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An Audit Report on

# **Caseload and Staffing Analysis for Child Protective Services at the Department of Family and Protective Services**

May 2013

Report No. 13-036



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## Overall Conclusion

The Department of Family and Protective Services' (Department) competitive starting salaries for Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers and its recruitment strategies helped it hire 1,704 CPS caseworkers in fiscal year 2012. Despite its hiring efforts, the Department experienced average vacancy rates as high as 15.9 percent and turnover rates as high as 34.3 percent in some regions for the same time period. Although the Department offers competitive starting salaries to CPS caseworkers, the Department loses significant ground on salary competitiveness<sup>1</sup> by the time CPS caseworkers reach the second level of their career tracks, which complicates the Department's efforts to retain tenured staff (see Chapter 1).

While compensation issues are among the most common reasons that departing caseworkers give for leaving the Department<sup>2</sup>, there are other factors that lead to high caseworker turnover that the Department can also address. To reduce vacancy rates and better control caseloads, the Department should improve its efforts to retain qualified caseworkers. Specifically, the Department should:

- Improve the way it rewards caseworker performance.
- Strengthen its oversight of the regional offices to help ensure that administrative processes do not unnecessarily increase caseworkers' workloads.
- Analyze its recruitment and hiring strategies to help ensure that it is hiring caseworkers who are more likely to perform well and stay with the Department.

<sup>1</sup> The Department conducted a salary study in December 2012 comparing Texas to four neighboring states.

<sup>2</sup> Auditors reviewed the reported results from the State Auditor's Office's exit survey of state workers who voluntarily leave employment.

This audit was conducted in accordance with Texas Government Code, Section 321.013.

For more information regarding this report, please contact Nicole Guerrero, Audit Manager, or John Keel, State Auditor, at (512) 936-9500.

### Child Protective Services

The purpose of the Department of Family and Protective Services' (Department) Child Protective Services (CPS) Division is to:

- Conduct civil investigations of reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Protect children from abuse and neglect.
- Promote the safety, integrity, and stability of families.
- Find permanent homes or living arrangements for children who cannot safely remain with their families.

In fiscal year 2012, the Department averaged 8,064.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) CPS employees, including 4,551.7 FTE caseworkers and 741.7 FTE supervisors.

In fiscal year 2012, there were 275,961 alleged child victims of abuse and/or neglect and 97,688 children in confirmed investigations. In addition, 16,792 children were removed from their homes.

Source: The Department's 2012 Databook.

- Strengthen its processes for selecting, training, and evaluating caseworker supervisors.

Auditors communicated other, less significant issues regarding calculations of caseload performance measures and improvements to the system controls for case approvals and closures separately in writing to the Department.

## **Key Points**

**The Department's annual performance evaluations of CPS investigation caseworkers concentrate on the caseworkers' timeliness in addressing case activities and closures.**

Because of turnover among caseworker positions, CPS caseworkers routinely inherit delinquent cases from departing caseworkers. As a result, the inheriting caseworker has little-to-no control over timeliness for many of his or her cases. The Department should revise its annual performance evaluations to more fairly assess caseworker performance.

In addition, as of February 2013, at least 40 percent of CPS staff had not received annual performance evaluations in the previous year. Those annual performance evaluations were required for staff to be eligible to receive a merit award.

**The Department does not use performance as the main criterion for promotion.**

Caseworkers must take a set of courses leading to certification to be eligible for promotion.<sup>3</sup> In high-turnover, heavy-caseload areas, the highest performing caseworkers may not have the time to take the courses to make them eligible for promotion.

**The Department's actions may make it more difficult for caseworkers to manage their workloads.**

Caseworkers' workloads may increase because of the additional travel burden placed on them because of a lack of support staff or how cases are assigned to the caseworkers. The Department should analyze workload processes to restore support staff positions and review regional processes to minimize caseworkers' workloads.

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<sup>3</sup> Caseworkers also must meet minimum performance requirements.

**The Department should analyze its recruitment strategies and its pre-interview candidate assessment instrument to determine whether it is efficiently using resources to hire employees who are going to stay with the Department.**

The Department does not assess the success of its recruitment activities to determine which activities best identify and recruit employees who are more likely to stay with the Department. In addition, the Department uses a pre-interview screening instrument to identify suitable caseworker applicants, but it does not analyze the different characteristics (such as personality traits or skills) that are required for the different types of caseworkers.

**The Department should strengthen processes for selecting, training, and evaluating caseworker supervisors.**

The Department has not developed procedures to help ensure that it selects the most qualified individuals to serve as caseworker supervisors. Additionally, it should ensure that supervisors are adequately trained prior to assuming supervisory duties. Approximately 60 percent of supervisors promoted to their positions since fiscal year 2011 had received the required training as of January 2013, and the majority of the supervisors who received the training received it late. The Department also should consistently provide annual performance evaluations to caseworker supervisors. As of September 2012, at least 40 percent of supervisors were not evaluated in the previous year.

## ***Summary of Management's Response***

The Department agreed with the recommendations in this report. The Department's detailed management responses are presented immediately following each set of recommendations in the Detailed Results section of this report.

## ***Summary of Information Technology Review***

Auditors assessed the reliability of caseload data used in the audit by conducting a review of general and application controls over the Department's Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) system. Auditors also reviewed employee and training data by (1) comparing data to other sources of data, (2) analyzing key data elements for completeness and reasonableness, and (3) interviewing Department employees knowledgeable about the data. Auditors determined that the data was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this audit.

## ***Summary of Objectives, Scope, and Methodology***

The objectives of this audit were to:

- Determine whether the Department complies with state law, regulations, and relevant provisions of the General Appropriations Act in administering selected CPS strategies, including the hiring of direct delivery staff and management of caseloads.
- Determine whether the Department has adequate processes and related controls to help ensure that its reported performance measure results for selected CPS strategies are reliable and that the Department uses those results to help manage the associated programs.

This report is the second of two reports addressing the objectives. The sub-objective for this report was to determine whether the Department has processes to monitor caseloads and whether its recruitment and retention efforts are effective.

The scope included reviewing and analyzing CPS training, staffing, caseloads, and recruitment and retention efforts for fiscal year 2011, fiscal year 2012, and part of fiscal year 2013. In addition, auditors performed a limited review of four key performance measures related to turnover and average daily caseload. Auditors performed interviews with CPS staff (caseworkers, supervisors, program directors, program administrators, and regional management) and Department staff (hiring specialists) at four regions in selected offices, as well as with Department staff at the state office. The four regions visited were Arlington, Austin, Houston, and Midland.

The methodology included collecting and reviewing information and documentation, analyzing CPS caseworker staffing levels and caseloads, and interviewing management and staff at the Department. Auditors also reviewed Department data related to salaries, turnover, and caseloads. In addition, auditors selected four key performance measures for limited review.

# Contents

## *Detailed Results*

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Chapter 1	
The Department Should Strengthen Its Efforts to Retain Tenured CPS Caseworkers.....	1
Chapter 2	
The Department Should Improve Caseload Management, Analyze Recruiting and Hiring Efforts, and Support Caseworkers to Ensure That It Hires and Retains the Most Qualified Individuals to Serve as CPS Caseworkers.....	7

## *Appendices*

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Appendix 1	
Objectives, Scope, and Methodology .....	20
Appendix 2	
Average Tenure and Vacancy Rates for Each Caseworker Type by Region .....	24
Appendix 3	
Average Daily Caseload for Each Caseworker Type by Region.....	27
Appendix 4	
Salary Study for Texas and Neighboring States .....	29
Appendix 5	
Delinquent Investigation Cases by Region .....	30
Appendix 6	
Fiscal Year 2009 and 2012 Statistics by Department of Family and Protective Services' Regions.....	31
Appendix 7	
Related State Auditor's Office Work .....	32

# Detailed Results

## Chapter 1

### ***The Department Should Strengthen Its Efforts to Retain Tenured CPS Caseworkers***

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The Department of Family and Protective Services (Department) has responded to high turnover among its Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers by concentrating its efforts on recruiting individuals to fill vacant positions. While the Department recruited 1,704 caseworkers in fiscal year 2012, it should improve its efforts to retain tenured caseworkers.

