition the DCFS FASD Program Specialist also provided FASD information to stakeholders around the state as summarized below regarding issues often faced by children affected with FASD, behavioral strategies and techniques designed for children diagnosed with FASD, and advocacy information related to FASD:

- CALL Support Group in Sherwood (Area 6) September 2, 2014
- Health & Wellness Fair in Jacksonville (Area 6) January 31, 2015
- Outcomes, Inc. Therapeutic Foster Parents and Staff (Area 1) April 9, 2015

Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services (CPS) Manager, contracted through Hornby Zeller Associates, provided continuing education related to Structured Decision Making (SDM) and protection planning to staff on an as needed basis. In SFY 2015, these trainings included:

- Investigative Training for Area 10 Assessment Unit August 29, 2014
This one-day training provided DCFS child maltreatment investigators with the newly implemented area-wide assessment unit for Area 10 with a better understanding of DCFS policy, procedures, and best practices for initiating and conducting child maltreatment investigations.
- SDM Training for TDM Facilitators and Back-up Facilitators September 10, 2014
This three-hour training was designed to provide an overview of Structured Decision Making and protection planning for TDM Facilitators and Back-up Facilitators given that the implementation of a protection plan is the trigger point for a TDM meeting. The definitions of child maltreatment, risk, safety and immediate danger were explained. The guidelines for taking actions if a child was determined to be in immediate danger were also reviewed and discussed.

opportunities provided to field staff as well as all best practice and program (development) related training.

A Central Office workgroup, inactive in SFY 15, was established in previous reporting periods to develop competencies for mid/upper level management positions. This workgroup identified ten common duty areas from a review of functional job descriptions before becoming inactive. The Supervisory Practice Model also provides additional information from which to build recommendations for Mid/Upper Management training.

These work efforts will resume in the 2015-2019 CFSP and most likely into CFSP 2020-2024.

SFY 2015 Update: Development of Field Trainer Competencies

Due to the immense amount of work related to the implementation of several IV-E Waiver interventions described above, many of the efforts related to the development of Field Trainer competencies was put on hold during the latter half of SFY 2015.

However, program development efforts did include:

- Delivery at the July 21-22, 2014 Academic Partnership Meeting of a training for Field Trainers focused around Advanced Practice Education (APE) requests for FSWs and Supervisors with one or more year of employment with the Division. The general goal for this training was to help Field Trainers work with FSWs and Supervisors to determine appropriate training objectives, including transfer of learning collaborative process planning.
- Convening a workgroup (composed of Academic Partners) to identify issues/concerns related to conducting strength and needs assessments of Field Trainers.
- Development and use of online content management processes. Current development work includes creating a Field Training Taxonomy to link IV-E Allowable training topics to established FSW and FSW Supervisor competencies. (2015-2019 CFSP).
- A professional development opportunity, a *Trauma Informed Practice Refresher*, for Field Trainers held on February 9, 2015

At the February 2015 Academic Partnership Meeting, members were asked to consider what their own training needs and any existing training resources that might be considered. During SFY 2016, the Academic Partnership Training Design Manager will utilize this information to focus on field training modules related to training needs identified by Field Trainers.

SFY 2015 Update: Training System Outcome Measures

The Division has communicated the need to formally review and update the current evaluative processes within the Academic Partnership. The Training Skills and Development Team (TSDT) is responsible for leading this effort. To help support this, a Hornby Zeller Quality Assurance Manager is a member of TSDT.

At the October 29, 2014 TSDT meeting, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville presented a technical infrastructure for a training evaluation system in support of CQI processes.

At the May 8, 2015 Academic Partnership Meeting the Knowledge and Technology for the Academic Partnership also discussed Knowledge Net groups (virtual groups) and how the groups can be used to facilitate communication related to best practices and how to improve or enhance elements of mandated trainings provided by the Academic Partnership such as the trauma informed trainings and Managing Difficult Encounters trainings.

- Identified areas for future exploration:
 - Creating stronger links of classroom skill ratings with OJT activities and supervisory review processes.
 - Defining additional structure to Phase II of Field Training for New Staff (after new worker training and OJT is completed). The Individual Training Plans developed after New Staff Training is currently the starting point for this phase of field training.
 - Considering joint skill assessment through a collaborative process between the supervisor Classroom Trainer and Field Trainer. For example, the Supervisor observes and rates the new worker's practice (could be a staffing, a home visit, court testimony, etc.) and the trainers also observe and rate the new worker's practice in same areas. Parties would then meet and discuss training needs.
 - Looking at/research methodologies for gathering data to improve efficiencies in system.

