

STATE OF COLORADO



OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
George Kennedy, Deputy Executive Director

Division of Child Welfare
1575 Sherman Street, 2nd Floor
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
Phone 303.866.5932 Fax 303.866.5563
www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare

Lloyd D. Malone, M.P.A., Director



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

September 22, 2008

The Honorable Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor of Colorado
State Capitol Building
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Ritter,

This letter is sent as a cover to the report being submitted according to the requirements of C.R.S. 26-5.5-104 (6) that are as follows:

“On or after July 1, 1994, the Executive Director of the State Department shall annually evaluate the statewide Family Preservation Program (Program) and shall determine the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the Program. On or before the first day of October of each year, the Executive Director of the State Department shall report such findings and shall make recommended changes, including budgetary changes, to the Program to the General Assembly, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Governor. In evaluating the Program, the Executive Director of the State Department shall consider any recommendations made by the interagency Family Preservation Commission in accordance with section 26-5.5-106. To the extent changes to the Program may be made without requiring statutory amendment, the Executive Director may implement such changes, including the changes recommended by the commission acting in accordance with subsection (7) of this section.”

The following are the background and findings of program effectiveness, cost efficiencies, and recommended changes for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-2008 Core Services Program evaluation:

Background:

The following sources of information were used in completing the annual evaluation of the Core Services Program:

- Counties and Tribal Core Services Commission Reports
- Colorado Financial Management System (CFMS)
- Colorado Trails (Child Welfare's data management system)

The Core Services Program (formerly known as Family Preservation) has been in operation for nine years.

Program Effectiveness:

Performance Audit

A program performance audit was conducted pursuant to C.R.S. 2-3-103, which authorizes the State Auditor to conduct performance audits of all departments, institutions, and agencies of state government. The audit work was performed from April to December 2006 and evaluated the effectiveness of Core Services, which are designed to prevent or shorten foster care placements or allow children to move to the least restrictive placement settings.

The Report of the State Auditor was published May 2007 and recommended changes in two key areas in the Core Services Program.

1. The audit report found that the Department does not have valid and accurate methods that meet the statutory requirements of evaluating and reporting the effectiveness and cost efficiency of Core Services. As a result of the finding, the Department earmarked \$150,000 from the FY 2007-2008 Core Services allocation and contracted with Tri-West Group for program evaluation consulting services through a request for proposals process. With the Department, Tri-West Group is in the process of developing effective and valid methods for calculating costs savings as well as measurable outcomes related to the Core Services Program.
2. The audit report also recommended the Department review statutes relating to Core Services to identify areas in which the statute could be made clearer and more consistent with respect to the services to be provided, the population that is eligible for services, and any time limits on the services. This review is ongoing.

Services Provided

The count of services represent the number of individual authorizations of service entered into Trails and duplicates the count of children served, since one child may have received more than one type of service (or even multiple authorizations for the same service). A total of 50,814 services were provided to children and families during FY 2007-2008.

Children Served

Trails extracts for FY 2007-08, identified 17,773 children served. This is 7% lower than numbers reported in previous fiscal years. However, this difference appears to reflect a combination of two factors. The first factor is the differences in data sources and methodology and Trails enhancements described in the Evaluation Methods section of the full report. Second, there is likely to be a real decrease in the number of children

receiving services due to a smaller Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA) increase in funding over the past fiscal year.

Community Collaborations

The Department is progressing with integrating collaborative efforts with the Core Services Program to prevent or minimize out-of home placements, to include:

- ✓ Family-to-Family Initiatives
- ✓ Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program
- ✓ Collaborative Management Program (HB 04-1451)

While all counties and tribes may not formally participate in the collaboration initiatives outlined above, it is important to note that nearly all (89%) of counties and tribes reported that collaboration efforts are a part of their Core Services Program. These counties and tribes report that these efforts have allowed them to extend a greater number of treatment options to families, with many discussing the benefits of collaboration in providing Wraparound Services.

Program Outcomes

In addition to the Division of Child Welfare requirements and desires to evaluate program effectiveness, the federal standards defined through the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) and measured in the Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), help to shape the specific evaluation goals, as outcome data will be used for both state and federal oversight. Within these two sets of criteria, the ultimate assessment of the effectiveness of the Core Services Program will be the degree to which these services aid the Division of Child Welfare in meeting its mission to “help Colorado’s Children live in safe, healthy, and stable environments.”

A set of outcome measures for which data is already collected in the Trails data system shows about 29% of all service authorizations were ended with the child meeting all or substantially all treatment goals. About 35% of authorizations ended with the child being not completely successful, but meeting some or a substantial number of treatment goals. More than one-third of children (36%) met few, none, or substantially none of the treatment goals. It is noteworthy that almost two thirds (64%) of the population served by the Core Services Program has met some or substantially all treatment goals with the help of the Core Services Program.

Out-Of-Home (OOH) Placement/s Outcomes

One of the main priorities of the Core Services Program is that children remain in the home whenever possible during the time during which they receive services. However, in many cases, in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect, Core Services must be delivered while the child is placed in OOH care. The same percentage of children (18%) receiving Core Services in fiscal years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 were placed in OOH care during the time they were receiving services.

In addition to keeping children in the home during Core Services delivery, the program also aims to deliver services that will prevent subsequent OOH placements once the children and family have completed

treatment. For all children who completed the Core Services Program in FY 2006-2007, only 35% were placed OOH (for at least one day) within 12 months of the termination of their last Core Service authorization.

Cost-Efficiencies:

Overall Expenditures

In FY 2007-08, a total of \$49,848,547.67 was expended on the Core Services Program. This figure encompasses all statewide county and tribal expenditures, including additional funding requests made beyond the original funding allocation, the use of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars and county money to supplement the Core Services Program allocation. Overall, Core Services Program funding was supplemented by an additional \$874,484.23 to meet basic needs. These supplemental funds helped to fill serious gaps in services to the un-served and underserved, as well as for services by culturally and linguistically competent service providers, which remain a persistent challenge for helping to prevent OOH placements.

The average cost for services was \$9.66 for every day that a child was enrolled in Core Services, translating into a statewide average of \$293.66 per month per child served that in comparison, is significantly lower than residential placement costs. Monthly costs per child did vary greatly across counties, as they have in the past.

Recommended Changes:

Overall, I am pleased with the progress of the State, counties, and tribes in the delivery of the Core Services Program to the children, youth, and families of Colorado. The Department continues to address audit concerns proactively with the Tri-West Group program evaluation consulting service, the Legislative Auditor, the Legislative Audit Committee, and the General Assembly to complete any needed technical modifications in the statutes to clarify intent and provide consistent guidance in services parameters to include but not limited to: target service population, services eligibility criteria, and evidence-based services types, etc.

The current report represents another step in moving toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program. This report fulfills the legislative mandate and serves as a foundation for future evaluation and reporting that will further explore the impacts and processes of the Core Services Programs.

The Division of Child Welfare and the county and Tribal Family Preservation/Core Services Commissions have undertaken a comprehensive effort to improve services for children and families. These efforts have brought significant attention and improvements to the overall array of services across the state.

While enhancements in the type, quality and availability of evidence-based services remains in the early stages of system services delivery evolution, there are some emerging findings pointing to positive progress and several needed changes in this system change effort.

#1 The Core Services Program supports empirically supported intervention models to reduce abuse and neglect and avoiding out-of-home placement.

#2 Counties are implementing the Core Services Program with significant creativity and resourcefulness.

#3 Gaps in the services arrays challenge county efforts to provide services to children and families.

#4 Information tracking is improving but still is in need of improvement.

In closing, the Department recognizes the staff of each county department for their willingness to continue to provide valuable input to data enhancements for the Child Welfare Core Services Program in Trails. Without their time and patience, the Core Services Program would not be able to extrapolate accurate reporting data, monitor contract spending, measure program success and outcomes, nor ensure a high level of program accountability.

If you need more information, please contact Melinda S. Cox, Core Services Program Administrator, at 303-866-5961 or Bob Coulson, Adolescent Services Administrator, 303-866-4706.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Human Services

Core Services Program Evaluation Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2007-08

July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008

Colorado Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth and Family Services
Division of Child Welfare (DCW)



TRIWEST GROUP

Core Services Program Evaluation Annual Report

Submitted to:

Colorado Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth and Family Services
Division of Child Welfare

By:

Tonya Aultman-Bettridge, PhD
David Bartsch, PhD
Peter Selby, PhD

TriWest Group
4450 Arapahoe Ave, Suite 100
Boulder, Colorado 80303

303.544.0509
www.triwestgroup.net
Contact: Peter Selby, PhD

August 2008



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Executive Summary

Evaluating outcomes for the Core Services Program represents more than just a response to the legislative requirement to provide “. . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program.” It is a commitment made by the Division of Child Welfare (DCW) to the people of Colorado that must be supported through actionable data over multiple years across 64 diverse, and sometimes differing, counties and two Tribes each with their own, localized vision of that mission. Furthermore, the definition of effectiveness is a narrow balance between the competing goals of keeping children safe while promoting safety, permanency, and wellbeing and keeping children and families together whenever possible. There is tremendous pressure on all child welfare systems to promote safe and stable families, but no tolerance for systems that allow children to be harmed. Providing DCW with reliable, useful data that answers all of the often-conflicting questions asked is therefore critical. This report represents another step in moving toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program.