The Department conducts hiring fairs and interviews, and it offers recruitment bonuses in some areas to create incentives for individuals to choose careers as CPS caseworkers. Caseworkers' starting salaries are competitive, but salaries for more tenured caseworkers are not as competitive and may make it difficult for the Department to retain tenured staff.

Despite its hiring efforts, the Department experienced average vacancy rates as high as 15.9 percent and reported turnover rates of more than 30 percent in 5 of its 11 regions. One region's turnover rate was as high as 34.3 percent for fiscal year 2012.<sup>4</sup>

The Department should improve its efforts to retain its tenured caseworkers by improving the way it rewards caseworker performance.

Consistently providing annual performance evaluations that more fairly assesses caseworker performance and basing promotions and other recognitions on that performance may help address caseworker concerns about opportunities for advancement at the Department. The Department also could provide tenured caseworkers more opportunities for recognition and advancement.

Providing greater opportunities for recognition and advancement could help the Department reduce turnover among tenured caseworkers who have already proven their ability to handle their jobs. As shown in Table 1 on the next page, the Department determined in a salary study it conducted that it pays a competitive starting salary to incoming caseworkers; however, it loses significant ground in comparison to caseworkers in neighboring states by the time caseworkers reach the next level. (See Appendix 4 for salaries of CPS caseworkers by position level.)

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 for average vacancy rates for all regions of Texas between September 2010 and September 2012 and Appendix 6 for average turnover rates for all regions for fiscal year 2012.

Table 1

Average Salaries for CPS Caseworkers in Texas and Neighboring States			
Location	Entry-level Position	Second-level Position	Highest Level Position
Texas	\$34,656	\$37,104	\$40,560
Neighboring States <sup>a</sup>	\$33,410	\$41,058	\$42,717
Percentage Difference	3.6%	-10.7%	-5.3%

<sup>a</sup> Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Arkansas were included in the Department's salary study required by House Bill 753 (82nd Legislature, Regular Session). See Appendix 4 for salaries of CPS caseworkers for Texas and neighboring states by position level.

Source: The Department's Child Protective Services Salary Study, December 2012.

The Department's pay increases for caseworkers are infrequent and mostly one-time merit awards. The Health and Human Services Commission has a freeze on merit awards, but it granted permission for up to 20 percent of Department staff to receive a merit award in fiscal year 2012. As a result, the Department reported in its February 2013 recruitment and retention report that selected CPS caseworkers in 41 counties received either a one-time merit award or a salary increase. Of the \$3.55 million in merit awards given from September 1, 2011, through February 28, 2013, \$28,600 (or less than 1.0 percent) were salary increases. The remaining 99.2 percent were one-time merit awards. Of the \$28,600 in salary increases, approximately \$4,930 (17.2 percent) was given to CPS caseworkers and supervisors.<sup>5</sup> The infrequency and limited coverage of merit awards may be part of the reason caseworkers stated that there were few opportunities for advancement.

The Department may adversely affect caseworker morale by rewarding newly hired caseworkers for skills that tenured caseworkers can obtain. During fiscal years 2012 and 2013, the Department gave recruitment bonuses and base salary increases to some newly hired caseworkers. Caseworkers who were already employed at CPS at the time those pay increases were offered expressed disappointment that the Department gave salary increases to incoming caseworkers who had certain skills, such as proficiency in Spanish or social work degrees, that existing caseworkers can obtain, but for which the tenured caseworkers cannot receive additional compensation. The effect of giving bonuses to new caseworkers for skills that more tenured caseworkers can obtain may reinforce employees' views that there are few opportunities to advance and may lead to higher turnover among tenured CPS caseworkers.

<sup>5</sup> Eight caseworkers received a total of \$880 in salary increases, and 30 supervisors received a total of \$4,050 in salary increases.

The Department should improve the way it evaluates and promotes CPS caseworkers.

The Department's performance evaluations do not fairly assess caseworker performance. The Department's annual performance evaluations of investigation caseworkers rely primarily on standards of timeliness for performance criteria. However, caseworkers in many areas work in a high-turnover, heavy-caseload environment in which they have little control over how promptly they can process and complete cases. In those areas, it is common for caseworkers to inherit from departing caseworkers "abandoned" cases, many of which were already delinquent or backlogged when the new caseworkers inherited them (see Appendix 5 for delinquent investigation cases by region). The Department does not distinguish between cases that are inherited and cases originally assigned to a caseworker. Some Department staff described the first section of the Department's annual performance evaluation form, which focuses on whether a caseworker met the pre-established standards of timeliness, as "meaningless." Other caseworkers resented receiving poor performance evaluations based partly on the delinquent inherited cases. The second section of the Department's performance evaluation form provides supervisors the opportunity to provide additional information about a caseworker's performance. According to Department staff, the first and second sections of the performance evaluation often contradict each other because the supervisor can rate a caseworker's performance high when the ratings for the objective performance standards (the first section) are low. That contradiction could be a strong indicator that the performance standards the Department uses inappropriately measure caseworker performance.

The problems caseworkers and supervisors perceive in the Department's current performance evaluation standards may help explain the Department's poor compliance rate with its policy that each employee receive an annual performance evaluation. According to the Department, as of February 2013, at least 40 percent of CPS staff had not received an annual performance evaluation in the previous year.

Additionally, the Department's policy for selecting employees for the merit awards discussed above required that employees have a current performance evaluation to be considered for a merit award. As a result, at the time the merit awards were given, a significant portion of the Department's staff were disqualified from receiving a merit award because of factors unrelated to performance. The caseworkers' lack of control over factors that directly affect their pay and advancement may be one factor that leads to high turnover among CPS employees.

Promotions of CPS caseworkers are not based primarily on performance. To gain a promotion, the Department requires caseworkers to complete a set of training courses leading to a certification. While promotion depends on a minimum level of performance, the certification is the main criterion. Caseworkers in

high-turnover, heavy-caseload areas told auditors that they had not been promoted because they did not feel that they could take the time away from their casework to complete the required certification. By using criteria other than performance as the primary basis for promotion, the Department has created the potential that some of the most experienced, hardest working caseworkers cannot be promoted.

## Recommendations

The Department should:

- Provide tenured employees with the same pay increases for special skills as it provides to newly hired caseworkers.
- Consider expanding the use of retention bonuses (authorized by Section 3.07, page IX-20, the General Appropriations Act [82nd Legislature]) for tenured caseworkers.
- Revise annual performance evaluations to more appropriately assess caseworker performance.
- Consider separating inherited cases from those originally assigned to caseworkers for the purposes of evaluating case timeliness.
- Ensure that supervisors consistently provide annual performance evaluations to caseworkers by the end of each fiscal year.
- Consider revising its promotion processes to ensure that employees are rewarded for their productivity and the quality of their casework, in addition to progress with their certifications.
- Consider developing additional ways to recognize high-performing caseworkers.