Training System Overview

DCFS currently has nine (9) contracts with a number of universities known as the Academic Partnership for Public Child Welfare. This group conducts the majority of DCFS professional development training.

The Academic Partnership also provides a system of educational support through "Field Trainers" who work directly in DCFS field offices on a variety of issues. As DCFS continues its review of the State's training system, the Field Trainers will continue providing support to new and experienced workers.

1. Maintaining the exchange of information between the Division and our training partners. Representatives from our training partnership are now engaged in a number of planning meetings and/or discussions in which they did not previously have the opportunity to participate. This includes participation in:
 - a. Routine meetings with Executive Staff and CHRIS representatives.
 - b. Conference calls and meetings with key Executive Staff members related to new initiatives and contract renewal issues.
 - c. Central Office Area Director meetings - when appropriate.
 - d. Quality assurance information exchanges related to COR and other reporting mechanisms.

- e. Presentations related to new tools the Division may be considering.
- f. Conference calls and meetings with other training professionals who are developing training programs outside of the partnership. This helps us ensure congruency of practice messages.
- g. Central Office participation in staff training events developed by training partners and other professional training entities.
- h. PDU participation in local training development meetings with the Area Director and IV-E University Coordinator.

The Division knows it wants field and classroom trainers to support the development of supervisory leadership skills in new and innovative ways. DCFS believes front line supervisors are the key to our success in changing practice behaviors across the state.

Currently front line supervisory practices (from a system perspective) remain a challenge to successfully implementing change in the system. While training alone does not address this issue in its entirety, it certainly supports the change effort.

SFY 2015 Update:

- The contract for SFY 2016 was updated to continue to reflect the work the Division expects of the Academic Partnership and includes budget increases for additional part-time foster parent trainers/home study providers and references to upcoming IV-E Waiver activities and training.
- As previously reported UAF continues to build Knowledge Net, a responsive web management system. During SFY 2015 a master training calendar to help coordinate and track various training initiatives was added to Knowledge Net.

Current In-Service Training

New staff training (and related on-the-job activities) for Family Service Workers and Family Service Worker Supervisors has been approved by the DCFS Executive Staff and is provided by UALR MidSOUTH Training Academy (classroom) and the IV-E Partners (on-the-job activities).

The curriculum is based on worker and supervisor competencies developed by the Institute for Human Services (IHS).

MidSOUTH provides this statewide training program through five regional training academies located in Little Rock, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, Arkadelphia, and Monticello allowing new staff closer access to both office and home. When a new employee is hired, s/he is scheduled for training within the first two weeks of employment.

New Staff Training for Program Assistants (PAs) is currently based on a modified version of the Family Service Worker in-service training and does not have an on-the-job component.

New DCFS supervisors are also expected to complete the Departmental (DHS) Supervisor training prior to attending additional training provided by MidSOUTH.

The DHS Leadership Series includes:

- DHS 4-Day Supervisor Training (with update training every 5 years) includes PPES, Administrative Policy, and EEO Laws. Hiring Procedures and Grievances, Cultural Diversity, and Interpersonal Communications.
- DHS Leadership in a High Performance Culture.

New Staff Training (provided by MidSOUTH) for DCFS supervisors maintains a focus on leadership skills within the context of child welfare and the administrative, educational, and supportive roles a supervisor plays which makes this program uniquely different than the DHS series.

SFY 2015 Updates as of June 19, 2015:

New Staff Training

- 203 FSWs have completed NST of the 258 FSWs who have been hired since July 1, 2014
- 37 FSWs of the 258 FSWs who have been hired since July 1, 2014 are currently participating in NST or are registered to begin a NST beginning July 2015
- 28 FSWs of the 258 FSWs who have been hired since July 1, 2014 have already left the agency
 - Of those 28 FSWs, 7 left the agency before completing NST
- Reasons for remaining staff hired in SFY 2015 but who have not yet completed, participating in, or registered for a scheduled training include those staff who have been hired but are currently waitlisted until a NST is scheduled for their particular MidSOUTH Training Academy.

Between February 12 and March 20, 2015 MidSOUTH attempted to survey 153 FSWs who completed UALR/MidSOUTH New Staff Training from March 1, 2014-February 10, 2015. The survey covered all aspects of the training model including classroom training, CHRIS training, and field training. On this same date, emails were also sent to the 74 Supervisors on record for these FSWs asking them to relate their experiences with New Staff Training for these workers.

Thirty-six of the 153 FSWs responded to the survey and 15 of the 74 Supervisors responded giving valuable information about the training designed for this crucial position. Please see Attachment B for the survey results.

