

**LOUISIANA MAINTENANCE OF ACCREDITATION HURRICANE RECOVERY PLAN
DECEMBER 2006 UPDATE**

Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 1: Discussion of change in agency mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA-AM 1: Agency purpose The agency's purpose is responsive to the needs of the communities and citizens it serves, and guides the administration and delivery of services. • PA-AM 4: Community involvement / advocacy 	<p>Mission Change: The Agency mission was changed by Act 110 of the 2005 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session to include child abuse and neglect prevention. The addition of prevention services is reflected in the Office of Community Services mission statement as articulated in the organization's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>In the aftermath of the 2005 hurricanes, the Family Services (FS)/Prevention Section undertook a survey of staff at the parish level across the state to identify local service needs and to explore the availability of local service providers. Subsequently, state office staff met with staff from each parish, and five areas of greatest need were identified: in-home services, substance abuse treatment, transportation, domestic violence intervention, and mental health services. The FS/Prevention section is focusing on three of those identified needs as follows:</p> <p><i>In-home services:</i> Contracts with Intensive Home Based Service (IHBS) providers are being revamped. IHBS services are currently available in all regions except Lafayette, Lake Charles, and Monroe. The agency's goal is to provide in-home services in all regions, but difficulties have been encountered in recruiting providers in some regions. The agency is moving to comprehensive use of the Homebuilders® model, which is an intensive family-focused prevention model. In this model, children at imminent risk of harm are referred for the in-home model rather than being placed in foster care. A group of OCS staff, accompanied by staff from the Casey Strategic Consulting Group, visited the Institute of Family Development in Federal Way, Washington to explore Homebuilders®. Funding for the trip was made available by OCS's partner, statewide Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana. The FS/Prevention Section Administrator and consultants have traveled to the regions to train staff on the use of the new model.</p> <p><i>Substance abuse treatment:</i> A Memorandum of Understanding has been negotiated with the Office of Addictive Disorders for in-house substance abuse counselors to be shared with the Office of Family Support, the statewide financial assistance agency. The FS/Prevention Section Administrator is informing parish and regional staff about the availability of substance abuse counselors during her travels throughout the state. Efforts are also underway to develop outpatient substance abuse services in areas of the state where no inpatient substance abuse treatment is available.</p> <p><i>Transportation:</i> Efforts to improve transportation services include exploring the addition of funds to Family Resource</p>

Center Contracts so that they would be able to provide transportation.

Additional Initiatives: A new family assessment instrument that closely follows the North Carolina Family Assessment Survey (NCFAS) is being used. It is the basis of the assessment used in the Homebuilders®. The assessment instrument is currently being piloted in a paper format, and efforts are underway to provide the assessment in an automated format.

The FS/Prevention Section has also contracted with Jefferson Parish Human Services District (a state-local agency) for implementation of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST), another evidence-based, intensive, in-home program focused on behavior disordered youth ages 12-18 and their families in several areas of the state.

An effort closely related to the mission change is front-end intake and an alternative response system. A meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2006 with the National Resource Center on Child Protection to review current intake procedures and consider alternative response initiatives. The Child Protection Investigation Section is also working with the National Resource Center on Data and Technology regarding the causes of increased foster care cases.

Community Involvement and Advocacy: The Department of Social Services (DSS) is utilizing approximately 220 million dollars of Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) special hurricane relief funds awarded in February 2006 to strengthen endangered communities. The funds will be used to support staff retention efforts in the medical teaching hospitals in New Orleans, establish and implement departmental initiatives such as digital imaging of important documents from paper case records, build and rebuild child care centers in the hurricane damaged areas, develop a quality certification process for child care centers including assessment of child care staff competencies and child care staff training, concrete and affective services to individuals and families affected by the storms through the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps, and support the reform initiatives of OCS including implementation of initiatives recommended by the Casey Strategic Consulting Group and the various federally funded child welfare national resource centers involved in providing training and technical assistance to OCS.

In addition to community and stakeholder involvement through Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) committees, the OCS Assistant Secretary has traveled throughout the state to acquaint agency staff, judges and other stakeholders, and communities at large with the agency mission change, short-term recovery and long-term reform goals. Further, Family Services and Prevention Staff have traveled to the regions to meet with staff and providers in order to monitor service provision at the community level.

DSS was one of five entities awarded a competitive grant of \$400,000 per year for 5 years by the Children's Bureau to be used for a project called Louisiana Kinship Enhanced Service System (LAKISS). The purpose of the grant is to demonstrate collaboration between child welfare and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) agencies to improve child welfare outcomes with required evaluation and replicability factors (it cannot be used for direct services). DSS is partnering with the LSU School of Social Work and the Louisiana Youth Enhanced Services consortium (a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA] funded mental health program for children and their families) to work with kinship care families across the continuum of child welfare services from prevention work with TANF only families to access to services for youth aging out of foster care. The funds provided by this grant will further the goals of the DSS No Wrong Door initiative by enhancing collaboration between OCS and the Office of Family Support, the statewide TANF agency, and will provide a forum for advocating for the needs of kinship care families.

OCS worked closely with our federal partners to develop recovery and reform initiatives with strong training and technical support from the child welfare national resources centers. An organizing and guiding matrix of the services to be provided by each of the resource centers was developed and progress is monitored through conference calls that occur every six weeks and involve representatives of each of the National Resource Centers and appropriate OCS staff.

Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 2: Plan to address human resource management issues (i.e., staffing patterns, space for staff, resources for staff, training and supervision) and the inter-relationship of these issues with the increase in volume of calls to hotline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Staffing Patterns</u> PA-HR 2: Human resources planning PA-HR 5.04: Analyze employment patterns • <u>Resources for Staff and Space for Staff</u> PA-AM 7.04: Resource management/development PA-FIN 2: Financial risk assessment PA-FIN 3.01: Budget serves as a plan for managing financial resources. • <u>Training and Supervision</u> PA-TS 1: Personnel development and training PA-TS 2: Training content PA-TS 3: Supervision PA-PQI 6: Staff training and support • <u>Adoption Services</u> PA-AS 12.04: Collaboration with providers PA-AS 13: Personnel • <u>Child Protective Services</u> PA-CPS 4.01: Access to report abuse/neglect PA-CPS 4.05: Timeliness of assigning reports PA-CPS 14: Personnel • <u>Foster Care Services</u> PA-FC 18: Personnel • <u>Family Preservation and Stabilization Services:</u> PA-FPS 11: Personnel PA-FPS 11.05: Supervisory personnel available 24/7 • <u>Kinship Care Services</u> PA-KC 16: Personnel 	<p>Staffing Patterns: Prior to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, OCS had 1860 employees. In the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes, many staff were displaced, and some positions were lost due to budget cuts. Our current legislative approval is for 1825 probationary and permanent employees. All but about 45 of those positions are filled, resulting in a vacancy rate of approximately 2.5%. Staffing patterns and personnel issues in this report are provided for the agency as a whole, but reflect agency efforts to assure adequate staffing in each agency program.</p> <p>The low vacancy rate is in part attributable to a recently implemented recruitment strategy whereby 30 to 50 staff are hired throughout the state as special job appointments. These special job appointments are temporary in nature, thus do not require legislative approval. Consequently, these positions exist in addition to the legislatively approved staffing level, and are placed throughout the regions on an as-needed basis and availability of funds in the agency budget. Job requirements, including emphasis on an MSW or related degree and affirmative action requirements apply equally to these employees as to probational-to-permanent hires. The temporary employees receive all required training, and are ready to step into a permanent position whenever a vacancy occurs, thus providing an in-house, job-ready applicant pool. Another initiative to keep the vacancy rate as low as possible was implemented earlier this year by increasing the special entrance pay rate by 10% for Child Welfare Trainees and Specialists 1 who hold an MSW or related masters degree.</p> <p>The staff turnover rate has increased significantly since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In the four State Fiscal Years (SFY) from 2001-2002 through 2004-2005, the average turnover rate was 10.95%. In SFY 2005-2006, the turnover rate was 15.86%, the highest rate in seven years. The staff turnover increase has resulted from staff who were eligible for retirement opting to retire rather than continue working, staff who decided to resign to allow more time for handling personal business, and staff displaced to other states choosing not to return to Louisiana. In order to reduce turnover, OCS is in the process of increasing the number of Child Welfare Specialist 3 positions to improve morale and allow for more in-line career development opportunities. The duties of these Specialist 3s positions will vary according to local needs, but will include management of specialized caseloads, serving as lead worker for a particular supervisory unit, or acting as an assistant to the unit supervisor.</p> <p>A total of 11 probationary staff were laid off as a result of the hurricanes. Those staff have not been recalled, and the positions have been abolished. Also, a number of permanent staff were furloughed as a result of the storm. The agency requested and received approval from Louisiana State Civil Service to extend the furloughs through June 2006. At the end of June, staff who had not returned were sent a letter informing them that they would be separated if they did not</p>

return to work by July 5, 2006. Every reasonable effort was made to accommodate displaced staff in offices near where they were living. Most staff did return. Those who were unable to return or chose not to return were provided the most generous separation package possible, including non-competitive re-employment rights for 10 years and maintaining their pay and leave status. Staff displaced by the hurricanes who returned to work were allowed to work in the office nearest where they were living if such placement could be justified by caseloads. Those who could not be placed in the nearest office were provided employment in as close proximity to their physical location as possible. Some of the staff who accepted employment in other regions plan to stay in those regions permanently. Others plan to return to the New Orleans area, and have been allowed to do so as the caseload justified additional workers. At this time, only about 5 to 10 employees are working outside the New Orleans area and have requested a return to the New Orleans area. The number of staff requesting return to New Orleans changes frequently as openings become available and staff either return or decide to stay where they are rather than return.

The area most heavily impacted by the storms was the Greater New Orleans Region. This region is comprised of two districts, Orleans District which is comprised of Orleans Parish, and Jefferson District which is comprised of Jefferson, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines Parishes. A door-to-door population survey published in October 2006 revealed that Orleans Parish had 187,525 residents compared with 454,863 pre-Katrina residents; Jefferson had 435,786 compared with 452,824, Plaquemines Parish had 20,024 compared with 28,995, and St. Bernard had 25,016 compared with 65,364. The staffing level in the Orleans District is currently 110, less than half of the approximately 225 staff employed there prior to the hurricane season of 2005. This reduction in staff is reflective of at least two highly populated areas (Ninth Ward and New Orleans East) remaining uninhabitable. The staffing level in the Jefferson District is around 200, approximately the same as prior to the hurricanes.

Because population shifts continue to occur, Human Resources and Field Services Divisions continue extensive collaboration. Information exchange meetings are held bi-weekly, Human Resources participates in the quarterly Regional Administrators meetings, and an annual Human Resources workshop is held between state office Human Resources staff, Regional Administrators, and regional Human Resources Liaisons. The position control data base that was established as a direct result of the hurricanes continues to be operational and very useful. In spite of the population shifts that have occurred throughout Louisiana, the only potentially significant demographic shift in the population served by the agency involves the large influx of Hispanic workers who are employed in the reconstruction of the Greater New Orleans Region. OCS is currently exploring the level of impact the Hispanic population is having on our caseloads, the number of bilingual (Spanish/English) staff in the region, and possible recruitment methods to encourage bilingual

applicants should that be determined necessary.

Space for Staff: In the immediate aftermath of the hurricanes, the entire Greater New Orleans region staff was housed in the Jefferson Parish East Bank office, resulting in nearly intolerable working conditions. Since then, the Jefferson West Bank office and the Orleans office have reopened. Now all workers have their own desks and computers. Overcrowding has ceased to be a problem in the Jefferson District even though Plaquemines Parish staff continues to work out of the Jefferson west bank office and St. Bernard Parish continues to work out of the Jefferson east bank office. There are no plans in the foreseeable future to reopen either the St. Bernard or Plaquemines offices.