## Management's Response

***The Department should:***

- ***Provide tenured employees with the same pay increases for special skills as it provides to newly hired caseworkers.***

*DFPS agrees to review any disparities that may exist as part of an on-going effort to be fair and equitable with staff. Based on the results, DFPS will work within established HHS HR policies and procedures to address any findings and will consider leveraging any funds allocated for merit raises.*

***Responsible Party:*** Director of Management Support Division

***Estimated Completion Date:*** April 30, 2014

- ***Consider expanding the use of retention bonuses (authorized by Section 3.07, page IX-20, the General Appropriations Act [82nd Legislature]) for tenured caseworkers.***

*DFPS agrees to expand the use of retention bonuses for tenured workers based on a review of their efficacy and as budget permits. DFPS has robust retention efforts underway and will be implementing additional retention efforts as directed by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature.*

***Responsible Party:*** Director of Management Support Division

***Estimated Completion Date:*** April 30, 2014

- ***Revise annual performance evaluations to more appropriately assess caseworker performance.***

*DFPS agrees. We will review the annual performance evaluation to ensure it adequately and appropriately assesses caseworker performance.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Special Projects Program Specialist

***Estimated Completion Date:*** February 28, 2014

- ***Consider separating inherited cases from those originally assigned to caseworkers for the purposes of evaluating case timeliness.***

*DFPS agrees. We will determine if Management Reporting and Statistics (MRS) is able to produce data on inherited cases and will change the annual performance evaluation to differentiate between inherited cases and those cases originally assigned to caseworkers for the purpose of evaluating case timeliness. If not, CPS will change the performance evaluation to ensure it accurately captures the timeliness of work performed by each individual caseworker given their assigned caseload.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Special Projects Program Specialist

***Estimated Completion Date:*** February 28, 2014

- **Ensure that supervisors consistently provide annual performance evaluations to caseworkers by the end of each fiscal year.**

*DFPS agrees. We will enforce the policy that performance evaluations must be completed annually. We will monitor the status of the evaluations through the report available to staff on the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS) and data warehouse.*

**Responsible Party:** *CPS Director of Field*

**Estimated Completion Date:** *October 31, 2013*

- **Consider revising its promotion processes to ensure that employees are rewarded for their productivity and the quality of their casework, in addition to progress with their certifications.**

*DFPS agrees to revise its promotion processes. CPS and CLOE recently reinstated the CPS Statewide Training Council. The council consists of members both at State Office and in the regions. The council meets on a quarterly basis. This topic will be added to the agenda for discussion. Guidance from this audit and the council will be incorporated into the promotion process.*

**Responsible Party:** *CPS Training Liaison and CPS Director of Field*

**Estimated Completion Date:** *January 31, 2014*

- **Consider developing additional ways to recognize high-performing caseworkers.**

*DFPS agrees. While CPS management at both the state office and regional levels recognize high performing staff in a number of ways, improvement in this area is always possible. Staff recognition is a topic of discussion in Supervisor Basic Skills Development (BSD) Training, the training required for new supervisors. We will ensure it is an ongoing topic of discussion with our Caseworker Advisory Committee, Supervisor Advisory Committee and Program Director Advisory Committee. The suggestions made by these committees and by agency leadership will be implemented with available resources.*

**Responsible Party:** *CPS Special Projects Program Specialist and Director of Field*

**Estimated Completion Date:** *October 31, 2013*

## ***The Department Should Improve Caseload Management, Analyze Recruiting and Hiring Efforts, and Support Caseworkers to Ensure That It Hires and Retains the Most Qualified Individuals to Serve as CPS Caseworkers***

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The Department hired 1,704 CPS caseworkers in fiscal year 2012 in an effort to address high turnover<sup>6</sup> in some regions. Even with the Department's recruiting and hiring efforts, vacancy rates<sup>7</sup> averaged as high as 15.9 percent in certain regions. With the high number of vacant CPS caseworker positions, some regions experienced very high caseloads managed by low-tenured caseworkers, which increases the need for supervisor support. See Appendix 2 for average tenure and vacancy rates for each caseworker type by region.

### Chapter 2-A

#### **The Department Should Improve Caseload Management and Analyze Recruiting and Hiring Efforts**

The Department, in its February 2013 recruitment and retention report, indicated that its efforts to manage CPS caseloads have focused on providing additional manpower, often short-term, because of insufficient resources and high caseloads. However, some of the Department's actions may make it more difficult for caseworkers to manage their caseloads. Specifically:

- The Department has decreased CPS staff support positions.
- Case assignments in some regions may cause higher workloads for some caseworkers due to increased travel requirements and caseworkers' lack of familiarity with available local resources.
- Investigation caseworkers do not receive required annual training.
- The Department could strengthen its analysis of the effectiveness of its recruiting and hiring of caseworkers who are more likely to perform well and stay with the Department.
- The Department should make a coordinated effort to maximize its Title IV-E program<sup>8</sup> to provide recruitment and training of conservatorship caseworkers.

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<sup>6</sup> Fiscal year 2012 turnover among CPS caseworkers ranged from 17.6 percent in the El Paso region to 34.3 percent in the Midland region (see Appendix 6).

<sup>7</sup> Fiscal year 2012 vacancy rates among CPS caseworkers ranged from 4.0 percent in the Beaumont region to 15.9 percent in the Midland and Austin regions (see Appendix 2).

<sup>8</sup> Through the Title IV-E program, Department regions can enter into contracts with public universities with accredited social work programs to receive federal funds to help in the education of conservatorship caseworkers.

In the first half of fiscal year 2013, 29.0 percent of CPS caseworkers who responded to the State Auditor’s Office’s exit survey said they left the Department because of poor working conditions, such as high caseloads. Caseworkers interviewed in four selected regions also mentioned high caseloads as a reason that caseworkers leave the Department. The average daily caseloads for fiscal year 2012 for the three types of caseworkers were:

**Types of Caseworkers**

An investigation caseworker conducts an investigation after the Department identifies a child abuse or neglect case.

A Family-based Safety Services caseworker primarily provides services in the home, when possible.

A conservatorship caseworker provides services to children who have been removed from their homes and placed into the Department’s care.

- Investigations: 24.7 cases.
- Family-based Safety Services: 14.3 cases.
- Conservatorship: 33.7 cases.

See Appendix 3 for average daily caseloads per quarter for each region and caseworker type.

**The Department should better support its caseworkers.**

**Unit Composition**

In addition to caseworkers and supervisors, each investigations unit has one human services technician or one administrative assistant. In contrast, each Family-based Safety Services and conservatorship unit has both a human services technician and an administrative assistant. In addition:

- An investigations unit has six caseworkers and one supervisor.
- A Family-based Safety Services unit has seven caseworkers and one supervisor.
- A conservatorship unit has seven caseworkers and one supervisor.

Source: Department management.

The Department reduced its workforce in fiscal year 2011 due to budget constraints, which reduced the number of support positions. To preserve caseworkers, the Department restructured its CPS units, resulting in one fewer support staff per investigations unit (see text box). Individuals in support positions often perform tasks related to cases and thereby make it easier for caseworkers to handle heavy caseloads. For example, human services technicians can help caseworkers with transporting children for appointments and visitations, and an administrative assistant can make case-related telephone calls or perform data entry.

In addition, residential child care contractors are contractually responsible for providing and arranging travel for children in their care. However, the Department has not enforced that requirement and, due to the loss of human services technicians, caseworkers have

primary responsibility for those tasks. Those additional duties increase caseworkers’ workloads and travel expenses.

Support staff is generally assigned to a unit, but in some regions they also provide services, such as mailroom operator and front desk receptionist, for an entire office. That decreases the amount of assistance the support staff can provide the caseworkers in their assigned units. Other regions are able to rotate their support staff into officewide support positions so that the majority of a support position’s time is still spent supporting the caseworkers in the assigned unit.

**The Department should analyze how cases are assigned.**

Case assignments may negatively affect caseworkers’ workloads. In one of the regions that auditors visited, regional management had changed the case assignment system to try to address heavy caseloads in certain areas.

However, the solution was a general rotation in which all caseworkers receive cases from anywhere in the county (Harris County), which is a large geographic area. Caseworkers stated that the general rotation significantly increased their travel time and, therefore, significantly increased their workloads. Previously, cases were assigned to caseworkers for specific zip codes within Harris County, which reduced the amount of travel and provided caseworkers time to become familiar with an area and the availability of local resources. Assigning cases by zip codes also is useful for caseworkers who are specifically trained to address the disproportionality<sup>9</sup> of children removed from their homes that may be more prevalent in certain zip codes.

The Department should ensure that all CPS investigation caseworkers complete required training.