In SFY 2016, PDU will explore the possibility of revising the SFY 2017 UALR contract deliverable regarding the administration of the NST survey to FSWs and Supervisors. More specifically, PDU will ask MidSOUTH to survey all staff who completed NST for June 1 to June 1 of the following year to more closely correspond with state fiscal year dates thereby providing more consistency in the timeframes utilized for other training-related reports.

New Program Assistant Training

- 34 PAs of the 53 PAs hired since July 1, 2014 have completed New PA Training
- 14 PAs of the 53 PAs hired since July 1, 2014 are currently participating in New PA Training
- 3 PAs of the 53 PAs hired since July 1, 2014 left the agency prior to completing New PA Training

New Supervisor Training

To date for SFY 2015:

- 29 Supervisors of the 29 Supervisors who have been hired or promoted since July 1, 2014 have completed the classroom-based New Supervisor Training

New Staff Training Attendance/Exemption Procedures

DCFS Family Service Workers or Family Service Worker Supervisors returning to field work after a one (1) year break in service are required to attend New Staff Training unless an exemption request is approved.

DCFS Family Service Workers or Family Service Worker Supervisors returning to the field within one (1) year of previous employment with the Division (in the same or similar job classification) are considered exempt from New Staff Training.

For staff considered exempt from training, the hiring supervisor will develop a training plan with the field trainer to address any knowledge/skill areas s/he would like addressed with the returning employee.

Exemption requests (approved by Area Directors) for returning staff with one year or more break in service are submitted to the Professional Development Unit for additional review and final approval.

The request will include the following information:

1. Details of the previous DCFS trainings and/or other child welfare related trainings.
2. Date and time of the previous training and the relevance to current job duties.
3. Description of existing knowledge and skills related to job duties, including previous performance evaluations.
4. Copies of the training certificates or letter of attendance.

After review of this information, the Assistant Director of Community Services will notify the Professional Development Unit (PDU) of the decision.

The Professional Development Unit will notify the Area Director and MidSOUTH of the exemption disposition.

Actual credit hours will not be awarded to an employee who is exempted from a mandated training topic.

If, after granting an exemption for a class, the employee's skills are viewed as unacceptable, the employee will be required to attend the class for which exemption was awarded. Credit hours would then be awarded for completion of the attended training event.

DCFS Family Service Workers returning to field work in Family Service Extra Help positions will not be expected to attend the full New Staff Training series. Extra Help positions are temporary and can only be used for a period of six months. The hiring DCFS Supervisor will assess the skills of the former Family Service Worker and will base his/her duty assignments on that person's assessed strengths. Typically the Division avoids hiring FSW personnel into these positions but this hiring practice does sometimes occur.

New Worker Initial Caseload Assignments

Due to the intensity of the NST, on-the-job training requirements, and local office workload capacity issues, caseload assignment decisions will be based on an incremental model.

This model supports skill development in such a way the worker is more prepared to accept full caseload responsibilities at the completion of NST.

Supervisors will make caseload assignment decisions by considering the following factors:

1. Type of family case.
2. Complexities surrounding the family issues (Example: Sexual Abuse, Chronic Neglect, and Failure to Thrive).
3. Current number of completed training modules.
4. Experience and skill at time of hire.
5. Local plan of support for the new worker, including IV-E partner contact and supervisory support.

Continuing Education Requirements

Employees of DCFS are mandated to attend a minimum number of job-related training each year.

The following identifies the number of required continuing education hours based on the job function.

- Program staff (field staff with direct client contact and caseloads), Family Service Worker (FSW) classification, Area Managers - Twenty-four (24) annual hours required.

The mandated annual trainings *Managing Difficult Encounters with Families and A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Trauma Assessment* are applied to the above hours.

- Program Support staff (direct client contact with secondary case assignments or no caseload), Nurses, Health Service Workers, Health Service Specialists, Program Assistant, Transitional Youth Services Coordinator - Fifteen (15) annual hours required.

The mandated annual trainings *Managing Difficult Encounters with Families and A Comprehensive and Compassionate Approach to Trauma Assessment* are applied to the above hours.

- Non-program staff (administrative support, office personnel, administration having no direct client contact [DCFS Central Office] including DCFS Executive Staff - Fifteen (15) annual hours required.

- Volunteers serving in a foster or adoptive care capacity for DCFS - Thirty (30) hours pre-approval and fifteen (15) annual hours required after the first year of approval.

The above training hour requirement for adoptive homes stops upon completion of the adoptive process.