Context for this Report

Commissions – The Family Preservation Commissions were established in statute during the 1993-1994 legislative session. C.R.S. 26-5.5-106 sets forth the composition and duties of the commissions as follows:

- 1) “The governing body of each county or city and county shall establish a family preservation commission for the county or city and county to carry out the duties described in subsection (2) of this section. The commission shall be interdisciplinary and multi-agency in composition, except that such commission shall include at least two members from the public at-large. The governing body may designate an existing board or group to act as the commission. A group of counties may agree to designate a regional commission to act collectively as the commission for all such counties.
- 2) It shall be the duty of each commission established or designated pursuant to subsection (1) of this section to hold periodic meetings and evaluate the family preservation program within the county or city and county, and to identify any recommended changes to such program. On or after July 1, 1994, the commission shall submit an annual report to the executive director of the state department. The report shall consist of an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program. The report shall be submitted on or before the first day of September of each year.”

The Family Preservation/Core Services committees submitted annual reports directly to the TriWest group. In addition, the Southern Ute Tribe also began receiving Core Services dollars during this fiscal year and submitted a report. Data from those reports is highlighted



throughout this evaluation. Copies of each full report are available by request from the Division of Child Welfare.

Scope of the Current Report – In responding to legislative requirements for “. . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program” this report represents the first phase of a long-term evaluation plan. The purpose of this plan is to provide stakeholders with actionable information on the successes and opportunities for improvements within the Core Services Program. Long-term evaluation objectives include analysis and reporting on longitudinal data on safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and using a group of children and families not receiving core services to provide a comparative analysis of program effects and cost-efficiencies. Current efforts will serve as a foundation for these long term objectives through the establishment of baseline data, the exploration of data sources (those both currently in existence and those that may need to be added to future evaluation efforts), and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that local and state contexts are taken into consideration in the evaluation and that appropriate indicators are being used to determine program success.

As the initiation of this evaluation process, this first evaluation report has four objectives:

1. To describe the children being served by the Core Services Program and the types of services they are receiving.
2. To describe the program, as it is delivered within each of the 64 counties and two Tribes, including implementation challenges, program success, general effectiveness and cost efficiencies.
3. To address requirements specified by the State Auditor in May 2007 to develop a method to calculate an accurate cost per child that can be used to compare the costs and benefits of the Core Services Program.
4. To develop and report baseline data to be used in subsequent reports to demonstrate program effectiveness and to begin outlining the long-term evaluation plan.

Children eligible to receive services are those who are “at imminent risk of being placed out-of-home.” This refers to children who, without immediate intervention, services, and support would very likely have been immediately removed from the home and placed under County or Tribal custody. Counties and Tribes assess and determine which services will best meet the needs of each child and family.

The following table shows the types of services that make up the Core Services Program and the general availability of these services in each county, organized by availability in FY 2007-08. The numbers presented here represent the number of individual Family Preservation/Core Services Reports that were returned (n=65). Services are described in the body of the report.



Core Services Availability by County and Tribe				
	Number of Counties/Tribes Offering Services Percentage of Counties/Tribes			
Type of Core Service	FY 2004-05 N=64	FY 2005-06 N=64	FY 2006-07 N=64	FY 2007-08 N=65
Home-Based Intervention	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(65) 100%
Mental Health Services	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(65) 100%
Substance Abuse Treatment	(60) 94%	(60) 94%	(60) 94%	(63) 97%
Intensive Family Therapy	(56) 88%	(57) 89%	(57) 89%	(64) 98%
Life Skills	(55) 86%	(57) 88%	(60) 94%	(64) 98%
Sexual Abuse Treatment	(47) 73%	(47) 73%	(48) 75%	(62) 95%
Special Economic Assistance	(55) 86%	(58) 91%	(58) 91%	(52) 80%
Day Treatment	(45) 70%	(48) 75%	(48) 75%	(44) 68%
County Designed Services	(46) 72%	(46) 72%	(48) 75%	(42) 65%
Aftercare Services	NR ¹	NR	NR	(32) 49%

In addition to Core Services, **County-Designed Services** are provided as part of the Core Services Program and are designed by counties to meet specific local needs. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the counties reported using county-designed services to meet the needs of families in their communities. These services allow counties to implement programs to meet specific local needs and implement an array of evidence-based programs as well. More details on these services are presented in the body of the report.

Program Changes and Core Service Allocations for Fiscal Year 2007-2008

In FY 2007-2008, an additional 1.5% Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) was allocated to the 80/20 funding line, earmarked to providers of the Core Services Program. This 1.5% COLA was distributed to county departments based on their Core Services Program funding base.

¹ NR=Not reported in past fiscal year reports.



Total Core Services Allocations

FY 2007-2008 Core Services Program Allocations			
County	SFY 08 Core Services Grand Total	County	SFY 08 Core Services Grand Total
Adams	\$ 4,560,584	Kiowa	\$ 52,772
Alamosa	\$ 661,817	Kit Carson	\$ 125,479
Arapahoe	\$ 4,198,386	Lake	\$ 136,566
Archuleta	\$ 258,269	La Plata/SanJ	\$ 1,028,048
Baca	\$ 42,440	Larimer	\$ 1,640,739
Bent	\$ 87,004	Las Animas	\$ 282,263
Boulder	\$ 2,397,501	Lincoln	\$ 409,810
Broomfield	\$ 321,335	Logan	\$ 358,103
Chaffee	\$ 288,552	Mesa	\$ 1,196,939
Cheyenne	\$ 38,362	Moffat	\$ 464,733
Clear Creek	\$ 120,218	Montezuma	\$ 302,392
Conejos	\$ 124,635	Montrose	\$ 461,047
Costilla	\$ 79,416	Morgan	\$ 640,763
Crowley	\$ 26,992	Otero	\$ 447,247
Custer	\$ 26,019	Ouray/SanMig	\$ 254,198
Delta	\$ 379,762	Park	\$ 167,701
Denver	\$ 7,373,211	Phillips	\$ 38,626
Dolores	\$ 29,536	Pitkin	\$ 33,904
Douglas	\$ 211,982	Prowers	\$ 324,321
Eagle	\$ 109,844	Pueblo	\$ 1,270,051
Elbert	\$ 233,429	Rio Blanco	\$ 116,045
El Paso	\$ 4,997,585	Rio Grande/Min	\$ 73,298
Fremont	\$ 766,962	Routt	\$ 309,654
Garfield	\$ 440,539	Saguache	\$ 90,569
Gilpin	\$ 84,456	Sedgwick	\$ 31,697
Grand	\$ 169,152	Summit	\$ 219,586
Gunnison/Hins	\$ 81,891	Teller	\$ 511,867
Huerfano	\$ 135,523	Washington	\$ 102,386
Jackson	\$ 26,326	Weld	\$ 1,402,435
Jefferson	\$ 3,849,218	Yuma	\$ 241,239
State Total	\$ 44,855,425		

In addition to the 1.5% COLA, the \$4,028,299 earmarked specifically for Core Services Program evidence-based services to adolescents was continued. These additional funds were allocated to county departments through a request for applications (RFA) process. It is believed that the additional funds are not only an asset to the Core Services Program as county departments continue to serve an increased number of Colorado's children and



families, but also essential to the sustainability of evidence-based services and promising practices in Colorado.

In order to access these funds, counties needed to follow the conditions stated below:

- The additional funds must be in their Core Services Plan under County-Designed and all appropriate forms must be submitted.
- Each county must put forward a 20% share in order to utilize the additional funds.
Note: The \$4,028,299 has been allocated as 80/20 funds.
- The services offered must be evidenced-based services for adolescents.

A breakdown of these awards by County is presented in the body of this report.

Access to Services

Gaps in services were described across all regions of the state and were not specific to any particular county size (e.g. rural vs. urban), or region of the state. While there were no specific need patterns across these breakdowns, some types of services were more commonly identified as a need than others.

More than half of counties (58%) reported some service that was needed but not currently available in their counties. Sixty percent (60%) of rural counties reported unmet service needs.

- 21 counties reported that there are some needed services that are currently not available in their county

The most commonly reported services issues are specialized services and special populations. Fourteen (14) counties discussed concerns related to services gaps and the needs for Spanish-speaking providers, special needs populations, domestic violence and sexual assault services as well as substance abuse treatment.

More than half (7 of the 12; 58%) primarily urban or urban and rural mixed counties discussed existing service needs in their communities. There was a significant range of needs expressed within these counties, these needs include:

- More intensive family therapy and family group conferencing
- More Spanish-speaking providers
- Domestic violence programs
- Trauma recovery services
- Substance abuse treatment services

More than one-third (38%) of counties reported transportation issues that prevent families from accessing needed services. This issue was reported across urban and rural counties and wasn't limited to large geographic areas.