The Department does not ensure that CPS investigation caseworkers complete the 20 hours of training required by Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Section 700.519. Additionally, the Department stated that it has not determined whether its current training meets the annual training requirements and, in interviews, CPS investigation caseworkers said they were unaware of those training requirements. Caseworkers who are not adequately trained may struggle with their caseloads. Investigation caseworkers who regularly attend training may be able to more effectively handle their caseloads while becoming more familiar with applicable rules and available resources. Receiving regular training also could familiarize caseworkers with case management best practices that could improve efficiency and reduce caseloads and turnover.

The Department should track and better analyze the effectiveness of its recruiting strategies.

While the Department's hiring specialists perform a variety of recruitment activities and report those activities in the Department's semi-annual Human Resources Management Plan, the Department does not assess the success of the activities. For example, most regions use job fairs at local universities to recruit caseworkers. The hiring specialists also use online advertisements, newspaper advertisements, and social media to recruit CPS employees in hard-to-fill areas, such as the Midland region. The Department logs and routinely reports on those activities; however, it does not analyze the results of those activities when determining where to focus its recruiting resources.

Analyzing which recruitment activities worked best would allow the Department to allocate resources to the more successful activities. In addition, analyzing the success rates of individuals hired by those means could help the Department determine which activities help identify and recruit employees who are more likely to stay with the Department.

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<sup>9</sup> Disproportionality is defined as the overrepresentation of a group of people in a program or system.

**Title IV-E Program (Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance)**

Department regions can enter into contracts with public universities with accredited social work programs to receive federal funds to help in the education of conservatorship caseworkers. Those caseworkers are contractually obligated to work for CPS for a designated amount of time after graduation.

Sources: Social Security Act, Title IV, Part E, Section 474(3)(a), and the Department.

The Department should ensure that it maximizes its Title IV-E programs for recruitment and training of caseworkers.

The Department does not have a coordinated statewide approach for ensuring that it maximizes its Title IV-E programs (see text box) for recruiting and training caseworkers. As of March 2013, Title IV-E provided funding for educating conservatorship caseworkers at 13 of 22 eligible universities (see Table 2). The Department should periodically revisit universities that are not participating to expand the number of participating eligible universities and potentially increase the number of qualified individuals under contract<sup>10</sup> to work as CPS caseworkers. The Department should consider implementing a more comprehensive approach in partnering with eligible public universities to maximize access to a qualified labor force with an incentive to work for CPS.

Table 2

Public Universities with Accredited Social Work Programs and Title IV-E Participants <sup>a</sup>			
University	Baccalaureate Degree Accredited	Master's Degree Accredited	Title IV-E Participant
Lamar University	X		X
Midwestern State University	X		
Prairie View A&M University	X		
Stephen F. Austin State University	X	X	X
Tarleton State University	X		X
Texas A&M University - Commerce	X	X	X
Texas A&M University - Kingsville	X		X
Texas Southern University	X		
Texas State University - San Marcos	X	X	X
Texas Tech University	X		
Texas Woman's University	X		X
University of Houston		X	X
University of Houston - Clear Lake	X		
University of Houston - Downtown	X		
University of North Texas	X		X
The University of Texas at Arlington	X	X	X
The University of Texas at Austin	X	X	X
The University of Texas at El Paso	X		
The University of Texas at San Antonio		X	X

<sup>10</sup> Students who receive a Title IV-E program stipend are expected to work eight months at the Department for each semester they receive the stipend. CPS employees must commit to continue to work four months at the Department for each semester they receive the stipend.

Public Universities with Accredited Social Work Programs and Title IV-E Participants <sup>a</sup>			
University	Baccalaureate Degree Accredited	Master's Degree Accredited	Title IV-E Participant
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin	X		
The University of Texas - Pan American	X	X	X
West Texas A&M University	X	X	
<sup>a</sup> Accreditations and participation in Title IV-E are as of March 2013.			

As of January 2013, 114 Title IV-E participants had graduated in fiscal years 2010 through 2012 and later were hired by the Department. That included 82 bachelor's of social work degree graduates and 32 master's of social work degree graduates. During fiscal years 2011 and 2012, 64 Department employees graduated with a master's of social work degree as part of the Title IV-E program.

The Department should determine whether the pre-interview assessment instrument can be used to identify different characteristics for multiple types of casework.

The Department uses a pre-interview assessment screening instrument developed by a contractor to identify suitable applicants for caseworker positions based on their responses. The screening instrument assumes that the characteristics of a successful employee are the same across the Department. However, CPS staff indicated that the personality characteristics needed to be a successful investigation caseworker are not the same characteristics that help an individual succeed as a conservatorship or Family-based Safety Services caseworker. Ignoring the differences in requirements for different types of casework could mean that the screening instrument unnecessarily limits the applicant pool, excluding individuals who could perform well and stay with the Department.

In addition, because the Department offers a \$5,000 annual stipend to CPS investigation caseworkers and investigation supervisors (as authorized by the General Appropriations Act<sup>11</sup>), newly hired caseworkers may be more likely to choose investigative casework even if their personalities are better suited for other types of casework. The Department may be able to improve caseworker retention by better matching newly hired caseworkers with the appropriate type of casework for their personality.

<sup>11</sup> Rider 20, page II-43, the General Appropriations Act (82nd Legislature), authorizes the Department to continue to provide the \$5,000 annual stipend to CPS investigation caseworkers and investigation supervisors that was originally established by the 79th Legislature.

The Department should consider increasing supervisor participation in the interview process for CPS caseworkers in their units, whenever possible.

According to CPS staff, some regions include CPS supervisors in the hiring process of caseworkers and are able to provide detailed expectations for the caseworker job requirements to job candidates. According to interviews with CPS supervisors, caseworkers often leave the Department because they did not have a realistic view of the job expectations. Supervisors reported that when they are involved in the interview process, they can provide more realistic scenarios of the job duties that new caseworkers will face. Supervisors also stated that their experience helps them determine during interviews which applicants would most likely make a good caseworker, which some hiring specialists may not be able to do.

## Recommendations

The Department should:

- Analyze the workload processes to determine whether support positions can be restored to provide transportation and workload support to the direct delivery CPS staff.
- Enforce contractual requirements that contractors provide for and arrange travel for children in their care.
- Review regional processes for assigning incoming cases to ensure that those processes do not unnecessarily increase caseworkers' workloads.
- Consider establishing specialized units to handle abandoned cases and/or units that travel within regions to help reduce the highest caseloads.
- Ensure that all CPS investigation caseworkers complete the annual 20 hours of training required by Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Section 700.519.
- Systematically evaluate its various recruitment efforts to ensure that it efficiently uses limited resources to recruit and hire employees who could perform well and stay with the Department.
- Centralize efforts for and periodically revisit university involvement to ensure that it maximizes Title IV-E funding.
- Determine whether its pre-interview assessment can be used to identify different characteristics for multiple types of casework.
- Consider increasing supervisor participation in the hiring process, whenever possible.

## Management's Response

### ***The Department should:***

- ***Analyze the workload processes to determine whether support positions can be restored to provide transportation and workload support to the direct delivery CPS staff.***

*DFPS agrees with this recommendation. DFPS will conduct a study and as a part of the study, we will analyze the workload processes and determine if support positions should be restored for the investigations unit. The Director of Field will make a decision regarding the support positions within three months following the completion of the analysis.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Director of Field

***Estimated Completion Date:*** August 31, 2014

- ***Enforce contractual requirements that contractors provide for and arrange travel for children in their care.***

*DFPS agrees. The CPS placement team and the contract division have been working to ensure that both CPS staff and contract providers are aware of this contractual requirement. The placement team works with contractors to educate them regarding this requirement. The residential contract division monitors for this requirement and issues non-compliance letters requiring corrective action from contractors after receiving complaints that demonstrate that travel has not been appropriately provided.*

*To further ensure that CPS staff are aware of the contract requirement related to transportation and the steps that may be taken to obtain assistance when there are issues related to travel, the Residential Contract Division will send out a memorandum to CPS staff.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Director of Residential Contracts

***Estimated Completion Date:*** July 31, 2013

- ***Review regional processes for assigning incoming cases to ensure that those processes do not unnecessarily increase caseworkers' workloads.***