In Plaquemines Parish, a coalition of various social service and mental health providers opened a one-stop, private not-for-profit, service center. It is anticipated that at some point in the future, OCS will utilize space in this center for interviewing, family visits, etc. At this point, the center is too small to accommodate OCS, but a group of architects has donated their time to develop plans for expansion. No time frame has been established for OCS utilization of this facility. The service center in Plaquemines Parish is also envisioned as a probable site for housing staff working in the TANF-child welfare collaboration (LAKISS).

Space for staff in Orleans Parish is somewhat limited at this time. After the hurricanes, the amount of space being leased in Orleans Parish was reduced as a cost-saving measure because the space was not needed. The need for space in that parish is increasing, and working conditions are currently somewhat crowded. Similarly, the Lake Charles Regional and Calcasieu Parish offices were combined as a cost-saving measure prior to the hurricanes. Increased caseloads and resulting increased staffing has resulted in overcrowding in that office. Increased caseloads and population shifts have also caused overcrowding in Bossier Parish in the Shreveport Region and in Livingston Parish in the Baton Rouge Region. Alleviating overcrowded conditions is contingent on budget, and efforts and plans are underway to obtain the funding that would be needed alleviate overcrowded working conditions, with the overarching goal of co-housing as many Department of Social Services (DSS) agencies as possible, both as a cost-saving measure and to improve services for consumers who are served by multiple DSS agencies. All other parishes and regions have adequate space for staff. State office staff moved into a new office building in September 2006. Construction of this building had begun long before Katrina and Rita occurred, and the new site houses all DSS agencies, consistent with the No Wrong Door initiative.

Resources for Staff: Most of the special resources for staff implemented in the aftermath of the hurricanes are no longer necessary. Many staff who were on Family and Medical Leave after the hurricanes have returned to work. The “special”

leave that was approved for a number of staff to attend to personal business ended on June 30, 2006, but as much leeway as possible is afforded in granting annual leave to workers who need time away from work to attend to personal and property issues. A DSS coordinator continues to be available to assist staff as needed in negotiating the FEMA application process and other assistance.

The formal grief counseling made available to staff in the aftermath of the hurricanes by the agency has ended. The agency has an ongoing Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team that has resumed operation and will begin recruiting new members in the near future. Team membership requires an application and interview selection process, and members receive training from the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation. Additionally, Louisiana Spirit, one of the state-funded hurricane recovery initiatives provides no cost individual counseling to those affected by the hurricanes, and agency administration has made staff aware of this service and encouraged their use of it. Further, staff within and outside the hurricane-affected areas has been very supportive of one another.

Training and Supervision: All regularly offered training activities that were suspended after the hurricanes have resumed. The frequency of legislatively required core curriculum new worker training has increased as a result of the increased turnover rate and the population shift resulting in staff working in different programs necessitating cross-training. In order to accommodate the increased number of training sessions, three former employees have been hired in temporary positions to provide staff training. One of the former employees is housed in Shreveport, one in Alexandria, and one in Baton Rouge. Having trainers in various areas of the state makes training more accessible for regional staff, and saves travel time and money. The Introduction to Child Welfare series is now being held two to three times per month, with at least one of the sessions in north or central Louisiana and at least one in the Baton Rouge area.

The lack of hotel space for training rooms and sleeping rooms for staff that occurred for several months after the hurricanes has now resolved, and there is adequate hotel space throughout the state, however hotel rates have increased. State rates for hotels are set by the Louisiana Division of Administration, and the state rates are no longer realistic or adequate; therefore, special approval for current hotel rates has to be requested for each training that requires hotel space for staff.

Two trainings developed after the hurricanes, Case Management after the Storm and Emergency Planning, continue to be available in the curriculum, but it has not been necessary to offer either of these trainings recently. All regional home development staff has now received the training on abbreviated home studies for child specific placements. Additionally,

the standard foster/adoptive parent training has been synthesized into seven sessions rather than the ten sessions that were previously required, and the elements of the training have been put on PowerPoint to assure consistency throughout the state. In the past, only foster care and adoption workers were required to complete the foster/adoptive parent training, but the agency now requires all new professional staff to have this training, which is the second course in the required curriculum, thus assuring a better understanding of the implications of foster care placement for investigative and family services/prevention staff.

Development of A Comprehensive Enterprise Social Service System (ACCESS) had begun prior to the hurricanes. ACCESS will serve as Louisiana's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), but is broader than most SACWIS systems in that it will integrate information from all DSS agencies. Full implementation has been delayed, but ACCESS was implemented for the Child Protection Investigations program only on a statewide basis subsequent to the hurricanes. ACCESS training has been, and continues to be, a major responsibility of the Training Section. ACCESS coordinates with the Department's implementation of the No Wrong Door initiative activities.

Additionally, each of the agency's reform efforts has a training component, and the Training Section is actively involved in working with our partners from the child welfare national resources centers to develop training sessions for these initiatives, some of which will be conducted in-house and some contracted. The Training Section is also working with National Resource Centers to enhance Cultural Competence training to include working with the growing Hispanic population in the Greater New Orleans Region.

The federal Title IV-E stipend program continues as a critical component of meeting the educational requirements for educationally competent staff. Five BSW students graduated or are scheduled to graduate in December 2006. One of the five has already been employed by the agency, and the others are in the application process. New stipends have always been awarded for the fall semester only, and none will be awarded for this spring semester. Applications will be due in April, with stipends to be awarded in June, for the 2007-2008 academic year starting in the fall.

The mentoring program for supervisors provided under contract with nationally recognized expert Marsha Salas has been completed, with 24 supervisors having received this intensive training. The agency is considering expanding and continuing the mentoring program, but no firm decision has been made at this time. Ms. Salas does continue regular training for supervisors, with the next sessions scheduled for January 2007.