Children Served by Core Services Program

Trails extracts for fiscal year (FY) 2007-08, identified 17,773 children served. This is 7% lower than numbers reported in previous fiscal years. However, this difference appears to reflect a combination of two factors. The first factor is the differences in data sources and methodology and Trails enhancements described in the Evaluation Methods section of the full report. Second, there is likely a real decrease in the number of children receiving services due to a smaller COLA increase in funding over the past fiscal year.

Total Number of Children Served: Core Services Program			
	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08
Total Un-duplicated Count	19,006 ²	19,152 ³	17,793

Services Provided

The count of services represent the number of individual authorizations of service entered into Trails and duplicates the count of children served, since one child may have received more than one type of service (or even multiple authorizations for the same service). A total of 50,814 services were provided to children and families during FY 2007-2008.

Total Number of Services Provided: Core Services Program				
	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08
Total Number of Services Authorized	35,127	46,394	50,090	50,814

As seen below, one quarter (25%) of all services authorized were County-Designed services. This was the largest portion of all services authorized, illustrating how important these flexible services are in meeting the needs of children and families.

The next most common type of services authorized was substance abuse services (22%) and mental health services (16%) for children and families. Day Treatment (2%) and Sexual Abuse/Offending (3%) services were the least frequently utilized, which is consistent with county reports that these services are not adequately available in many areas.

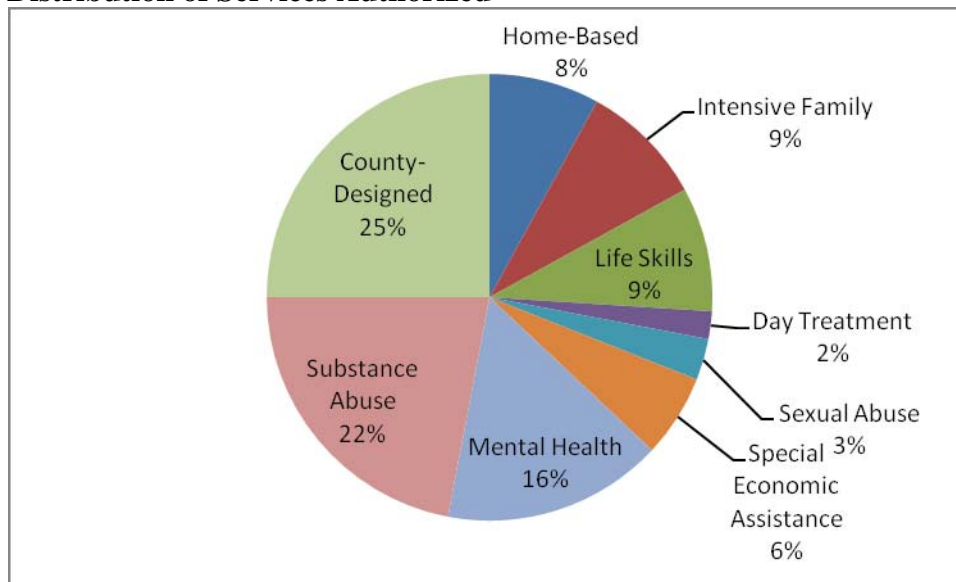
Intensive family therapy and life skills program each made up 9% of the services authorized, while home-based services made up 8% of the services authorized.

² This number is taken from the FY 2006-07 Commission Report.

³ This number is taken from the FY 2006-07 Commission Report.



Distribution of Services Authorized



Cost of Core Services

Overall Expenditures. In FY 2007-08, a total of \$ 49,848,547.67 was expended on the Core Services Program. This figure encompasses all statewide county and tribal expenditures, including additional funding requests made beyond the original funding allocation, the use of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars and county money to supplement the Core Services Program allocation. Overall, Core Services funding was supplemented by an additional \$874,484.23 to meet basic needs. These supplemental funds helped to fill serious gaps in services to the un-served and underserved, as well as services by culturally and linguistically competent service providers. This remains a persistent challenge in preventing OOH placements.

The average cost for service was \$9.66 for every day that a child was enrolled in Core Services, translating into a statewide average of \$293.66 per month per child served. Monthly costs per child did vary greatly across county, as they have in the past. County costs are shown in the following tables.

Average Monthly Costs Per Child Served

Costs Per Service	
County	Average Monthly cost per child
Largest 10 Counties	\$285.15
Remaining counties	\$320.72



Average costs for the largest 10 counties were lower than for the other counties in the state. This is to be expected given that, for many programs the same infrastructure costs must be paid even as fewer clients are served. Some counties have achieved cost savings by combining resources, but it still remains a greater financial challenge to fund many types of programs in less densely populated areas.

Community Collaboration in the Core Services Program

While all counties may not formally participate in the collaboration initiatives outlined above, it is important to note that nearly all (89%) of counties reported that collaboration efforts are a part of their Core Services Program (see Table 14, starting on page 36 of the full report, for a matrix showing collaborative efforts by county). These counties report that these efforts have allowed them to extend a greater number of treatment options to families, with many discussing the benefits of collaboration in providing Wraparound Services.

Nearly all of the counties (89%) reported participating in some kind of collaborative effort with other agencies in their community.

Core Services Program Outcomes

In addition to the DCW requirements and desires to evaluate program effectiveness, the federal standards defined through the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) and measured in the Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) to help shape the specific evaluation goals, as outcome data will be used for both state and federal oversight. Within these two sets of criteria, the ultimate assessment of the effectiveness of the Core Services Program will be the degree to which these services aid DCW in meeting its mission to help “Colorado’s Children live in safe, healthy and stable environments.”

Below is a list of the first, preliminary, set of outcome measures for which data is already collected in the Trails data system. A future component of this evaluation will be to identify additional measures for which data may either already be available or for which additional data collection can be implemented in order to augment these initial outcome measures.

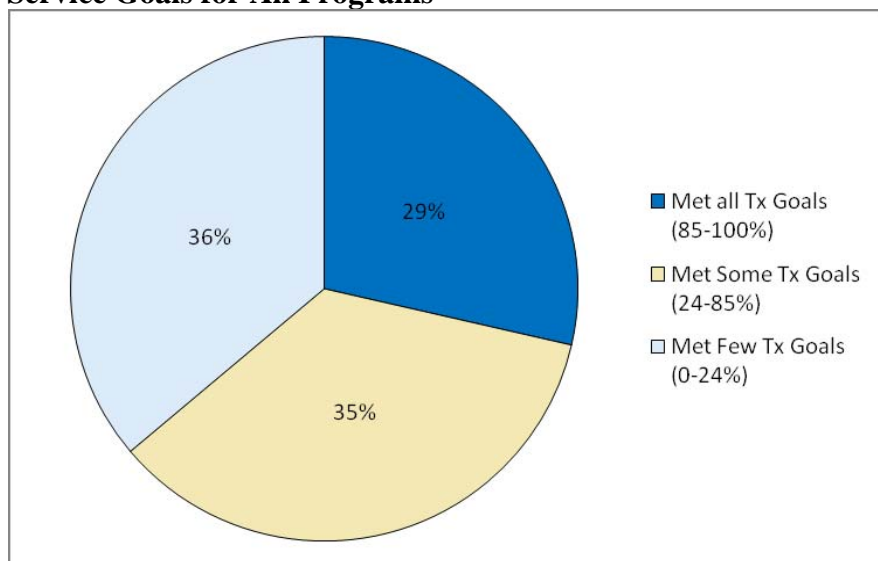
- **Leave reasons** (case dispositions): These are the case dispositions entered into Trails by the caseworker. Reasons for leaving service are translated into five outcome categories, discussed in the body of the report.
- **OOH placements** during Core Services delivery and in the 12 months following Core Services termination. Twelve months post-termination data is currently available for all children terminating services during FY 2006-2007. This represents the evaluation baseline for post-termination data for FY 2007-08 child services.
- **Length of time placed OOH** during Core Services delivery and in the 12 months following core services termination.



- **Reports of abuse/neglect** during Core Service delivery and in the 12 months following core services termination.

Leave Reasons

Service Goals for All Programs



As seen in the figure above, program outcomes were fairly evenly distributed across positive, moderate, and negative outcomes. About 29% of all service authorizations were ended with the child meeting all or substantially all treatment goals. About 35% of authorizations ended with the child being not completely successful, but meeting some or substantial treatment goals. More than one-third of children (36%) met few, none, or substantially none of the treatment goals. However, it is noteworthy that almost two thirds (64%) of the population served by the Core Services Program has met some or all treatment goals.

OOH Placements - One of the main priorities of the Core Services program is that children remain in the home whenever possible during the time during which they receive services. However, in many cases, in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect, Core Services must be delivered while the child is placed OOH. The same percentage of children (18%) receiving Core Services in fiscal years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 were placed out-of-home during the time they were receiving services.