*DFPS agrees. CPS will conduct a systemic review. As a part of the review, the current regional processes for assigning incoming cases will be evaluated and recommendations provided on how to improve and implement any identified needed changes. Implementation of any case assignment*

*recommendations will be implemented within six months of completion of the study. The Director of Field will be responsible for the implementation.*

***Responsible Party: CPS Director of Field***

***Estimated Completion Date: June 30, 2015***

- ***Consider establishing specialized units to handle abandoned cases and/or units that travel within regions to help reduce the highest caseloads.***

*DFPS agrees. CPS has hired 15 Master Investigators that travel across the state to counties that are struggling with a high number of delinquent investigations, which often include abandoned cases. The Master Investigators are assigned delinquent investigations to complete, or new cases so that the caseworkers in those counties can focus on shutting down the cases on their workload (which may include abandoned cases). In addition, Harris County has a unit that is assigned cases that are “abandoned” when a caseworker goes on extended leave or resigns from the agency. CPS will expand the use of this practice in areas with the highest need. In addition, resources provided by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature will help bring down the number of delinquent cases.*

***Responsible Party: CPS Director of Field***

***Estimated Completion Date: December 31, 2013***

- ***Ensure that all CPS investigation caseworkers complete the annual 20 hours of training required by Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Section 700.519.***

*DFPS agrees. Supervisors will be expected to enforce the requirement that CPS investigation caseworkers complete 20 hours of training annually. In addition, we will ask supervisors to track and review the number of training hours their staff attend.*

***Responsible Party: CPS Director of Field***

***Estimated Completion Date: October 31, 2013***

- ***Systematically evaluate its various recruitment efforts to ensure that it efficiently uses limited resources to recruit and hire employees who could perform well and stay with the Department.***

*DFPS agrees to systematically evaluate the use of our limited recruiting resources.*

***Responsible Party:*** Director of Management Support Division

***Estimated Completion Date:*** June 30, 2014

- ***Centralize efforts for and periodically revisit university involvement to ensure that it maximizes Title IV-E funding.***

*DFPS agrees. DFPS will initiate a coordinated statewide approach to maximizing Title IV-E funding, by ensuring that all eligible universities are contacted annually to determine their interest in participating in Title IV-E funding programs.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Director of Regional Contracts and Finance-Director of Federal Funds

***Estimated Completion Date:*** June 30, 2014

- ***Determine whether its pre-interview assessment can be used to identify different characteristics for multiple types of casework.***

*Management Support Division will evaluate the pre-assessment tool to determine if it can differentiate characteristics for multiple types of casework.*

***Responsible Party:*** Director of Management Support Division

***Estimated Completion Date:*** June 30, 2014

- ***Consider increasing supervisor participation in the hiring process, whenever possible.***

*DFPS agrees that supervisors are critically important in the hiring process. Supervisors are allowed and encouraged to participate currently. DFPS will work to improve communication of this practice and encourage more participation from them. The Hiring Teams will also begin tracking supervisor participation.*

***Responsible Party:*** Director of Management Support Division

***Estimated Completion Date:*** June 30, 2014

## The Department Should Strengthen Processes for Selecting, Training, and Evaluating Caseworker Supervisors

When CPS caseworkers quit, one of the reasons they often give for leaving the Department is issues with their supervisors.<sup>12</sup> Although as reported by the Department, the supervisor turnover rate averaged only 9.7 percent in fiscal year 2012, the Department recognizes that caseworker supervisors are critical to providing caseworkers support and guidance. However, it has not developed procedures to help ensure that it selects the most qualified individuals to serve as caseworker supervisors. Compounding this problem, the Department has not ensured that individuals who become supervisors receive required training to help them succeed in their new positions. Approximately 60 percent of employees promoted to supervisor positions since fiscal year 2011 had received the required training as of January 2013. Additionally, the Department does not consistently provide annual performance evaluations to supervisors. Without consistently evaluating supervisors, the Department cannot adequately address supervisors' weaknesses, provide focused training, or reward deserving supervisors.

There are no set criteria for the supervisor selection process. The Department has rules for posting vacant supervisor positions, but it does not have set criteria for narrowing the pool of candidates. According to program directors interviewed, they usually narrow the pool of applicants based on candidates' years of experience.

The Department does not ensure that it consistently trains supervisors in a timely manner. Of the 164 CPS employees promoted to supervisor since the beginning of fiscal year 2011, approximately 60 percent completed all required CPS and Department supervisor training courses. For supervisors who received training, a majority received it late.<sup>13</sup> Supervisors commented that they would have preferred to receive this training in a timely manner to help them better handle the personnel management duties involved with supervising caseworkers.

The Department does not consistently provide timely annual performance evaluations of supervisors. As of September 2012, according to the Department, at least 40 percent of supervisors were not evaluated for the previous year. In addition, caseworkers generally do not provide feedback for their supervisors. It is important that the Department consistently evaluate its supervisors and consider caseworker feedback to help retain the most qualified individuals in those positions and provide the best guidance and support to caseworkers.

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<sup>12</sup> Based on State Auditor's Office exit survey responses.

<sup>13</sup> Department training is required for new supervisors within 60 days of promotion and CPS training is required within 6 months of promotion.

Auditors identified other information related to the importance of selecting, training, and retaining the most qualified supervisors:

- The regions with the lowest tenure among caseworkers often have the lowest tenure among supervisors as well. For example, in the Austin and Midland regions, the average tenure was approximately two years for investigation caseworkers and approximately seven years for investigation supervisors. Tenure in other regions averaged as high as 4.5 years for investigation caseworkers and 11.7 years for investigation supervisors. Because the pool of applicants for supervisor positions usually comes from the caseworkers in that area, it is especially important that the Department ensure that it selects and sufficiently trains the most qualified individuals to be supervisors in high-turnover, low-tenure areas.
- Due to budget constraints, the Department restructured CPS units in fiscal year 2011 to preserve caseworker positions. As a result, many supervisors managed one more caseworker in each unit than they did before the restructuring. According to supervisors interviewed, the unit restructuring increased their workloads and negatively affected their ability to support their caseworkers.
- The Department's inconsistency in evaluating caseworkers, discussed in Chapter 1, may hinder the Department's efforts to identify the most qualified candidates to fill supervisor positions. Because the Department usually selects supervisors from the pool of qualified caseworkers in the area, its inconsistency in evaluating caseworkers may affect its ability to select the best supervisors.

## Recommendations

The Department should:

- Develop and implement selection procedures for filling supervisor positions.
- Ensure that supervisors receive required training prior to assuming the responsibility of supervising caseworkers.
- Ensure that all supervisors (1) receive annual performance evaluations by the end of the fiscal year and (2) are held accountable for whether the caseworkers they manage receive required annual training and performance evaluations.
- Consider incorporating feedback from caseworkers in supervisors' annual performance evaluations.