The ratio of workers to supervisors following the hurricanes was an issue in that more supervisors returned to work than were needed. For as long as possible, supervisors retained their pay and job title while performing the tasks of a worker. Civil Service limits the amount of time that an employee can work out of classification without being changed to the classification in which they are working. Through the close working arrangements between Human Resources and Field Services Divisions, the agency was able to place all former supervisors back in supervisory jobs prior to the Civil Service deadline, although some of the supervisors were supervising as few as three workers. The efforts to assure that no supervisors were demoted were consistent with the overall commitment of the agency administration to provide as much support to staff as possible, while minimizing any potential negative employment actions. The efforts to retain pre-hurricane employment status for supervisors was instrumental in providing increased staff stability and may have prevented additional employee turnover.

Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 3: Plan to address infrastructure issues (i.e., records storage and recovery, contract management, PQI, and physical site challenges)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records Storage PA-RPM 6 (emphasis: 6.01): Security of Information • Contract Management PA-RPM 2: Risk prevention PA-RPM 2.01: Contracting practices and compliance PA-RPM 9: Contracts and service agreements PA-RPM 10: Quality monitoring purchased services PA-PQI 1: Leadership endorsement of PQI values PA-PQI 2.04: Quality expectations reflected in documents PA-PQI 4: Analyzing and reporting information • Physical Site Challenges PA-ASE 2: Accessibility PA-ASE 4: Facility maintenance PA-ASE 7: Emergency Preparedness • Adoption Services PA-AS 12.05: Record retention 	<p>Records Storage and Recovery: As stated in our June 2006 report, records were destroyed only in St. Bernard Parish. Those records were reconstructed using court records, computer records, IV-E documentation, and packets that had been sent to state office prior to the 2005 storms for various service authorizations. The reconstructed records and all others are securely maintained according to legally mandated timeframes. The digital imaging of records referred to in our June 2006 report has been delayed. The project has been designed; a strategy has been developed; and the Statement of Work has been signed by the company doing the pilot, the Information Technology Director and DSS staff. It has been forwarded to the LA Division of Administration for final approval. Because of contract delays, it is now anticipated that work on digital imaging of records will begin in March 2006. A target completion date has not yet been established.</p> <p>Contract Management: No changes in the agency’s contract management procedures occurred as a direct result of the hurricanes; however, the agency’s recovery and reform efforts have resulted in rather intensive work with contractors both in the development of front-end prevention services and in review of residential placements. However, this work with contractors has not changed the method of contract negotiation, implementation or oversight.</p> <p>Performance and Quality Improvement: <i>Continuous Quality Improvement Meetings:</i> To some extent, agency recovery and reform efforts have taken precedence over regular CQI meetings. The statewide CQI committee last met in May 2006, and the next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2007. In order to maintain continuity, half of the committee members rotate off of the committee, and a rotation was completed in conjunction with the May meeting. Referrals continue to come in from the regions on issues ranging from emergency preparedness to policy and practice, and those referrals have been managed by the committee chair. CQI committees have resumed or continued meeting in all regions with the exception of the New Orleans District in the Greater New Orleans Region. The New Orleans District last met prior to the hurricanes, and reports that the issues they were working on at that time have become insignificant in light of the recovery and reform efforts currently underway. They have not yet established a time frame for resuming regular meetings.</p> <p>In addition to regular CQI meetings, the agency’s work with both Casey Strategic Consulting Group and the federally funded child welfare national resource centers contain a performance and quality improvement component, as these reform efforts are data and performance-driven. A steering committee for the reform efforts has taken on a quasi-CQI role. The committee has met for between one-half and one day every two weeks since June 2006. Case reviews and forums are held regularly on the status of the reform initiatives, and the steering committee meetings have been held to</p>

analyze case reviews, results and outcomes of forums held on the reforms, measure progress on the plan for reform, conduct actual case studies, and consider how to use statistical data.

Stakeholder involvement: Our stakeholders continue to contribute to our efforts. The Consumer and Community CQI stakeholder subcommittee last met on July 13, 2006. The date for the next meeting has not yet been set, as the subcommittee is being reinstated with a planned survey of members. The results of the survey will serve as a guide for future goals of this subcommittee. In addition to the work of this subcommittee, state office staff has traveled to the regions to meet with contractors, hold community forums, and meet with agency staff.

Consumer Satisfaction Surveys: Consumer satisfaction surveys continue to be distributed and collected at parish and regional offices, and the results rolled up for CQI review and development of corrective action plans as needed. In the new building housing state office staff, there has been a delay in installing collection boxes for consumer satisfaction survey. The survey boxes for state office are in the process of being installed.

The Consumer Satisfaction and Feedback Mechanisms Subcommittee resumed a quarterly meeting schedule, with the next meeting scheduled for January 11, 2007. A major issue under consideration by the committee prior to the storms was accessibility of the agency telephone number for members of the general public who need to report child abuse or neglect. The issue is still under consideration. Telephone directories from around the state were reviewed to determine how and where the agency number is listed, and it was found that there is inconsistency in listing locations. The issue will be brought up to the CQI committee, and the cost of additional listings will be explored. A companion issue is whether the general public recognizes the agency by its name which is not very descriptive. Plans were made to develop and conduct a survey to gauge the knowledge level of the general public about the name of the agency and how to find the telephone number, but this has not been accomplished due to other agency initiatives.

Peer Case Reviews: Although formal peer case reviews will not be held until the beginning of 2007, the Peer Case Review Subcommittee has resumed a regular meeting schedule, with its next meeting scheduled February 1, 2007. Preparations are being made for reinstating Peer Case Reviews for SFY 2007-2008. Lead coordinators have been identified, and the review instrument is being revised. It is anticipated that the revised instrument will track the Child and Family Services Review instrument, and that the worker/supervisor interviews that had been deleted from the process will be reinstated. The agency is also considering a more flexible approach to peer involvement that will facilitate involvement of more peers. The initial draft of the revised review instrument will be circulated by the beginning of 2007,

with comments due by the end of January. The changes will be rolled up CQI, and then presented to Regional Administrators at their quarterly meeting in March 2007.