In addition to keeping children in the home during Core Services delivery, the program also aims to deliver services that will prevent subsequent OOH placements once the children and family have completed treatment. For all children who completed the Core Services Program in FY 2006-2007, 35 percent were placed OOH (for at least one day) within 12 months of the termination of their last Core Service authorization. This proportion cannot yet be computed for the current fiscal year covered in this report because 12 months have not elapsed since the



termination of FY 2007-2008 services. This will serve as a baseline proportion for comparison in future evaluation reports. In the FY 2008-2009 report this table will be updated to show findings for children completing services in FY 2007-2008.

Children Placed OOH within 12 Months Following Core Services			
Fiscal Year	Number of Children Placed OOH	Percent of Children Placed OOH	Mean (Average) Days in Placement
FY 2006-2007	1,586	34.6%	98 days

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current report represents another step in moving toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program. This report fulfills the legislative mandate and serves as a foundation for future evaluation and reporting that will further explore the impacts and processes of the Core Services Programs.

The Division of Child Welfare and the county and Tribal Family Preservation/Core Services Commissions have undertaken a comprehensive effort to improve services for children and families. These efforts have brought significant attention and improvements to the overall array of services across the state. While enhancements in the type, quality and availability of evidence-based services remains in early stages of its evolution, there are some emerging findings pointing to positive progress in this system change effort.

The Core Services Program supports empirically supported intervention models to reduce abuse and neglect and avoiding out-of-home placement. Available data point to promising impacts and outcomes for the Core Services Program in protecting children in Colorado from abuse and neglect and in supporting families in addressing challenges and avoiding out-of-home placements. As the evaluation is further developed in coming years additional understanding of the mechanisms and outcomes of the Program will be explored.

Counties are implementing the Core Services program with significant creativity and resourcefulness. Through collaboration and creative programming, Counties are maximizing scarce resources to provide access to promising services in their communities. Similarly, Counties are engaging in efforts to tailor services to the needs, constraints and cultures of their communities.

Gaps in the service array challenge County efforts to provide services to children and families. To a significant extent, County efforts to match children and families to needed services depend on the existing local and regional service array. As the system moves towards more evidence-based assessment and matching of children to services it will be critical to engage service providers collaboratively to ensure that available services meet local needs.



Information tracking is improving but still is in need of improvement. In order to use evaluation resources to effectively support management and program improvement decisions it is necessary to have reliable and accessible data. We strongly support the work that is being done and that has been proposed to enhance the Trails system so that the counties and the Division can have a greater confidence in the numbers of services and children served, as well as the capacity to more precisely link services and costs to outcomes.



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Background and Introduction

Evaluating outcomes for the Core Services Program represents more than just a response to the legislative requirement to provide “. . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program.” It is a commitment made by the Division of Child Welfare (DCW) to the people of Colorado that must be supported through actionable data over multiple years across 64 diverse, and sometimes differing, counties each with their own, localized vision of that mission. Furthermore, the definition of effectiveness is a narrow balance between the competing goals of keeping children safe and promoting health and stability by keeping children and families together whenever possible. There is tremendous pressure on all child welfare systems to promote safe and stable families, but no tolerance for systems that allow children to be harmed. Providing DCW with reliable, useful data that answers all of the often-conflicting questions asked is therefore critical. This report represents another step in moving toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program.

Context for this Report

Commissions – The Family Preservation Commissions were established in statute during the 1993-1994 legislative session. C.R.S. 26-5.5-106 sets forth the composition and duties of the commissions as follows:

- 1) “The governing body of each county or city and county shall establish a family preservation commission for the county or city and county to carry out the duties described in subsection (2) of this section. The commission shall be interdisciplinary and multi-agency in composition, except that such commission shall include at least two members from the public at-large. The governing body may designate an existing board or group to act as the commission. A group of counties may agree to designate a regional commission to act collectively as the commission for all such counties.
- 2) It shall be the duty of each commission established or designated pursuant to subsection (1) of this section to hold periodic meetings and evaluate the family preservation program within the county or city and county, and to identify any recommended changes to such program. On or after July 1, 1994, the commission shall submit an annual report to the executive director of the state department. The report shall consist of an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program. The report shall be submitted on or before the first day of September of each year.”

All 64 Family Preservation/Core Services committees submitted annual reports directly to the TriWest group. In addition, the Southern Ute Tribe also began receiving Core Services



dollars during this fiscal year and also submitted a report. Data from those reports is highlighted throughout this evaluation. Copies of each full report are available by request from the Division of Child Welfare.

Family Preservation Services – A separate subsection of this legislation defines “family preservation services” as assistance that focuses on a family’s strengths and empowers a family by providing alternative problem-solving techniques, child-rearing practices and responses to living situations creating stress for the family. This includes resources that are available to supplement existing informal support systems for the family. This collection of services makes up the Core Services Program.

Commission Report – Historically, the annual Commission Report has been submitted by the Division of Child Welfare, in compliance with the above statute, and has represented a compilation of the individual county Family Preservation Commission reports submitted to the Division. As evidence-based practice has become the emphasis within child welfare services, counties have become increasingly interested in measuring and documenting outcomes of the services and placements provided to children and families. In addition, the continuous development and enhancement of the statewide Colorado Trails data system has provided access to more systematic and detailed quantitative data regarding children and families served by the Core Services Program. Responding to these two factors, the Division of Child Welfare released a Request for Proposals in November of 2007 in order to identify a contractor to fulfill the State reporting requirements and conducts an expanded outcome evaluation of how the safety and permanency of children are affected by the Core Services Program.

TriWest Group, a Colorado-based human services evaluation and consulting company, was awarded the evaluation contract and began work in June 2008. Responding to an expedited timeline between the June 2008 contract start and the August due date for the report, TriWest proposed a multi-year, multi-phased approach to the evaluation. During these first few contract months we have focused our efforts on developing familiarity with the program and data systems involved. We have constructed the first year report to mirror and expand on previous reports and to serve as a baseline for expansion of future reports – to establish a foundation upon which a solid outcome-driven evaluation can be built.

Scope of the Current Report – In responding to legislative requirements for “. . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program” this report represents the first phase of a long-term evaluation plan. The purpose of this plan is to provide stakeholders with actionable information on the successes and opportunities for improvements within the Core Services Program. Long-term evaluation objectives include analysis and reporting on longitudinal data on safety, permanency and well-being outcomes and using a group of children and families not receiving core services to provide a comparative analysis of program effects and cost-efficiencies. Current efforts will serve as a foundation for these long term objectives through the establishment of baseline data, the exploration of data sources (those both currently in



existence and those that may need to be added to future evaluation efforts), and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure that local and state contexts are taken into consideration in the evaluation and that appropriate indicators are being used to determine program success.

As the initiation of this evaluation process, this first evaluation report has four objectives:

- To describe the child being served by the Core Services Program and the types of services they are receiving.
- To describe the program, as it is delivered within each of the 64 counties and two Tribes, including implementation challenges, program success, general effectiveness and cost-efficiencies.
- To address requirements specified by the State Auditor in May 2007 to develop a method to calculate an accurate cost per child that can be used to compare the costs and benefits of the Core Services Program.
- To develop and report baseline data to be used in subsequent reports to demonstrate program effectiveness and to begin outlining the long-term evaluation plan.

Structure of the Current Report – The report begins with a brief presentation of the **Evaluation Methods** used throughout the report. This includes data sources, dates of collection, as well as the general assumptions and parameters for analysis, organized by each subsequent section of the report.

Following the evaluation methods presented above, the first section of the report is the **Program Overview**. This reviews the primary activities of the Core Services Program, including services available as well as gaps in services and barriers to accessing services. The section also includes a discussion of the children served by the programs and the distribution of those services across the state. This description includes an overall view of the Core Services Program as well as county-level specific data.

The second section of the report discusses costs of service delivery per child on a daily, monthly, and annual basis. This data is discussed for the state as a whole, for the 10 largest counties, as well as by county.

The third section of the report describes county-level collaboration efforts. The section summarizes the experiences shared, through the individual Family Preservation Commission Reports, regarding the Family-to-Family Initiative, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, and the Collaborative Management Program. This description concludes with county reports of the effects of these collaborative efforts.



The fourth section of the report presents baseline data for basic outcomes for which data is currently available through the Trails data system. This includes information on the general outcome of service delivery (service leave reason), out-of-home placements, and reports of child abuse and neglect. The final section summarizes evaluation findings and makes recommendations for changes to the Core Services Program. In addition, the potential direction of future evaluation efforts is discussed.



Evaluation Methods

Data Sources. Data for this report come from four primary sources:

1. **Colorado Trails Data System** – Extracts from the Trails data system provide information regarding the children served, the types and lengths of services provided, service outcomes (leave reasons), child placement history, and reports of child abuse and neglect. Trails is a dynamic case management system in which users can update, add, and delete records on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available or as errors are discovered and corrected. As a result, the FY 07-08 data for this report reflect what was in the Trails system as of the date the data was extracted: July 21, 2008.