## Management's Response

### ***The Department should:***

- ***Develop and implement selection procedures for filling supervisor positions.***

*DFPS agrees. CPS will develop and implement a standardized procedure for hiring supervisory level staff. This will include standardized job postings, interview questions and scoring matrices.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Special Projects Program Specialist

***Estimated Completion Date:*** February 28, 2014

- ***Ensure that supervisors receive required training prior to assuming the responsibility of supervising caseworkers.***

*DFPS agrees. Currently there is a senate bill (SB 771) that if passed, will ensure that the department develops and implements a training program that each employee who is newly hired or promoted to a management position in the child protective services division must complete before the employee begins serving in the management position.*

*Ensuring trained supervisors is a priority for agency leadership. If this bill does not pass, DFPS will evaluate capacity to increase the number of supervisory trainings necessary to implement this recommendation or develop computer based training to meet this requirement.*

***Responsible Party:*** CPS Training Liaison and Director of Center for Learning and Organizational Excellence

***Estimated Completion Date:*** February 28, 2014

- ***Ensure that all supervisors (1) receive annual performance evaluations by the end of the fiscal year and (2) are held accountable for whether the caseworkers they manage receive required annual training and performance evaluations.***

*We will enforce current policy that performance evaluations must be completed annually. We will monitor the status of the evaluations through the report available to staff on CAPPS and data warehouse. We will request that regional management track the status of performance evaluations for supervisors and caseworkers.*

***Responsible Party: CPS Director of Field***

***Estimated Completion Date: October 31, 2013***

- ***Consider incorporating feedback from caseworkers in supervisors' annual performance evaluations.***

*DFPS agrees. A process for incorporating caseworker feedback in supervisor evaluations will be created.*

***Responsible Party: CPS Special Projects Program Specialist***

***Estimated Completion Date: February 28, 2014***

# Appendices

Appendix 1

## **Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

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### **Objectives**

The objectives of this audit were to:

- Determine whether the Department of Family and Protective Services (Department) complies with state law, regulations, and relevant provisions of the General Appropriations Act in administering selected Child Protective Services (CPS) strategies, including the hiring of direct delivery staff and management of caseloads.
- Determine whether the Department has adequate processes and related controls to help ensure that its reported performance measures results for selected CPS strategies are reliable and that the Department uses those results to help manage the associated programs.

This report is the second of two reports<sup>14</sup> addressing the objectives. The sub-objective for this report was to determine whether the Department has processes to monitor caseloads and whether its recruitment and retention efforts are effective.

### **Scope**

The audit scope included reviewing and analyzing CPS training, staffing, caseloads, and recruitment and retention efforts for fiscal year 2011, fiscal year 2012, and part of fiscal year 2013. In addition, auditors performed a limited review of four key performance measures related to turnover and average daily caseload.

Auditors performed interviews with CPS staff (caseworkers, supervisors, program directors, program administrators, and regional management) and Department staff (hiring specialists) at four regions in selected offices, as well as with Department staff at the state office. The four regions visited were Arlington, Austin, Houston, and Midland.

### **Methodology**

The audit methodology included collecting and reviewing information and documentation, analyzing CPS caseworker staffing levels and caseloads, and

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<sup>14</sup> The first report was *An Audit Report on Child Protective Services Funding, Direct Delivery Staff, and Disproportionality Efforts at the Department of Family and Protective Services* (State Auditor's Report No. 13-029, April 2013).

interviewing management and staff at the Department. Auditors also reviewed Department data related to salaries, turnover, and caseloads. In addition, auditors selected four key performance measures for limited review.

Auditors assessed the reliability of the caseload data used in the audit by conducting a review of general and application controls over the Department's Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) system. Auditors also reviewed employee and training data by (1) comparing data to other sources of data, (2) analyzing key data elements for completeness and reasonableness, and (3) interviewing Department employees knowledgeable about the data. Auditors determined that the data was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this audit.

Information collected and reviewed included the following:

- Department policies and procedures.
- *Child Protective Services Handbook*.
- Texas Family Code, Chapters 261 and 264.
- Texas Human Resources Code, Chapter 40.
- Social Security Act, Title IV-E.
- Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 700.
- General Appropriations Acts (80th, 81st, and 82nd Legislatures).
- The University of Texas at Austin's Survey of Organizational Excellence, 2012.
- Fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013 State Auditor's Office exit survey results as of March 2013.
- Information from the Department's Web site, including:
  - ♦ *DFPS 2012 Data Book, DFPS 2011 Data Book, DFPS 2010 Databook, and DFPS 2009 Databook.*
  - ♦ Human Resources Management Plans for fiscal years 2011 and 2012.
- Department employee staffing data.
- Department caseload data.
- Department recruitment and retention reports.
- Performance measure definitions and results.

Procedures and tests conducted included the following:

- Interviewed Department management and staff, including CPS and Department staff at four selected regions and at the state office.
- Analyzed data pertaining to staffing and caseload levels.
- Reviewed performance measure calculations and related data to ensure consistency with performance measure definitions.
- Analyzed supervisor training records.
- Reviewed certification program completion.
- Reviewed the performance evaluation and promotion process for caseworkers and supervisors.
- Analyzed recruiting and retention efforts.

Criteria used included the following:

- Department policies and procedures.
- General Appropriations Acts (80th, 81st, and 82nd Legislatures).
- *Child Protective Services Handbook*.
- Texas Family Code, Chapters 261 and 264.
- Human Resources Code, Chapter 40.
- Title 40, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 700.

### **Project Information**

Audit fieldwork was conducted from November 2012 through March 2013. We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The following members of the State Auditor's staff performed the audit:

- Jennifer R. Wiederhold, CGAP (Project Manager)
- Scott Boston, MPAff (Assistant Project Manager)
- Jeffrey D. Criminger

- Derek J. Felderhoff, MBA
- Jacqueline M. Gomez
- Justin H. Griffin, CISA
- Anca Pinchas, CPA, CISA, CIDA
- Sherry Sewell, CGAP
- Lisa M. Thompson
- Charles Wilson, MPAff
- Brenda Zamarripa, CGAP
- Dennis Ray Bushnell, CPA (Quality Control Reviewer)
- Nicole M. Guerrero, MBA, CIA, CGAP, CICA (Audit Manager)

## Average Tenure and Vacancy Rates for Each Caseworker Type by Region

Tables 3 through 5 list the average tenure in years for each type of Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker at the Department of Family and Protective Services (Department). The average tenure for the various caseworkers generally increased between September 2010 and September 2012. The Department's caseworkers handle the cases at different stages of service. The **investigation** caseworkers conduct an investigation after the Department identifies a child abuse or neglect case. The **Family-based Safety Services** caseworkers provide services in the home, when possible. The **conservatorship** caseworkers provide services to children who have been removed from their homes and placed into the Department's care.

Table 3

Average Tenure for Investigation Caseworkers						
Region	September 2010			September 2012		
	Average Years Since Last Hire	Average Years State Tenure	Total Number of Caseworkers	Average Years Since Last Hire	Average Years State Tenure	Total Number of Caseworkers
Statewide	2.6	3.6	1,831	3.2	4.3	2,024
Region 1 - Lubbock	2.8	3.6	83	3.6	4.7	92
Region 2 - Abilene	4.4	5.4	53	4.2	5.6	58
Region 3 - Arlington	2.9	3.7	477	3.6	4.5	514
Region 4 - Tyler	2.0	3.2	92	3.0	4.7	97
Region 5 - Beaumont	3.7	4.5	66	4.5	5.1	71
Region 6 - Houston	3.1	4.3	324	3.5	4.8	379
Region 7 - Austin	2.2	3.3	216	2.3	3.5	250
Region 8 - San Antonio	2.3	3.1	217	2.4	3.4	246
Region 9 - Midland	1.9	3.9	54	2.2	4.2	50
Region 10 - El Paso	2.2	3.3	47	3.9	4.6	56
Region 11 - Edinburg	1.9	2.7	202	2.7	3.8	211

Source: Department employee data.

Table 4

Average Tenure for Family-based Safety Services Caseworkers						
Region	September 2010			September 2012		
	Average Years Since Last Hire	Average Years State Tenure	Total Number of Caseworkers	Average Years Since Last Hire	Average Years State Tenure	Total Number of Caseworkers
Statewide	2.5	3.5	856	3.1	4.2	861
Region 1 - Lubbock	2.2	2.7	43	3.2	4.2	54
Region 2 - Abilene	2.2	3.8	22	2.2	4.5	26
Region 3 - Arlington	2.5	3.2	161	3.3	4.2	182
Region 4 - Tyler	2.3	3.7	40	2.8	4.5	39
Region 5 - Beaumont	2.2	4.7	19	2.4	5.4	20
Region 6 - Houston	3.2	4.2	165	3.7	4.8	175
Region 7 - Austin	2.3	3.7	79	3.2	4.2	60
Region 8 - San Antonio	2.2	3.2	137	2.5	3.5	123
Region 9 - Midland	1.9	2.9	27	1.0	1.9	20
Region 10 - El Paso	5.0	5.8	29	5.3	6.5	28
Region 11 - Edinburg	1.9	2.9	134	2.7	3.8	134

Source: Department employee data.