A number of ad hoc case record reviews have been conducted and the organization has taken steps to insure the case reviews have been conducted on the number of case required. The reviews are summarized as follows. Family service case reviews were conducted by state office staff, and state office staff continues to review records in the field, providing feedback to field staff. Foster Care reviews have been completed for the Independent Living and Young Adult Programs, and for Foster Care Special Board Rates. The record reviews have been completed, but the data analysis has is not completed to provide feedback to field staff. Individual case reviews for all programs have been completed on Katrina Class cases (the Katrina Class is comprised of all children in agency custody and foster care alumni participating in the Young Adult Program who were displaced either to another state or to another area of Louisiana as a result of the hurricane). A Title IV-E case review has been completed. Home Development regional staff has been asked to contact underutilized foster/adoptive parents to get information on their availability, but the information is not being rolled up or documented. A review of 100% of residential cases is being conducted including interviews with each child in residential placement. CPI record reviews have not been done. The CPI Section Administrator compiled lists of factors that could be contributory to the increase in foster care entries, and the Quality Assurance Section has provided various data sets representative of these factors. The data is currently being analyzed by CPI staff. Upon completion of the data analysis, a determination will be made as to the necessity of reviewing CPI cases, particularly for the effects of legislation regarding kinship care placements and substance exposed infants. The results of all of these ad hoc reviews will be provided to the CQI committee for recommendations on needed corrective action.

Traditional QA reviews: Traditional quality assurance reviews have been resumed in all regions; however, quality assurance reviews for CPI cases have been suspended as a result of ACESS implementation in that program. It had been hoped that many of the traditional QA review items could be reviewed through ACESS reports, alleviating the need for record reviews on these data items. ACESS is capable of producing such reports, but is not doing so at this time. A firm date has not been set for resumption of QA reviews of CPI cases.

The Quality Assurance Section is working on several initiatives. (1) An intranet annual report concept, building a platform in three parts: population information from census and client profile information at state, region, and parish levels; typical QA information in annual reports with drill down to region/parish (this will complement information that is currently being provided to regions for several of the original Program Improvement Plan corrective action measures with

drill down to worker level); and federal data standards outcome information with drill down no lower than regional level. (2) Movement toward more qualitative QA reviews. Qualitative data needs have been identified, but data sources have not. (3) Integration of Peer Case Review and QA data to provide a more useable feedback loop for agency administration and field staff. (4) The Louisiana Court Improvement Project has received a grant focused on data and analysis. Efforts are underway to develop standards for court procedures and data systems, and standardizing the meaning of data across types of courts. The QA Section Administrator will be involved in this data development with the ultimate goal of electronic communication between the courts and the agency. The grant is for five years, and the first year will be devoted to strategic planning.

Program Improvement Plan: The renegotiated/revised Program Improvement Plan (PIP) was approved on June 19, 2006, and has a targeted completion date of September 30, 2007. The first progress report was submitted on November 15, 2006 for the period of July 1 through September 30, 2006. The renegotiated PIP provides a proactive template for recovery from the devastation left in the wake of the 2005 hurricanes and focuses on the six child welfare outcomes Louisiana did not achieve in the initial Child and Family Services Review: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect (Safety 1); Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible (Safety 2); Children have permanency and stability in their living situations (Permanency 1); Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs (Well Being 1); Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs (Well Being 2); and Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs (Well Being 3).

The renegotiated PIP acknowledged achievement of three national data goals: Reunification, Adoption in Twenty-four Months, and Placement Stability. During a conference call on November 2, 2006, ACF Regional Office and the Children's Bureau agreed that Louisiana had met a fourth data goal, Recurrence of Maltreatment. Achievement of the remaining data goal, Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care, has not been determined. The Louisiana NCANDS data submitted for this item was a correct data set, but the data was not incorporated because of miscommunication regarding Louisiana's ability to identify perpetrators.

The renegotiated PIP contains three major objectives: analysis of current CPI data, practice, and external factors as they relate to the increase in children entering foster care; development and implementation of a protocol for case management and decision-making for displaced children and their biological families; and provision of more qualified legal representation for children and/or parents in the child welfare system. Each of these objectives reflects consultation with the child welfare national resource centers, and is subdivided into strategies and action steps for achievement of each of

the three overarching objectives. Sixteen action steps were slated for completion during the first quarter of implementation, each of which was completed. The activities involved with the completion of these action steps are described in appropriate sections of this report.

Long Term Reform: The change in agency mission along with the challenges presented by the 2005 hurricanes presented an opportunity for the agency to develop and begin implementation of plans for long term reform efforts. These efforts are enhanced through agency partnerships with the Administration for Children and Families, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation. Reform efforts are focused on development of a comprehensive service array to allow more children to be served in families; re-design of home development to recruit and better support foster parents; limitations on the use of residential placements so that only older children who cannot be served in family settings are placed in residential care; assessment of Medicaid review for purposes of establishing funding for services for children in custody, particularly those who are now in residential placement; and redesign of the Independent Living program for adolescents in foster care.

Our federal partners have provided significant assistance in these reform efforts by providing training and technical assistance through the child welfare national resource centers. As a part of the PIP renegotiation, and to ensure safety, well being and permanency for the children and families served by the agency, the Administration for Children and Families agreed to provide assistance from the National Resource Centers for Child Protective Services, Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, Legal and Judicial Issues, Youth Development, Adoption, Organizational Improvement, Data and Information Technology, Children's Mental Health, and Friends National Resource Center. A matrix of the efforts of the resource centers was developed that identifies how each will assist in reaching desired child welfare outcomes. The resource centers work with the agency through teleconferences and on-site visits of a particular center with the associated agency program, and progress is measured through teleconferences held every six weeks involving all resource centers and involved agency staff.