The Division of Child Welfare continues to pursue enhancements to the Trails data system in order to provide the most accurate information possible. Currently, the number of children served and the number of services authorized represent the best data available to represent county efforts. However, there remain system issues around consistency of data entry across counties and differences regarding how and when counties enter service authorizations that can be improved upon to increase accuracy. These two issues are described below.

One issue involves tracking the number of children served. Currently, the system does not provide users with a convenient way to associate more than one child with a particular service authorization. Therefore, in some cases, while three children within a family may be receiving intensive family therapy, the Trails system makes it difficult for a caseworker to associate a service with all three of those children. As a result, in most cases the service is entered under only one child in the family. This produces an undercount of the actual number of children served. Also, the system is single child-driven; so counting the number of families is not possible.

In addition, there are many cases where Core Services are provided by the county, rather than under contract with an external provider. Some counties enter these authorizations into Trails as a “no pay”, meaning there is no contract associated with the service. However, some counties do not enter all county-provided services into Trails with the same level of consistency as those paid under contract, as the latter require authorization of the service in Trails for payment. Therefore, there may be an undetermined level of under-counting of services delivered through the Core Services Program.

2. **Individual (County/Tribe) Family Commission Reports** – Each individual county or sovereign tribal nation were asked to submit a Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Report directly to TriWest Group for inclusion in this report (Please see Attachment 1 for a blank template). County



commissions and Tribal leaders were asked to answer 17 questions regarding the services available in their community, program successes and challenges, and recommendations for changes to the Core Services Program. Full individual/county reports are available from the Division of Child Welfare.

3. **Data for Counties:** Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI) is a membership organization of Colorado counties and 60 associate members. CCI maintains a database of all Colorado counties with population, geographic size, Colorado senate and house districts and national congressional districts. CCI, working directly with counties, has divided the state into 5 regions as follows: Western, Southern, Mountain, Front Range and Eastern.
4. **Colorado Financial Management System (CFMS)** - Provides the total actual expenditures for the Core Services Program, for the entire state and by individual county.

These data sources are combined in order to describe various aspects of the Core Services Program, as outlined above in the objectives for this report.

Describing Children Served and Types of Services

Individual County Family Commission reports were used to identify the general types of services available in the county, as well as issues around access to services. Numbers of children served were derived from Trails data and represent an unduplicated count of children receiving services in each county; each child is counted one time, regardless of how many different services were received. Any child receiving a core service in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-08 (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008) is included in the count of children served.

When comparing data from the FY 2006-07 report to raw data extracts used for the current analysis, small differences in counts of children served were noticed. This difference is likely caused by three factors. First, prior Commission Reports used automated reports of children served by counties and aggregated the total number of children served. This year, raw extracts of Trails data were used to produce an unduplicated count. This methodological difference could have caused some disparity within the numbers. The second difference is that Trails is a “live” system, with users able to edit historical information at any time. Data in an extract or report is fixed at the time it is run, so any subsequent changes are not reflected. It is our understanding that users have been cleaning in Trails during this fiscal year and may have removed old cases from the system. Finally, this fiscal year did see a smaller COLA funding increase over FY 2006-07, meaning that counties may have had to reduce some services due to funding constraints.



The number of actual service units delivered reflects a duplicated count of children. In other words, a single child is counted multiple times, once for each service received. All services authorized in the Trails data system in FY 2007-08 are included in the count. Frequency distributions and means (averages) are used to describe child characteristics and service units.

Describing Core Services Implementation

Individual County and Tribal Family Commission Reports are used throughout this report. The reports are summarized in the description of the implementation of the Core Services Program. They also provide contextual data for the outcomes section of the report. It also includes information about other funding sources used by counties to fund needed services for Core Services Program families (those needs that exceed funding for Core Services), as well as specific program accomplishments, county collaborative efforts, evidence-based practices, and recommendations for changes to the Core Services Program. A discussion of issues raised by counties regarding out-of-home placements and lengths of placements is also featured. Most of the data presented from counties is qualitative and summarized in narrative form. Where possible and appropriate, frequency distributions are used to describe county implementation efforts.

Describing Costs of the Core Services Program

The Colorado Financial Management System (CFMS) data provide the total Core Services Program Expenditures for each county and for the state as a whole. In order to report an actual average of costs per service, these total expenditures were compared to the children served and the number of days of service those children received. To calculate an average daily cost per child, the following method was used.

- The number of days for each service authorization was calculated by subtracting the service authorization start date from the end date. Only days occurring in this fiscal year were counted (therefore if the start and end dates were not within the scope of the fiscal year, then the dates July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008 were used).
- In cases where the service started and ended on the same day, it was calculated as one day.
- The total number of days of service for each child was then calculated by adding all of the service authorizations for each child.
- The total number of days of service delivered by county was calculated by adding the service days for all children served by the county (this aggregation was repeated for the state as a whole).
- The total expenditures were divided by the total number of children's service days in order to compute a daily cost for one individual child. The daily per child cost was then multiplied by 30.4 (to account for variations in the number of days across the twelve months) in order to present an average cost per month per child.



In addition to average costs, this section of the report discusses spending overages for the Core Services Programs as well as additional funding sources used by counties to supplement shortfalls in the Core Services budget.

Describing Baseline Data for the Evaluation of Program Outcomes

Because this is the first year of TriWest's evaluation of the Core Services Program, outcome data presented here are baseline numbers that will be used in future evaluation efforts. Data regarding service leave reasons, OOH placements, and reports of child abuse and neglect were all extracted from the Trails data system. Dates of events were used to determine whether the placement/abuse report occurred during or after Core Services delivery.

Only finished Core Services episodes were used in outcome data reporting in order to ensure that the information on these services is complete. Completed episodes were identified and the service period determined by looking at the end date for a service authorization associated with a specific child. If a child still had a service authorization open (with a start date, but no end date) the episode was considered ongoing.

CFMS data provide the total Core Services Expenditures for each county and for the state as a whole. In order to report an actual average of costs per service, these total expenditures were compared to the children served and how many days of service those children received. To calculate an average daily cost per child, the following method was used.

- The number of days for each service authorization was calculated by subtracting the service authorization start date from the end date.
- The total number of days of service for each child was then calculated by adding all of the service authorizations for each child.
- The total number of days of service delivered by county was calculated by adding the service days for all children in the county (this aggregation was repeated for the state as a whole).
- The total expenditures were divided by the total number of children's service days in order to compute a daily cost for one individual child. The daily per child cost was multiplied by 30.4 (to account for variations in the number of days across the twelve months) in order to present an average cost per day per child.



Program Overview

Availability of Core Services. As previously stated, “family preservation services” are defined in statute (C.R.S. 26-5.5-103) as assistance that focuses on a family’s strengths and empowers a family by providing alternative problem-solving techniques, child-rearing practices and responses to living situations creating stress for the family. This includes resources that are available to supplement existing informal support systems for the family. This array of services makes up the Core Services Program.

This year represented the first time that the Core Services Program was provided by the two indigenous Indian tribes in addition to the 64 counties in Colorado. To be respectfully inclusive, the discussion of services provision at the “county” level includes the two Tribes who provide equivalent services with cultural and linguistic competencies. The term “counties” is used to describe each individually controlled Family Preservation/Core Services Commission, inclusive of the two Tribes.

Children eligible to receive services are those who are “at imminent risk of being placed out-of-home.” This refers to children who, without immediate intervention, services, and support would very likely have been immediately removed from the home and placed under local County or Tribal custody. Counties and Tribes assess and determine which services will best meet the needs of each child and family.

The following table shows the types of services that make up the Core Services Program and the general availability of these services in each county, organized by availability in FY 2007-08. The numbers presented here represent the number of individual Family Preservation/Core Services Reports that were returned (n=65). Each service is more fully described in the text following this table.

Table 1: Core Services Availability by County and Tribe				
Type of Core Service	Number of Counties/Tribes Offering Services			
	Percentage of Counties/Tribes			
	FY 2004-05 N=64	FY 2005-06 N=64	FY 2006-07 N=64	FY 2007-08 N=65
Home Based Intervention	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(65) 100%
Mental Health Services	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(59) 92%	(65) 100%
Substance Abuse Treatment	(60) 94%	(60) 94%	(60) 94%	(63) 97%
Intensive Family Therapy	(56) 88%	(57) 89%	(57) 89%	(64) 98%
Life Skills	(55) 86%	(57) 88%	(60) 94%	(64) 98%
Sexual Abuse Treatment	(47) 73%	(47) 73%	(48) 75%	(62) 95%
Special Economic Assistance	(55) 86%	(58) 91%	(58) 91%	(52) 80%



Table 1: Core Services Availability by County and Tribe				
	Number of Counties/Tribes Offering Services			
	Percentage of Counties/Tribes			
Type of Core Service	FY 2004-05 N=64	FY 2005-06 N=64	FY 2006-07 N=64	FY 2007-08 N=65
Day Treatment	(45) 70%	(48) 75%	(48) 75%	(44) 68%
County-Designed Services	(46) 72%	(46) 72%	(48) 75%	(42) 65%
Aftercare Services	NR ⁴	NR	NR	(32) 49%

While general descriptions of these service types are available, counties may categorize certain services in slightly different ways. The following provides a general description of the Core Service types, as well as a brief overview of their availability among the counties.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP, 2008)⁵ recently compiled a list of the effects of specific programs on preventing or reducing involvement in the child welfare system, including reports of child abuse, number of OOH placements and permanent OOH placements. This study provides examples of evidence-based programs within child welfare.