Table 5

Average Tenure for Conservatorship Caseworkers						
Region	September 2010			September 2012		
	Average Years Since Last Hire	Average Years State Tenure	Total Number of Caseworkers	Average Years Since Last Hire	Average Years State Tenure	Total Number of Caseworkers
Statewide	2.8	3.7	1,566	3.4	4.3	1,618
Region 1 - Lubbock	2.7	3.3	100	3.3	3.8	96
Region 2 - Abilene	2.9	3.9	49	4.1	5.5	54
Region 3 - Arlington	3.6	4.3	297	4.4	5.2	308
Region 4 - Tyler	2.7	3.7	89	3.0	4.0	78
Region 5 - Beaumont	4.0	7.0	41	3.6	6.4	47
Region 6 - Houston	2.3	3.2	361	3.3	4.0	368
Region 7 - Austin	2.6	3.8	186	3.2	4.3	185
Region 8 - San Antonio	2.3	3.4	232	2.9	3.7	262
Region 9 - Midland	2.1	3.8	54	2.6	4.2	48
Region 10 - El Paso	2.9	3.6	30	4.0	5.2	37
Region 11 - Edinburg	3.0	4.0	127	3.0	3.6	135

Source: Department employee data.

Table 6 identifies the average percentages by region of CPS caseworker positions that were not filled (vacancy rate) from September 2010 through September 2012. The vacancy rates varied from 4.0 percent of investigation positions in the Beaumont region to 15.9 percent of investigation caseworker positions in the Austin region and 15.9 percent of Family-based Safety Services caseworker positions in the Midland region.

Table 6

Average Caseworker Vacancy Rates Per Region September 2010 through September 2012			
Region	Average Vacancy Rates		
	Investigation Caseworkers	Conservatorship Caseworkers	Family-based Safety Services Caseworkers
Statewide	8.9%	8.0%	9.5%
Region 1 - Lubbock	5.4%	8.3%	12.5%
Region 2 - Abilene	10.3%	11.6%	15.4%
Region 3 - Arlington	8.9%	6.2%	12.0%
Region 4 - Tyler	8.3%	8.5%	9.9%
Region 5 - Beaumont	4.0%	6.5%	7.8%
Region 6 - Houston	7.5%	5.7%	7.1%
Region 7 - Austin	15.9%	13.3%	15.2%
Region 8 - San Antonio	9.3%	7.9%	8.2%
Region 9 - Midland	12.3%	11.8%	15.9%
Region 10 - El Paso	6.5%	4.3%	7.4%
Region 11 - Edinburg	5.3%	9.1%	5.1%

Source: Department employee data.

## Average Daily Caseload for Each Caseworker Type by Region

Tables 7 through 9 list the average daily caseloads for Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers at the Department of Family and Protective Services (Department). The average daily caseload is calculated by dividing the sum of all daily case counts by the sum of all daily caseworker counts. Auditors calculated the average daily caseload for the three types of caseworkers using caseload and caseworker data provided by the Department.

Table 7

Average Daily Caseloads for Investigation Caseworkers									
Region	Fiscal Year 2011				Fiscal Year 2012				Fiscal Year 2013
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter
Region 1 - Lubbock	31.8	29.8	26.6	24.9	27.7	26.4	24.9	24.7	22.2
Region 2 - Abilene	32.4	29.6	20.8	17.6	21.6	22.9	26.2	27.9	28.7
Region 3 - Arlington	25.4	22.2	22.0	22.5	23.7	24.4	23.8	20.2	19.4
Region 4 - Tyler	24.0	22.7	21.4	23.2	24.5	25.0	23.7	19.7	18.8
Region 5 - Beaumont	23.6	22.4	18.0	17.7	19.3	20.7	21.9	19.5	18.9
Region 6 - Houston	28.4	30.9	27.7	24.8	23.9	25.1	28.1	28.5	26.1
Region 7 - Austin	44.4	46.0	37.6	35.7	32.8	32.8	31.5	28.3	23.8
Region 8 - San Antonio	30.1	28.8	26.7	24.2	23.2	20.8	22.3	18.5	19.9
Region 9 - Midland	33.1	36.7	36.0	23.5	27.1	31.4	29.7	24.4	26.6
Region 10 - El Paso	40.1	40.2	33.1	28.0	22.5	23.5	27.2	23.9	23.4
Region 11 - Edinburg	27.4	25.6	23.4	22.0	20.8	23.1	27.0	23.9	21.9
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>22.1</b>

Source: Department caseload data.

Table 8

Average Daily Caseloads for Family-based Safety Services Caseworkers									
Region	Fiscal Year 2011				Fiscal Year 2012				Fiscal Year 2013
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter
Region 1 - Lubbock	22.7	24.3	22.1	21.1	17.5	16.1	14.0	13.7	12.7
Region 2 - Abilene	19.2	19.3	20.4	18.0	21.3	16.7	16.8	15.0	18.8
Region 3 - Arlington	19.4	17.9	15.1	14.4	14.0	14.0	12.9	11.9	12.8
Region 4 - Tyler	17.9	16.8	14.9	13.7	12.1	11.3	11.5	10.9	10.7
Region 5 - Beaumont	17.6	14.6	12.7	13.7	15.3	12.7	12.1	13.2	15.1
Region 6 - Houston	18.4	17.5	16.0	13.9	11.4	11.0	11.1	11.6	12.8
Region 7 - Austin	15.3	16.0	15.9	14.9	17.1	20.1	22.3	19.5	17.2
Region 8 - San Antonio	16.2	13.9	14.6	16.3	16.9	16.5	18.0	18.1	17.6
Region 9 - Midland	19.8	17.0	17.2	19.6	15.7	16.6	19.2	21.8	22.5
Region 10 - El Paso	15.5	17.3	16.7	12.1	13.4	15.8	12.9	12.6	12.6
Region 11 - Edinburg	18.9	18.8	18.5	17.1	16.1	15.6	14.0	13.0	12.8
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>13.9</b>

Source: Department caseload data.

Table 9

Average Daily Caseloads for Conservatorship Caseworkers									
Region	Fiscal Year 2011				Fiscal Year 2012				Fiscal Year 2013
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	1st Quarter
Region 1 - Lubbock	28.7	30.6	30.8	32.1	34.1	36.9	39.4	38.0	34.9
Region 2 - Abilene	29.4	34.1	33.9	31.6	31.0	30.9	30.4	28.8	29.5
Region 3 - Arlington	31.4	30.6	30.4	31.8	32.1	32.5	32.1	31.8	31.8
Region 4 - Tyler	30.5	30.9	28.3	28.9	29.7	30.8	32.3	36.0	36.0
Region 5 - Beaumont	29.1	29.2	29.2	32.1	32.4	32.0	32.4	33.2	34.5
Region 6 - Houston	32.8	32.1	31.5	31.1	29.9	29.4	29.5	29.4	29.1
Region 7 - Austin	31.6	31.8	32.0	34.3	35.4	36.3	37.5	37.0	35.7
Region 8 - San Antonio	33.0	32.4	32.9	35.2	39.7	41.7	41.4	39.3	35.9
Region 9 - Midland	34.9	33.6	32.7	34.9	34.9	37.6	37.9	37.3	40.7
Region 10 - El Paso	31.1	31.2	28.7	29.5	28.4	24.3	25.3	24.1	23.5
Region 11 - Edinburg	32.0	34.5	34.0	36.9	35.4	36.0	36.6	35.1	35.6
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>33.0</b>

Source: Department caseload data.

## Salary Study for Texas and Neighboring States

House Bill 753 (82nd Legislature, Regular Session) directed the Department of Family and Protective Services (Department) “to study the salaries of each type of Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker to determine the role salary plays in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers and in the turnover rate for each type of caseworker.” As part of that study, the Department conducted an analysis of four bordering states’ salaries for CPS caseworker positions. Table 10 shows the average salaries for CPS caseworkers in Texas and the neighboring states.