The child welfare national resource centers are providing comprehensive assistance to the agency in meeting its short term recovery and long term reform efforts. A few examples of national resource center involvement include the following: the National Resource Center for Child Protection is assisting with a review of current CPI intake procedures and consideration of alternative response initiatives; the National Resource Center for Data and Technology is working with CPI to assess the causes increasing foster care entries; the National Resource Centers for Organizational Improvement, Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning, and Data and Technology are all assisting with evaluation of

assessment tools, analysis of service array, and design of a continuum of services; the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues is assisting with the development of Child Law Centers, development and distribution of and “Emergency Preparedness Guide for Dependency Courts”, and researching interjurisdictional issues; and the National Resource Center for Youth Development is assisting in assessment and improvement of the agency’s Independent Living and Young Adult Programs.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation through the Casey Strategic Consulting Group is also providing intense assistance to the agency in accomplishing reform efforts. The Casey group provides regular on-site consultation and monitoring of agency progress, identifying methods of achieving the long-term reform goals, and identifying barriers to achievement. The Casey group is working with the agency to assist in developing a comprehensive service array that will allow more children to be served in families by incorporating evidence-based and in-home therapeutic and social services into agency practice; redesign of home development to recruit and support foster parents, and limiting the use of residential placements to children who cannot be served in a family setting.

The MacArthur Foundation is consulting with the Children’s Cabinet, which is working with our agency and with the state Office of Youth Development to increase access to Mental Health Rehabilitation services to clients of the two agencies. The foundation is funding a support position within the Children’s Cabinet to facilitate Medicaid funding for mental health services. The foundation is also providing consultation with a licensing expert to provide feedback on our draft residential licensing agreement.

Physical Site Challenges:

Accessibility: All of the buildings occupied by agency and used by agency consumers comply with federal, state, and local legal requirements regarding facility accessibility. Closure of the St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parish offices following the hurricanes reduces accessibility to those offices by consumers, but home visits and in-home services ameliorate this access limitation to some extent.

Emergency Preparedness: The Department of Social Services has contracted with Innovative Emergency Management, Inc., a consulting firm experienced in emergency planning for large organizations to develop a Continuity of Operation Plan (COOP) to assure continuation of services in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The COOP plan identifies for the department as a whole and for each agency within the department essential functions of operation, orders of succession, a roster of key employees statewide, delegation of authority in areas of Child Protection Investigations and

	<p>Foster Care case management, devolution to regional leadership if state office staff is inaccessible for 24 hours or more, alternative work facilities, essential functions and supporting dependencies such as unaccompanied children and foster care case management, ways to support personnel, supplies, records, and other necessities so that work can be carried on, and examines interoperable communication (alternative providers and modes of communication).</p>
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Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 4: Plan to address safety and service delivery to children in out of state placement with caregivers who evacuated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General PA-CR 1: Protection of rights and ethical obligations PA-PQI 2: Foundation and broad use of PQI PA-PQI 2.01: Takes into account all sites and persons served PA-RPM 1: Legal and regulatory compliance PA-RPM 2.01: Annual assessment of risk by management PA-RPM 9: Contracts and service agreements PA-ASE 7: Emergency response preparedness • Adoption Services PA-AS 3: Homestudy practice PA-AS 11.01: Post-adoption services • Child Protective Services PA-CPS 2: Community partnership PA-CPS 2.01: Collaboration PA-CPS 9.04: Frequency/ type of face-to-face visits PA-CPS 12: Child and youth permanency PA-CPS 12.01: Permanency plan within 30 days PA-CPS 12.03: Reviews at least every 6 months • Family Preservation and Stabilization Services PA-FPS 1: Access to service PA-FPS 3.06: Continual evaluation of progress PA-FPS 4.07: Case review PA-FPS 6.03: Home/community service setting PA-FPS 6.04: 24/7 services and involvement PA-FPS 7.05: Crisis intervention 24/7 PA-FPS 9.01: Termination planning • Kinship Care Services PA-KC 6.05: Regular home assessment PA-KC 13: Worker contact and monitoring 	<p>Safety of and Service Provision to Children and Foster Parents: In the immediate aftermath of the storms the agency worked collaboratively with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and established a dedicated call in line in the state office in order to determine the whereabouts of all children in foster care and their foster parents who had evacuated. Later, the agency worked in consultation with the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning to develop and implement a protocol for contact with children and foster parents displaced by the storm to assure their safety. Meetings were held among State Office Foster Care and Residential staff and staff from Orleans and Jefferson regions to strategize and develop plans for assuring worker contact with children temporarily out of state due to hurricane evacuation.</p> <p>A special “Katrina Class” was established and SSBG Special Hurricane Relief funds were used to appoint a staff person to assure that the displaced children in foster care and their caregivers received the services that they needed and had worker contact. As soon as offices reopened in the Greater New Orleans region, children who were out of state were referred to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children to request service provision by the state in which they were residing. Foster children in residential facilities who were relocated out of state were visited by a member of the State Office Residential staff. Foster children in residential, foster home, or relative placements who were relocated to other areas within the state were contacted by agency staff in the regions/parishes where the children were located. An instrument was developed for use in contacting foster children and their caretakers who had relocated out of state, and workers were instructed to use the instrument in making contact with these children and their caretakers in order to assure their safety and identify any needed services. Through the intensive efforts with “Katrina Class” foster children and their caregivers, remarkable progress has been made in reducing the number of children who remained out of state. As of March 1, 2006 as many as 250 foster children remained out of state; as of November 14, 2006 only 57 foster children were out of state; and as of December 13, 2006 the number of Katrina class children who have not returned to Louisiana is 41. By November, 2006 all of the children with goals of reunification had returned to Louisiana. The majority of the children who are still out of state have case plan goals of adoption; the others have case plan goals of Alternate Permanent Planned Living Arrangement.</p> <p>A key component of service provision for Katrina Class consumers was assuring continued contact between children in care and their biological families. Even after all foster children who had evacuated were located, many biological parents remained missing. Beginning in April 2006, a procedure was established by the Foster Care Section to collect and update information on missing parents using an Excel worksheet and a Word template created for that purpose. When the courts</p>