- Volunteers not serving in a foster or adoptive capacity, such as community volunteers or interns, are required to attend five (5) hours per year.
- All DCFS child welfare program field staff who have or may have contact with clients are required to maintain certification in first aid and CPR (infant, child and adult) provided at DCFS' expense through either the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, and the National Safety Council.

The time frame used to determine if the above requirements have been met is based on the calendar year.

Current Foster Parent Pre-Service Training
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The state uses the Foster/Adopt PRIDE (Parents' Resource for Information, Development, and Education) training curriculum as the Foster Parent pre-service training program.

This curriculum was developed by the Child Welfare League of America.

SFY 2015 Update:

PDU continues to meet with the Foster Care Unit and MidSOUTH Foster Parent Program Manager. While considerations are still being given to changing the pre-service training program for resource families no final decisions have been made.

895 prospective foster/adoptive parents (individuals) completed PRIDE pre-service training in SFY 2015. Of this total, 346 participants are listed as kinship or other and 4 are identified as fictive kin.

Foster Parent CPR Certification

All foster and adoptive parents are also required to be certified in First Aid and CPR. In addition, all homes are required to complete and maintain certification in First Aid, but only foster family (non-relative) homes are required to attend and maintain full certification covering infant-child-adult CPR.

Other homes, if only accepting fostering of relatives, are required to complete and maintain certification in the (categories listed below) for the ages of the children they accept.

1. Infant (birth through one (1) year of age).
2. Child (one (1) year through eight (8) years of age).
3. Adult (age eight (8) years of age through adulthood).

Acceptable national training providers include the following: American Red Cross; American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, and EMS Safety Services.

The Division allows for foster or adoptive family members to receive certification using online training programs established by the above providers. This approval is based on the condition that the certification process includes in person demonstration of the learned skill in front of a certified instructor.

The foster parent must adhere to and be responsible for maintaining his/her certification requirements since various certification time frames occur with the acceptable CPR provider group (1 or 2 years),

Note: Foster parents must maintain certification in CPR and First Aid to remain opened as a DCFS foster home, but these training hours are not used to meet the continuing education requirements outlined previously.

DCFS is responsible for scheduling First Aid and CPR training for these homes. Foster/adoptive homes will be reimbursed for successful completion of classes scheduled through DCFS using in-house or approved training providers.

Central Office Staff Training

Each hiring supervisor reviews a new employee's skills and experiences to determine necessary training related to job functions. Both incumbent and new employees are evaluated through the annual PPES (Performance and Evaluation) process. Training issues may be addressed through development of individual training plans that target specific skill development.

DCFS Central Office employees are permitted to attend training found applicable to their job performance. Supervisors may use formal training events, as well as media such as videotape, CD, DVD, printed material or through interview/shadowing of a topic expert.

Additional Training Opportunities

Additional training opportunities for DCFS employees and resource families include attendance in training events offered by other state and local community providers.

Regular training conferences include:

- Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health Annual Conference
- Arkansas Human Services Employees Conference (AHSEA)
- MidSOUTH Summer Conference for Integrative Health (formerly MidSOUTH Summer School)
- Annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference (MidSOUTH)
- DCFS Area Training Meetings
- Academic Partnership Regional Training Conferences
- Mental Health Institute
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Annual Conference

- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Conference (Division of Youth Services)

Several of the larger state conferences provide a limited number of scholarships for DCFS staff and foster parents.

DCFS currently serves on many of the planning committees for many of the above events. Future plans include expanding DCFS involvement to include speaking at these events and/or offering workshops related to shared child welfare/practice issues.

The Division believes this type of direct involvement will strengthen our collaborative relationships with these community providers.

These providers include:

- Administrative Office of the Courts
- Child Care and Early Childhood Education & Child Care
- Local Provider Associations
- Juvenile Justice
- System of Care
- Other relevant providers

Training Records and Attendance Documentation

- All participation by DCFS staff and volunteers in Academic Partnership-sponsored training events are recorded in a training database maintained by the sponsoring institution.
- UAF is responsible for gathering attendance information from their seven sub-contracted university training partners and for maintaining a centralized training records database.
- 2015-2019 CFSP: All MidSOUTH training records are uploaded weekly to CHRIS via an interface file. UAF and CHRIS capacity issues have slowed the progress on updating the interface file format. This is expected to be completed at the end of SFY 2015.
- DCFS staff with a “supervisor” level of security may view and print employee training records from the CHRIS system.
- Central Office supervisory staff and Area Directors (or designees) will initiate and maintain a CFS-381 Employee Training Record for all employees. Supervisors will enter all attended training on the form and include copies of attendance verification within the folder.
- Area Directors (or designee) will enter all non-Partnership training attendance into CHRIS through the Training Toolbar function. Central Office supervisors (or designee) will likewise enter their employee’s non-Partnership training into the CHRIS training database.