Table 10

Salaries of CPS Caseworkers for Texas and Neighboring States by Position Level				
State	Job Title	Range Minimum	Range Maximum	Average
Texas	CPS Specialist II <sup>a</sup>	\$31,729	\$49,180	\$34,656
	CPS Specialist III	\$33,633	\$52,130	\$37,104
	CPS Specialist IV	\$35,651	\$55,258	\$40,560
Oklahoma	Child Welfare Specialist I <sup>a</sup>	\$30,382	\$44,170	\$30,509
	Child Welfare Specialist II	\$33,854	\$48,561	\$35,310
	Child Welfare Specialist III	\$37,335	\$53,080	\$37,860
Louisiana	Child Welfare Specialist Trainee <sup>a</sup>	\$25,854	\$54,434	\$30,645
	Child Welfare Specialist I <sup>a</sup>	\$27,664	\$58,240	\$33,293
	Child Welfare Specialist II	\$31,678	\$66,685	\$42,543
	Child Welfare Specialist III	\$33,904	\$71,344	\$51,539
New Mexico	Intake, Investigations and Permanency Worker <sup>a</sup>	\$29,473	\$49,171	\$35,006
	Placement Worker*	\$33,155	\$49,171	\$38,188
	Senior Intake, Investigations and Permanency Worker	\$34,590	\$54,308	\$41,912
	Senior Placement Worker	\$37,835	\$54,308	\$46,196
Arkansas	Family Service Worker <sup>a</sup>	\$30,713	\$52,167	\$32,821
	Family Service Program Coordinator	\$32,249	\$54,775	\$39,331
	Family Service Worker Specialist	\$33,861	\$57,514	\$38,752
<sup>a</sup> This is the entry-level position.				

Source: The Department’s Child Protective Services Salary Study, December 2012.

## Delinquent Investigation Cases by Region

The Department of Family and Protective Services' (Department) policy requires investigation supervisors to close cases within 60 days after intake. As Table 11 shows, in two regions, more than 40 percent of the investigation cases remained open for more than 60 days (from September 2010 through November 2012).

Table 11

Delinquent Investigation Cases <sup>a</sup>			
From September 2010 through November 2012			
Region	Average Number of Investigation Cases	Average Number of Investigation Cases Open for More than 60 Days	Average Percent of Investigation Cases Open for More than 60 Days
Region 1 - Lubbock	5,270	1,642	31.2%
Region 2 - Abilene	3,519	1,399	39.8%
Region 3 - Arlington	25,389	6,487	25.6%
Region 4 - Tyler	4,967	1,179	23.7%
Region 5 - Beaumont	3,384	734	21.7%
Region 6 - Houston	21,184	7,299	34.5%
Region 7 - Austin	18,111	8,821	48.7%
Region 8 - San Antonio	12,611	3,831	30.4%
Region 9 - Midland	3,836	1,684	43.9%
Region 10 - El Paso	3,623	1,382	38.2%
Region 11 - Edinburg	11,165	3,293	29.5%

<sup>a</sup> The Department considers an investigation to be delinquent when it is open for more than 60 days.

Source: Department caseload data.

Appendix 6

## Fiscal Year 2009 and 2012 Statistics by Department of Family and Protective Services' Regions

2009	Region 1 - Lubbock	2012
240.2	Caseworkers	243.0
20.8%	Turnover	27.4%
\$33,975	Average Base Salary	\$34,935
7,457	Completed Investigations	7,244
598	Removals	828

2009	Region 2 - Abilene	2012
150.7	Caseworkers	144.4
16.8%	Turnover	24.8%
\$34,141	Average Base Salary	\$35,459
5,256	Completed Investigations	4,370
314	Removals	499

2009	Region 3 - Arlington	2012
1036.3	Caseworkers	987.4
19.0%	Turnover	18.1%
\$34,268	Average Base Salary	\$35,675
39,444	Completed Investigations	41,455
2,362	Removals	3,549

2009	Region 9 - Midland	2012
136.8	Caseworkers	129.9
28.3%	Turnover	34.3%
\$33,693	Average Base Salary	\$34,497
5,131	Completed Investigations	4,276
358	Removals	566

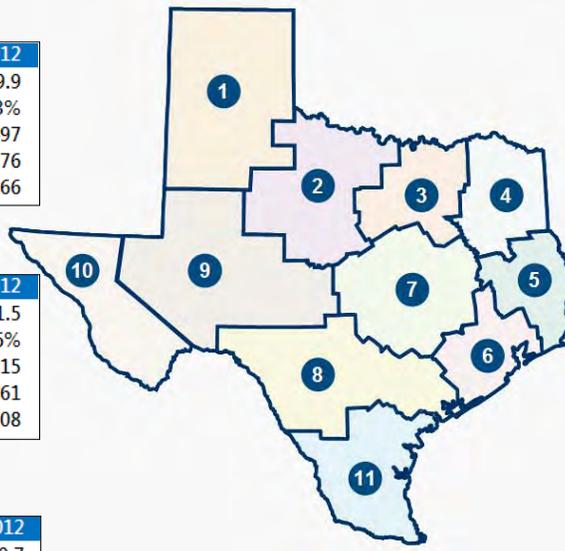
2009	Region 4 - Tyler	2012
225.6	Caseworkers	232.9
25.1%	Turnover	32.9%
\$33,836	Average Base Salary	\$35,453
8,759	Completed Investigations	8,881
903	Removals	1,065

2009	Region 10 - El Paso	2012
111.6	Caseworkers	121.5
17.6%	Turnover	17.6%
\$34,074	Average Base Salary	\$35,215
4,466	Completed Investigations	4,561
180	Removals	308

2009	Region 5 - Beaumont	2012
140.5	Caseworkers	151.2
17.9%	Turnover	22.9%
\$35,177	Average Base Salary	\$35,913
5,967	Completed Investigations	6,207
336	Removals	626

2009	Region 8 - San Antonio	2012
603.0	Caseworkers	630.7
23.5%	Turnover	32.2%
\$33,913	Average Base Salary	\$34,706
19,641	Completed Investigations	20,592
1,675	Removals	2,938

2009	Region 6 - Houston	2012
900.7	Caseworkers	961.0
23.1%	Turnover	23.2%
\$33,984	Average Base Salary	\$35,052
30,405	Completed Investigations	30,473
2,711	Removals	2,641



2009	Region 11 - Edinburg	2012
461.8	Caseworkers	468.2
35.2%	Turnover	30.7%
\$33,252	Average Base Salary	\$34,570
19,194	Completed Investigations	16,984
1,124	Removals	1,757

2009	Region 7 - Austin	2012
504.2	Caseworkers	481.4
27.5%	Turnover	32.6%
\$34,263	Average Base Salary	\$35,393
19,692	Completed Investigations	21,136
1,546	Removals	2,195

2009	Statewide Totals	2012
4,511.1	Caseworkers	4,551.7
23.6%	Turnover	26.1%
\$34,024	Average Base Salary	\$35,171
165,444	Completed Investigations	166,211
12,107	Removals	16,972

Sources: Unaudited, self-reported data from the Department of Family and Protective Services and the Health and Human Services Commission.

## Related State Auditor's Office Work

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Related State Auditor's Office Work		
Number	Product Name	Release Date
13-029	An Audit Report on Child Protective Services Funding, Direct Delivery Staff, and Disproportionality Efforts at the Department of Family and Protective Services	April 2013
12-050	A Report on On-site Audits of Residential Child Care Providers	August 2012
12-039	A Follow-up Audit Report on Staffing and Caseloads at the Department of Family and Protective Services	June 2012
11-049	A Report on On-site Audits of Residential Child Care Providers	August 2011
10-043	A Report on On-site Audits of Residential Child Care Providers	August 2010
10-007	A Report on On-site Audits of Residential Child Care Providers	September 2009
09-021	An Audit Report on Staffing and Caseloads at the Department of Family and Protective Services	March 2009

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