in the Greater New Orleans region reopened shortly after Katrina, efforts to locate parents were coordinated among court personnel, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and OCS staff. The agency also partnered with the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice and Permanency Planning to develop innovative methods of locating parents, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) provided assistance. Most of the identified methods of locating missing parents were already established in agency policy, such as using Federal and State Parent Locator Service, various internet search engines, and other resources. Additionally, data from FEMA and the Red Cross was utilized, and assistance was solicited and received from other states where missing parents might have applied for public benefits or housing assistance. Staff was directed to cooperate with NCMEC and assured that they were bound by the same confidentiality requirements as the agency. All biological parents active as service consumers with the agency and whose whereabouts were unknown as a result of hurricane evacuations have been located.

Strategies and procedures were also developed to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their biological families. The Foster Care Section Administrator and Program Managers met with staff from the New Orleans and Jefferson regions and developed guidelines for assuring that foster children maintained contact with biological families despite displacement resulting from the hurricanes. OCS Memorandum 06-024 was issued on March 22, 2006, providing staff with guidelines for arranging and supervising visits between children in foster care and their biological parents. Additionally, OCS Memorandum 06-005 was issued on January 17, 2006, and established payment codes for crisis transportation and crisis travel related expenses for visitation among displaced children and their families. A liaison position was established to facilitate contact between state office and the region and to assure a smooth and consistent process of travel expense approval.

Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 5: Plan to address case planning and legal jurisdiction changes for children in placement out-of-state.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption Services PA-AS 1.04: Service Selectivity PA-AS 3.04: Collaborative home study process PA-AS 5.02: Review every 6 months PA-AS 8.03: Consideration of birth parents' wishes PA-AS 12.04: Collaborative service delivery PA-AS 12.05: Records retention PA-AS 12.06: Release of information • Child Protective Services PA-CPS 12.01: Timeframe for achieving permanency PA-CPS 12.03: Review every 6 months PA-CPS 13.01: Evaluate for closure every 6 months • Family Preservation and Stabilization Services PA-FPS 1.02: Collaboration with referring agency PA-FPS 6.01: Respectful, family-centered relationships PA-FPS 9.02: Notification of case closure • Kinship Care Services PA-KC 6.04: Criminal background/central registry checks PA-KC 14.03: Notification of case closure 	<p>Case Planning for Children in Placement Out-Of-State: An informal task force consisting of OCS staff, CASA, and the courts was established when courts were reopened and has been in continuous contact to facilitate and assure appropriate decision making for children residing in other states due to hurricane evacuation.</p> <p>Each Katrina Class case was reviewed, and Katrina Class Casework was been established to facilitate case plan implementation and movement toward permanence. An instrument was developed for Katrina Class Case Reviews, and was used to assess the appropriateness of the placement and to identify an individualized plan for each Katrina Class child. OCS has received and continues to receive assistance from private and governmental entities in this endeavor.</p> <p>With input from partners, the decision making model already defined in agency policy continues to be used in a case-by-case manner with each Katrina class child, in- and out-of state. The essential elements of this model are the best interest of the child and close review by the court with emphasis on the safety, well being, and permanency of each child.</p> <p>Legal Jurisdiction for Children in Placement Out-Of-State: For the most part, legal jurisdiction for children displaced by the hurricanes has not changed. A case-by-case analysis of the most appropriate jurisdiction was done, involving collaboration between jurisdictions. In come cases, parties participate in judicial reviews and hearings by telephone rather than in person. As indicated earlier in this report, members of the legal system have been active partners in assuring that the best interests of children and families involved with the child welfare system are served.</p> <p>The state, through the Court Improvement Program, is working with the National Resource Centers for Organizational Improvement and for Legal and Judicial Issues to provide more qualified legal representation for children and/or parents involved with the child welfare system and impacted by the hurricanes. This collaborative effort has resulted in online Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses posted on the Louisiana Children's Legal Advocacy Resource Online and available to attorneys throughout the state. The CLEs include the following: Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) 101 Part I; ASFA 101 Part II; Permanency Options Part I; Permanency Options Part II; Foster Parents: Notice and Opportunity; Professionalism (legal versus social work); and Ethics (legal versus social work). These free and convenient CLE courses are expected to generate interest and train attorneys to provide qualified legal representation for storm impacted children and families.</p> <p>Training has also been developed by the Louisiana Court Improvement Program with child welfare resource center</p>