Home-Based Intervention services are provided primarily in the home of the client and include a variety of services such as therapeutic, concrete and collateral services as well as crisis intervention, depending on the needs of the child and family. Studies have shown that certain home-based interventions provided by nurse practitioners (e.g. Nurse-Family Partnerships, The Family Connections Project) have a positive effect on child abuse and neglect cases and future child behavior problems (WSIPP, 2007). In addition, emerging evidence indicates that these kinds of programs are also effective in preventing or reducing involvement in the child welfare system (WSIPP, 2008). Intensive Family Preservation services (which are in-home crisis intervention services) have been shown to prevent or reduce child welfare involvement (WSIPP, 2008).

All counties reported that they have some home-based intervention services available. One county (Summit) noted that home-based services are available in both English and Spanish. Another (Custer) noted that this type of service has proven particularly helpful for families where multiple problems are present.

Intensive Family Therapy programs typically involve intervention with all family members and aim to improve family communication, functioning and relationships. Some specific intensive family therapy programs (such as Multi-Systemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy) have been shown to be extremely effective in reducing family problems, juvenile

⁴ NR=Not reported in past fiscal year reports.

⁵ Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2008, July). Evidence-based program to prevent children entering and remaining in the child welfare system: Benefits and costs for Washington. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, report #08-07-3901.



delinquency, and substance use and have also been shown to be very cost-effective (WSIPP, 2007). Studies are currently underway regarding the effects of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) on subsequent child abuse and neglect. Another family therapy program (Parent–Child Interaction Therapy) has been shown to be cost-effective in preventing or reducing child welfare involvement (WSIPP, 2008).

Nearly all counties (98%) reported they provide some kind of intensive family therapy service. One Western Slope county did report that increased caseloads, rising fuel costs and increases in provider rates have severely challenged their ability to provide these kinds of services. The proportion of counties providing Intensive Family Therapy has improved from 88% in the past two fiscal years to 98%.

Life Skills programs are generally provided in the home and teach household management, accessing community resources, parenting techniques, and family conflict management. Life Skills training are a component in many successful child welfare programs, including various nurse home-visitation programs and the Triple-P Positive Parenting Program (WSIPP, 2008).

Nearly all counties (98%) provide some kind of Life Skills training services to families. Delta County reported that their Life Skills training program has been particularly helpful for families with children with special needs or who are developmentally disabled. The proportion of counties providing Life Skills has improved from 94% last fiscal year to 98%.

Day Treatment programs are comprehensive, highly structured services that provide education to children and therapy to children and their families. One example of this is the Chicago Child Parent Centers. This program provides a government-paid pre-school and kindergarten program that also provides parenting assistance as well as help in being involved in their child’s learning. The program has shown promising child safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and has been identified as a cost-effective program in preventing or reducing involvement with the child welfare system.

Just over two-thirds of counties reported providing day treatment programs. This represents a slight decrease in availability for this service. However, in addition to the 44 counties that reported having Day Treatment programs, an additional three counties indicated they provide day treatment alternatives in their county-designed services. For many of the Western Slope rural counties, Colorado West Mental Health has a day treatment program (described as “well developed”) that is utilized by multiple counties. In addition to those reporting the availability of day treatment as defined in the Core Services Program, three other counties noted that they have day treatment programs in their array of County-Designed services. Another reported that funds are set aside in case day treatment is needed, but there is not a local program available.

Sexual Abuse Treatment refers to therapeutic intervention designed to address issues and behaviors related to sexual abuse victimization, sexual dysfunction, sexual abuse perpetration, and prevention of further sexual abuse and victimization.



Most counties (95%) reported providing sexual abuse treatment services, representing a large percentage improvement over the 75% of counties last fiscal year. Some of the counties rely on programs run by other counties, due to the large expense of these services. Many contract with private providers that provide services for victims of sexual abuse; however, fewer counties reported access to providers who specialize in sexual offense-specific treatment.

Special Economic Assistance is emergency financial assistance of not more than \$400 per family per year in the form of cash and/or vendor payment to purchase services.

The majority of counties (80%) have special economic assistance services available. This represents a small decrease in the number of counties in which this type of service was available, possibly due to the use of other sources to fill this need in the community or a greater need for Core Services in other areas.

Mental Health Services include diagnostic and/or therapeutic services to assist in the development of the family services plan, and to assess and/or improve family communication, functioning and relationships. Because this category is broad in the types of services included, it is difficult to make comparisons with evidence-based practices. However, one county did report that parenting skills training and home visitation (two strategies generally proven effective) were included in mental health services.

All counties provide mental health services to children and families. Many contract for these services through their local community mental health center or regional mental health service agency (MHSA) or participate in a multiple county contract for services. One rural county reported that there is a gap in service here because the MHSA services are not as available locally as they are needed.

Substance Abuse Treatment Services include diagnostic and therapeutic services to assist in the development of the family services plan, to assess and/or improve family communication, functioning and relationships, and to prevent further abuse of drugs or alcohol. One substance abuse focused program, the Family Treatment Drug Court in California, has shown positive effects in reducing child abuse, number of OOH placements and permanent OOH placement (WSIPP, 2008).

Nearly all counties (97%) provide substance abuse treatment services to children and families. Many rural counties provide shared services, in multi-county plans, or through their regional MHSA. One county reported that local MHSA substance abuse providers are not Certified Addictions Counselors (CAC) and, therefore, services are inadequate. One county reported that they are in the process of redesigning substance abuse services for their adolescent population.



County-Designed Services are provided as part of the Core Services Program and are designed by counties to meet specific local needs. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the counties reported using county-designed services to meet the needs of families in their communities.

As mentioned in the discussion of day treatment programs, many counties use county-designed programs to provide more locally appropriate services for children traditionally receiving day treatment. In addition, counties are using county-designed surveys to implement evidence-based practices, including mentoring, Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Parents as Teachers, Family Treatment Drug Court, Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT), Wraparound Services, and Nurse-Home Visitation programs.

Counties also use these programs to provide services for populations who may not be as amenable to traditional treatment or therapy programs. For example, four counties have implemented play therapy programs for younger children who do not possess the verbal or reasoning skills needed for traditional therapy approaches. Counties have also used the County-Designed services flexibility to implement innovative program targeting very specific populations or behaviors that are specifically important within their communities.

Table 2, below, lists county-designed services outlined in each individual county Core Services plan. Programs in green are established evidence-based programs (EBP) that have been proven to be effective either in reducing family involvement with the child welfare system or in reducing child problem behaviors. Programs highlighted in blue are those who share program features with a named EBP, but haven't necessarily been specifically named as effective programs. Please note that these classifications are based on information provided in county Commission Reports. There may be other programs in this list based on other EBPs, but were not classified because there wasn't enough information about the program. Future evaluation reports will target a more conscious effort to describe County-Designed services.

Table 2: County-Designed Programs (Note, "Ex" indicates an expansion of services during this fiscal year)	
County	Service Type on Core Plan
Adams	Supervised Therapeutic Visitation Service Youth Intervention Program Expansion (Ex)
Alamosa	Discovery Group Family Decision Making/Confer Intensive Mentoring Program (Ex)
Arapahoe	Family Empowerment Multisystemic Therapy (Ex) - Synergy Savio Direct Link Program (Ex) Family Group Conferencing
Archuleta	High School Wellness Center High School Responsibility/Mentoring (Ex)
Baca	None



Table 2: County-Designed Programs

(Note. "Ex" indicates an expansion of services during this fiscal year)

County	Service Type on Core Plan
Bent	None
Boulder	Community Evaluation Team (CET) Adoption Counseling Family Group Decision Making
Broomfield	Day Treatment Alternative Multi-Systemic Therapy (Ex)
Chaffee	Chaffee County Mentoring Youth at Crossroads
Cheyenne	None
Clear Creek	None
Conejos	Intensive Mentoring (Ex)
Costilla	Intensive Mentoring Project (Ex)
Crowley	None
Custer	None
Delta	Mentoring Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) Day Treatment Alternative
Denver	Emerson Street School Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) (Non-Expansion) Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) (Ex) Savio Direct Link Program Domestic Violence Intervention Team Decision Making Supervised Visitation
Dolores	Day Treatment Alternative
Douglas	None
Eagle	None
Elbert	Multi-Systemic Therapy (Ex) Family Coaching/Youth Mentoring (Ex)
El Paso	Mediation Services Nurturing Programs Day Treatment Alternative Domestic Violence Functional Family Therapy (Ex) Multi-Systemic Therapy (Ex)
Fremont	Day Treatment Alternative Family Group Conferencing Adolescent Support Group Functional Family Therapy (Ex) Parenting Skills Supervised Visitation Family Treatment Drug Court