- Both MidSOUTH and the Academic Partnership will provide documentation of training attendance to participants in the form of a certificate, copy of the sign-in sheet or a letter of attendance.

Employee Career Advancement

The State personnel system no longer includes a career ladder incentive program (CLIP). This means employees wishing to advance into higher salaried positions must do so by following the established hiring process.

This process includes but is not limited to:

1. Submission of a formal employment application.
2. Met minimum qualifications for a position.
3. Met benchmarking standards (if applicable).
4. Interview
5. Selection

Stipend Program (BSW & Other Related Degrees)

The purpose of the DCFS Child Welfare Student Stipend Program is to hire more employees with degrees in social work and/or social work-related degrees.

DCFS Policy XI-C establishes guidelines for administering the DCFS Child Welfare Student Stipend Program.

University student stipend applicants first interview with the University IV-E Coordinator to determine if the student is a good candidate for the program. Applications and other related paperwork are submitted to the DCFS Professional Development Unit for review and processing.

Upon receipt of all record background checks and forms, the application packet is forwarded to the Division Director for approval.

If approved, students are awarded a two semester stipend (in most cases) in the applicant's senior year. Upon graduation, the student is hired by the Division in an IV-E allowable position and must remain (as a condition of the stipend agreement) employed for a minimum of one (1) year.

Acceptable degrees for stipend applicants are identical to the minimum qualifications for employment as a DCFS Family Service Worker, which are the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in social work, sociology, psychology or a related field. Related fields are identified as:

- ✓ Child and Family Development
- ✓ Child Development
- ✓ Counseling (any field of Counseling)
- ✓ Family Development

- ✓ Family Services
- ✓ Human Development and Family Studies
- ✓ Human Services
- ✓ Rehabilitation Science
- ✓ Social Welfare
- ✓ Behavior Science
- ✓ Criminal Justice
- ✓ Education (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level, Secondary, and Special Education)
- ✓ Home Economics/Family and Consumer Science

SFY 2015 Update:

The Division Director agreed to maintain the number of SFY 2016 stipend allotments for each Academic Partner University. The Division has also committed for the second year in a row to place a stipend in his/her first county preference of employment upon graduation. This commitment has been renewed for SFY16 in an effort to determine if retention of stipends beyond the first year of employment can be connected to being placed in the county he/she selects to work versus being placed in a county the Division identifies for the stipend.

The PDU Training Coordinator continued conducting annual exit interviews with stipend and non-stipend interns completing a total of 32 exit interviews for SFY 2015. The purpose of these interviews is to assess the quality of the interns' experiences and to help develop a DCFS Intern Program Management Guide. The PDU Training Coordinator is currently preparing a report to summarize the feedback received during exit interviews and general observations during the SFY 2015 stipend selection process. This report will then be used bolster continuous quality improvement efforts within the DCFS internship program.

Using feedback gathered from exit interviews and factoring in the implementation of the DCFS Hiring Guide for new FSWs, PDU prepared a final version of a DCFS Intern [Stipend/non-Stipend] Management Guide in SFY 2015. This final version is currently under review by Area Directors and IV-E University Coordinators. After receiving feedback from Area Directors and IV-E University Coordinators, PDU plans to review and distribute the final version of the DCFS Intern Program Management Guide at the July 30-31, 2015 Quarterly Partnership Meeting and the July 31, 2015 DCFS Statewide Quarterly Supervisor Meeting.

Revisions to this final version of the DCFS Intern Program Management Guide include:

- Clarifying steps related to the transition from a stipend student to a DCFS employee.
- Addressing concerns related to utilizing questions from the FSW Hiring Guide for students with limited professional experience.
- Including instructions regarding steps to be taken if a former stipend student resigns from the Division before completing a full year of employment with the Division.

Master of Social Work (MSW) Educational Leave Program

The DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program helps the Division employ an increased number of persons who possess an MSW degree working in programs throughout the state.

DCFS Policy XI-B establishes guidelines for administering the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program and addresses both full and part-time agreements.

Candidates must first gain acceptance from the University with an MSW Graduate Program before DCFS considers an application for this program.

In addition, an applicant must be a current employee with two (2) years of continuous service immediately prior to applying. Policy and the agreement mandate a work payback of two (2) months for every one (1) month spent in school.

SFY 2015 Update:

The MSW stipend program remains suspended. The Division is, however, accepting MSW non-stipend intern placements where it can be supported by county staff.