	<p>collaboration on how to advocate for children and families in the context of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Live trainings, including ethics and professionalism, have been delivered in Shreveport, New Iberia, Leesville, and New Orleans. Trainings are planned for Monroe in January 2007 and Alexandria in March 2007.</p> <p>The Court Improvement Program is also offering training in January 2007 in Baton Rouge for agency staff and others involved with the child welfare judicial system on mediation in Child in Need of Care proceedings. This mediation training is expected to result in creating an environment that encourages and allows communication among all parties, enhancing communication and problem solving skills, and providing staff with an opportunity to collaborate and work in partnership with other professionals.</p> <p>Another positive result of the impact of hurricanes Katrina and Rita has been the publication of an on-line course published by the Children's Bureau to guide juvenile courts in the development of emergency preparedness plans. Development of this training was a collaborative effort of the Children's Bureau, the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the National Center for State Courts.</p>
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Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 6: Plan to address safety and availability of foster and other substitute caregivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General PA-RPM 10: Quality monitoring of purchased services PA-BSM 2: Behavior support and management practices PA-BSM 3: Safety training PA-BSM 4: Restrictive behavior management intervention training • Foster Care Services PA-FC 2: Assessment PA-FC 6: Child placement PA-FC 12: Worker contact and monitoring PA-FC 16: Recruitment and retention of foster families • Family Preservation and Stabilization Services PA-FPS 2: Screening PA-FPS 2.01: Response to referrals and requests PA-FPS 2.02: Family informed about services PA-FPS 2.04: Refer families who cannot be served PA-FPS 3.06: Providers continually assess progress, PA-FPS 4.07: Case Reviews PA-FPS 6.01: Respectful, family-centered relationships PA-FPS 6.04: Individualized, involved, 24/7 services PA-FPS 7.05: Crisis intervention available 24/7 PA-FPS 11.05: Supervisors available 24/7 PA-FPS 11.07: Appropriate workload PA-FPS 11.08: Fair treatment of employees • Kinship Care Services PA-KC 6: Homestudy and placement services PA-KC 6.03: Caregiver assessment PA-KC 6.05: Regular assessment of home PA-KC 9.01: Responsibilities of caregivers PA-KC 10.04: Age-appropriate health services PA-KC 12.02: Assistance to caregivers 	<p>Safety and Availability of Foster and Other Substitute Caregivers: The agency is committed to assuring that children are safe and in the least restrictive placement possible. First, as discussed in the “Change in Mission” section of this report, we are enhancing services to families so that children can be safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible. Second, the agency is committed to locating and supporting kinship care families for children who cannot be maintained in their own homes. These efforts include working through the State Supreme Court which has obtained a grant to employ two full time employees using the “Family Find” model to locate relatives and other permanent connections for children whose relatives whereabouts are not known; shortening the certification process for child-specific placement resources; and using the LAKISS grant to locate and coordinate services for kinship care families through the joint efforts of the child welfare and financial assistance agencies.</p> <p>A significant component of the agency’s reform effort is the enhancement of home development so that foster families will be available when circumstances preclude children remaining in their own homes or being placed with relatives. The goal of home development reform is to assure consistent practice across the state and worker focus on recruiting and supporting families. With the assistance of the Casey Strategic Consulting Group, the agency has assessed the current home development system by reviewing state and regional paperwork and conducting focus groups of workers and foster parents; establishing workgroups for each aspect of home development, including standardizing paperwork, streamlining the certification process, contracting for a recruitment media campaign, creating training on intake and orientation, beginning a utilization data analysis, and requesting additional home development staff throughout the state. Further efforts and goals will include training staff on new home development policies and procedures, supporting the Foster Parent Association, and increasing foster care board payments and services to foster parents. By making this effort to revitalize home development, the agency expects to be able to assure better matches between foster parents and children placed in their homes, and reduce the number of placement disruptions.</p> <p>Closely tied to the efforts to enhance home development, are the efforts to reduce the number of residential placements. A disproportionate amount of the agency’s foster care budget is spent to retain children in residential care. An instrument was designed to review case records and interview children placed in residential facilities. The sequence of interviews was established, with Katrina class children in residential placement being interviewed first, followed by non-Katrina children ageing out of care, followed by the remaining children according to age. The first 25 children have been interviewed, resulting in at least one child stepping down from facility to family placement. Other planned activities include follow-up with the first 25 children interviewed, revising agency policy relative to children age 10 and under</p>

	<p>being placed in residential care; adjustment of interview and follow-up procedures for remaining children in residential placement; identify and train interviewers and expeditors; and establish timelines to move work forward.</p>
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Areas to Address and Corresponding Standards	Achievement as of December 2006
<p>Objective 7: Plan to assess safety and service delivery needs of children under state supervision who evacuated with their biological parents to another state</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General PA-AM 3: Scope of services • Adoption Services PA-AS 2.02: Strengths-based, culturally competent assessment PA-AS 2.05: Social history PA-AS 4: Service planning and monitoring PA-AS 4.03: Progress reviews and goal revisions • Child Protective Services PA-CPS 2: Community partnership PA-CPS 2.01: Leadership seeks collaboration PA-CPS 9.04: Face-to-face visits PA-CPS 12: Child and youth permanency PA-CPS 12.01: Permanency plan within 30 days PA-CPS 12.03: Review every 6 months PA-CPS 13.01: Evaluate for closure every 6 months • Family Preservation and Stabilization Services PA-FPS 1: Access to services PA-FPS 2.04: Refer families that cannot be served PA-FPS 3.06: Continually evaluate progress PA-FPS 4.01: Family-centered service plan PA-FPS 4.05: Extended family members advised of progress, participate PA-FPS 4.07: Case review PA-FPS 6.01: Respectful, family-centered relationship PA-FPS 6.03: Services in home and community setting PA-FPS 6.04: Services individualized and involve family; available 24/7 PA-FPS 7: Family supports and services PA-FPS 7.01: Assistance in meeting basic needs PA-FPS 7.02: Assistance in developing and applying needed skills PA-FPS 7.05: Crisis intervention available 24/7 PA-FPS 9.01: Termination planning PA-FPS 10.04: Post-closure follow-up PA-FPS 11.05: Supervisory personnel available by phone 24/7 	<p>Safety and Service Delivery Needs of Children Under State Supervision Who Evacuated with Biological Parents to Another State: No change has occurred in relation to the safety and service needs of children under state supervision who evacuated with their biological parents to another state since our report submitted on June 26, 2006. By that time, both CPI and FS had triaged open cases and intensive efforts had been made to locate the families. The families who were located were referred to the local child welfare agency for services in the area that the family had evacuated to if they were out of state or to the region/parish of Louisiana where they were located. A nation wide protective service alert was issued when the families of children determined to be at high risk could not be located.</p> <p>As previously indicated in this report, agency reform efforts are guided by the principle that children’s needs are best met in their own homes whenever this can be safely accomplished. Thus, the agency is working diligently to assure that an appropriate service array is developed so that children under agency supervision and their biological parents are provided appropriated community-based services to assure the safety and well being of those children.</p>