Table 2: County-Designed Programs

(Note. "Ex" indicates an expansion of services during this fiscal year)

County	Service Type on Core Plan
Garfield	Adolescent Mediation (Ex) Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) Functional Family Therapy
Gilpin	None
Grand	Day Treatment Alternative Family to Family Team Decision Making Parenting Time/Supervision
Gunnison	Therapeutic Mentoring (Ex)
Hinsdale	
Huerfano	Reconnecting Youth (Ex)
Jackson	Day Treatment Alternative
Jefferson	Multi-Systemic Therapy (Ex) Team Decision Making Ex)
Kiowa	None
Kit Carson	Functional Family Therapy (Ex)
Lake	Intensive Family Therapy (IFT)/School Partnership
La Plata	Play Therapy Multi-Systemic Therapy (Ex) Adolescent Dialectical Behavioral Treatment (DBT) (Ex)
Larimer	Foster Care/Adoption Support Groups Multi-systemic Therapy Nat'l Youth Program Using Mini-Bikes (NYPUM) (Ex) Functional Family Therapy (FFT) PCC Mediation (Ex) Family Options 1 Family Options 2 – Family Unity Meetings Family Options 3 – Family Group Conferencing Substance Abuse Petty Offenders Youth Services Life Nurse Visiting Program Community-Based Family Services and Support
Las Animas	None
Logan	Play Therapy
	Day Treatment Alternative
Mesa	Structured/Supervised Parenting Time Rapid Response (Ex) Day Treatment to Adolescents (Ex)
Moffat	Day Treatment Alternative
Montezuma	Day Treatment Alternative
Montrose	Promoting Healthy Adolescents Trends PHAT (Ex)



Table 2: County-Designed Programs (Note. “Ex” indicates an expansion of services during this fiscal year)	
County	Service Type on Core Plan
Morgan	Structured Parenting Time Day Treatment Alternative Family Group Decision Making
Otero	Play Therapy
Ouray/San Miguel	Day Treatment Alternative
Park	None
Phillips	None
Pitkin	None
Prowers	None
Pueblo	Visitation Center For Keeps Program (Ex)
Rio Blanco	Day Treatment Alternative
Rio Grande/Mineral	None
Routt	Day Treatment Alternative
Saguache	None
San Juan	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Sedgwick	None
Summit	Youth Outreach Day Treatment Alternative Mentor Supported Spell out first SA Treatment (Ex) Multi Systemic Therapy Team Decision Making
Teller	Multi Systemic Therapy (Ex) Day Treatment Alternative
Washington	Foster Care/Adoption Intervention
Weld	Day Treatment Alternative TIGHT (Ex) Multi-Systemic Therapy (Ex) Foster Parent Consultation Functional Family Therapy
Yuma	Day Treatment Alternative

The use of County-Designed services not only allows counties to implement programs to meet specific local needs, but also gives them the opportunity to implement an array of evidence-based programs as well.

While the counties have a comprehensive menu of services that are available through the Core Services Program, there continue to be some service gaps on two main fronts. The first of these is the issue of counties having sufficient local resources to be able to implement



needed services. This lack of resources may reflect fiscal limitations, may be related to the availability of specialized service providers to deliver specific treatment modalities, or to the challenge of implementing a fairly significant infrastructure in a small (population) community, when the services will only be used by a small number of children and families. This is common in counties with small populations and large geographic regions. Many counties have entered into partnerships in order to address this particular gap.

Program Changes and Core Service Allocations for Fiscal Year 2007-2008

In FY 2007-2008, an additional 1.5% Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) was allocated to the 80/20 funding line, earmarked to providers of the Core Services Program. This 1.5% COLA was distributed to county departments based on their Core Services Program funding base.

Total Core Services Allocations

Table 3: FY 2007-2008 Core Services Program Allocations			
County	SFY 08 Core Services Grand Total	County	SFY 08 Core Services Grand Total
Adams	\$ 4,560,584	Kiowa	\$ 52,772
Alamosa	\$ 661,817	Kit Carson	\$ 125,479
Arapahoe	\$ 4,198,386	Lake	\$ 136,566
Archuleta	\$ 258,269	La Plata/SanJ	\$ 1,028,048
Baca	\$ 42,440	Larimer	\$ 1,640,739
Bent	\$ 87,004	Las Animas	\$ 282,263
Boulder	\$ 2,397,501	Lincoln	\$ 409,810
Broomfield	\$ 321,335	Logan	\$ 358,103
Chaffee	\$ 288,552	Mesa	\$ 1,196,939
Cheyenne	\$ 38,362	Moffat	\$ 464,733
Clear Creek	\$ 120,218	Montezuma	\$ 302,392
Conejos	\$ 124,635	Montrose	\$ 461,047
Costilla	\$ 79,416	Morgan	\$ 640,763
Crowley	\$ 26,992	Otero	\$ 447,247
Custer	\$ 26,019	Ouray/SanMig	\$ 254,198
Delta	\$ 379,762	Park	\$ 167,701
Denver	\$ 7,373,211	Phillips	\$ 38,626
Dolores	\$ 29,536	Pitkin	\$ 33,904
Douglas	\$ 211,982	Prowers	\$ 324,321
Eagle	\$ 109,844	Pueblo	\$ 1,270,051
Elbert	\$ 233,429	Rio Blanco	\$ 116,045
El Paso	\$ 4,997,585	Rio Grande/Min	\$ 73,298
Fremont	\$ 766,962	Routt	\$ 309,654



Table 3: FY 2007-2008 Core Services Program Allocations			
County	SFY 08 Core Services Grand Total	County	SFY 08 Core Services Grand Total
Garfield	\$ 440,539	Saguache	\$ 90,569
Gilpin	\$ 84,456	Sedgwick	\$ 31,697
Grand	\$ 169,152	Summit	\$ 219,586
Gunnison/Hins	\$ 81,891	Teller	\$ 511,867
Huerfano	\$ 135,523	Washington	\$ 102,386
Jackson	\$ 26,326	Weld	\$ 1,402,435
Jefferson	\$ 3,849,218	Yuma	\$ 241,239
State Total	\$ 44,855,425		

In addition to the 1.5% COLA, the \$4,028,299 earmarked specifically for Core Services Program evidence-based services to adolescents was continued. These additional funds were allocated to county departments through a request for applications (RFA) process. It is believed that the additional funds are not only an asset to the Core Services Program as county departments continue to serve an increased number of Colorado's children and families, but also essential to the sustainability of evidence-based services and promising practices in Colorado.

History of the \$4,028,299 Evidence-Based Services Allocation

In FY 2003-2004, \$1.5 million dollars were appropriated to Core Services in order to mitigate county over expenditures in FY 2003-2004 to fund evidence-based services. Those services assist counties in providing services to adolescents in home and community-based settings, thus avoiding or reducing the length of costly out-of-home placement when appropriate.

The \$1.5 million are used to assist county departments of human services in implementing and expanding family and community-based services for adolescents. These services are based on a program or programs that have been demonstrated to be effective in reducing the need for higher costs of residential services. The additional funds cannot be supplanted.

In FY 2004-2005, an additional \$1.5 million dollars were appropriated. Then, in January 2005, an additional \$750,000 was appropriated for the same evidence-based services to adolescents' allocation.

To apply, counties needed to follow the conditions stated below:



- The additional funds must be in their Core Services Plan under County-Designed and all appropriate forms must be submitted.
- Each county must put forward a 20% share in order to utilize the additional funds. The \$4,028,299 has been allocated as 80/20 funds.
- The services offered must be evidence-based services for adolescents.

A completed Request for Core Services Additional Funding for Expansion of Services to Adolescent Proposal needed to be submitted.

Background

To date, the Core Services Program has been appropriated \$4,028,299 in order to mitigate county over-expenditures in FY 2007-2008 to fund evidence-based services, which assist counties in providing services to adolescents in home and community-based settings, thus avoiding or reducing the length of costly out-of-home placement when appropriate. Agency Letter CW-03-21-A is posted on the Department's web site detailing the Request for Application (allocation) process and time lines.

The \$4,028,299 has been allocated as 80/20 funds. Each county must put forward a 20% investment in order to utilize the additional funds.

The awards cannot be re-directed to other services/programs/needs in a county. Counties have the opportunity to expand existing evidenced-based services to adolescent programs, or implement new programs, upon additional funding and approval. If the awards are not used specifically for the submitted Request for Application (RFA), the funds must be forfeited and are reallocated according to scores submitted by the review committee.

Total awarded for evidence based services for adolescents = \$4,028,299 as of January 1, 2008.

The awards have been distributed in three phases: FY 2003-2004, \$1.5 Million (please refer to Agency Letter CW-03-21-A for details), FY 2004-2005, an additional \$1.5 Million (please refer to Agency Letter CW-04-22-A for details) then an additional \$750,000 was allocated to begin in FY 2004-2005. A COLA increase raised the total to \$3,949,313 for FY 2006-2007. A total of \$4,028,299 remained available for FY

2007-2008. The following section speaks to all counties receiving any expansion of services for adolescents.



Recommendations for Awards

The 2007-2008 evidence-based services to adolescent awards are shown in Table 4, broken down by county, amount of approved award, and the approved evidence-based service program.

Table 4: Evidence-Based Service Awards		
County Department	Award Offered	Evidence-Based Service Programs
Adams	\$288,569	Youth Intervention Program
Alamosa	\$62,893	Intensive Mentoring Project
Arapahoe (1)	\$237,808	Multisystemic Therapy (MST) – Savio
Arapahoe (2)	\$325,094	Direct Link/MST – Synergy
Archuleta	\$82,729	Moral Recognition Therapy and Responsibility Training
Broomfield	\$55,869	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Chafee	\$96,696	Mentoring
Conejos	\$61,513	Mentoring
Costilla	\$38,930	Intensive Mentoring Project
Denver	\$222,830	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Elbert (1)	\$56,600	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Elbert (2)	\$98,114	Family Coaching/Youth Mentoring
El Paso	\$244,964	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Fremont	\$91,617	Functional Family Therapy
Garfield	\$22,095	Adolescent Mediation Services
Gunnison/Hinsdale	\$38,607	Family and Youth Mentoring
Huerfano	\$11,762	Reconnecting Youth
Jefferson (1)	\$352,019	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Jefferson (2)	\$66,504	Team Decision Making
Kit Carson	\$19,339	Functional Family Therapy
La Plata/San Juan/ Montezuma, Dolores/Archuleta	\$151,292	Adolescent Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
La Plata/San Juan	\$158,298	Multi-Systemic Therapy
Larimer (1)	\$133,527	Family Group Conferencing
Larimer (2)	\$167,365	NYPUM National Youth Program Using Mini-Bikes
Mesa (1)	\$124,216	Rapid Response
Mesa (2)	\$162,013	Day Treatment to Adolescents
Montrose	\$64,034	Promoting Healthy Adolescent Trends (PHAT)
Pueblo	\$179,907	For Keeps Program
Summit	\$21,488	Mentor Supported Substance Abuse Treatment
Teller	\$113,457	MST
Weld (1)	\$298,278	Teamwork, Innovation, Growth, Hope and Training (TIGHT)
Weld (2)	\$86,839	Multi-Systemic Therapy
TOTAL AWARD ALLOCATION:	\$4,028,299	

The additional evidence-based programs for adolescents are considered as Core Services Program County-Designed Services. All County-Designed Services data pulled from Colorado Trails is inclusive of these additional evidenced-based programs. The CDHS will



continue to work with each County Department to ensure projected outcome data is compiled and the goal of each program is achieved.

To continue to receive the evidence-based services, the county needs to submit a complete program needs assessment, County-Designed Services description and determine projected outcomes. They must also document historical outcomes with regard to how these specific County- Designed Services demonstrate effectiveness in reducing the need for higher costs of more restrictive or residential services.

Access to Services: Challenges and Opportunities

Gaps in services were described across all regions of the state and were not specific to any particular county size (e.g. rural vs. urban), or region of the state. While there were no specific need patterns across these breakdowns, some types of services were more commonly identified as a need than others.

More than half of counties (57%) reported some service that was needed but not currently available in their counties.

- 21 counties reported that there are some needed services that are currently not available in their county

The most commonly reported services issue related to specialized services or special populations. Fourteen (14) counties discussed this issue in relation to Spanish-speaking providers, special needs populations, domestic violence and sexual assault services as well as substance abuse treatment.

More than half (7 of the 12; 58%) primarily urban or urban and rural mixed counties discussed existing service needs in their communities. There was a significant range of needs expressed within these counties, these needs include:

- More intensive family therapy and family group conferencing
- More Spanish-speaking providers
- Domestic violence programs
- Trauma recovery services
- Substance abuse treatment services

Two counties, in particular, pointed out a service gap for a specific population. One county reported a need for more services for young children (those under the age of 12). Another expressed a need for more services that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of families with developmentally delayed/disabled children.

“While a limited amount of community resources exist to accommodate needs for this population, a significant amount of families remain on



community waiting lists or receive partial services. El Paso County has relied on a handful of professionals to provide Core Services to the developmentally delayed/disabled group. Families with developmentally delayed/disabled need specialty services designed with a holistic approach. The length of stay for services to this population is generally longer than services to individuals without developmental disabilities because of the complex, diverse and rapidly changing issues targeted in each developmental stage. The stress and strain of parenting a child(ren) with developmental delays/disabilities increases marital discord or divorce and potential neglect of other children in the household.”

One county reported using nationally identified model counties in identifying additional services and procedures for more efficiently delivering services and assuring positive child welfare outcomes.

Sixty percent (60%) of rural counties reported existing unmet service needs. As was the case in urban areas, these needs varied across counties. The needs in rural counties often reflected those specified in urban or urban/rural mixed areas. Since more counties in the state are classified as rural counties, more patterns of needs emerged, with many counties sharing a need for a specific type of service.

The service area where the most need was expressed was in the area of substance abuse treatment. Nine of the rural counties (as opposed to only one urban/mixed county) identified some kind of need in this area. Specifically, counties cited few certified substance abuse treatment providers spread over a wide geographic area. This created an inadequate access to these services. A similar issue was identified in mental health services, (seven counties) particularly related to psychiatric services for children. The following quote from a County Commission Report illustrates this issue:

“Services are available, but there is not enough funding for some of the Core services offered. Our county is in a regional contract for Substance Abuse services that has not had an increase in funding level in over ten (10) years. The cost of doing business has increased each year but the State has failed to keep up with those increases. Every year, funding for substance abuse “runs out,” leaving some clients without services or having the County pay additionally for those services.”

The theme of specialized treatment options was a particularly salient issue in rural counties. In addition to the lack of specialized mental health and substance abuse providers, there were also deficits cited in treatment options for domestic violence and sexual abuse (four counties). Other counties (4) also reported a lack of sex offense specific treatment.

Another common type of service cited, as a general unmet need was day treatment programs. However, most counties pointed out this need is often not filled because the large amount of



resources required to sustain day treatment programs, compared with a relatively low day to day need for this service.

Six counties also cited specific needs for family programs, ranging from a need for more immediate crisis service, to intensive family therapy, and family conferencing services. Two counties expressed a need for greater funding for home-based services. This need is an important one given that families often have no or limited transportation options that prevent them from travelling to a specific provider. While funding limitations are understandable given the overall expense of these kinds of programs, it should be noted that a number of home-based programs have proven extremely cost effective in terms of reducing a family's future involvement in the child welfare system (WSIPP, 2008). One county, in particular, summarized why an increase in family-based services and programs was crucial to a successful Core Services Program:

“Kit Carson County believes that by providing and incorporating additional County-Designed services such as Family Group Decision Making and Structured/Supervised Parenting Time, we can assist in preventing more OOH placement cases by empowering the families of Kit Carson County to provide for the mental, physical and emotional needs of their children.”

Other expressed service needs were:

- Behavior coaching in schools
- Alternative education programs
- Wraparound services
- After-hours daycare

The recruitment of Spanish-speaking providers was an issue for three of the rural counties as well as one of the urban/mixed counties. The difficulty in securing these resources was summarized by one county as follows:

“We are also limited in the Core Services that we can provide to Spanish speaking only parents and families. It is difficult to hire and retain translators/cultural mediators on a contractual basis and often translators/cultural translators are not available when families require assistance as they (contractors) are working full time jobs. We are actively recruiting translators and/or bilingual therapists for all programs on an ongoing basis but this still remains a void for our agency and many other agencies in our community. Even when we do recruit and hire translators and/or bilingual therapists or other paraprofessionals, there is significant training required regarding the unique needs of the families we are assisting in



Child Welfare, confidentiality, etc. Again, this takes time and translators often can only work 2-5 hours every two weeks.”

Finally, several counties (4) specifically pointed out that general increases in funding would be helpful to continue to adapt to the rising costs of services in their communities, including a need for more caseworkers and funds that can be used flexibly to meet the individual county’s needs. In most cases, these funding needs are better characterized as barriers that prevent families from accessing service, rather than a lack of that specific service in the county. For example in one county: “Travel funds would really help since many of your clients have to drive 100 miles round trip to access some of these services.”

Forty-seven (47) counties (72%) discussed having wait lists (20 counties) and other barriers (43 counties) to services access in their communities.

A second issue around gaps in services across counties is the accessibility of services. Even when services are available, there may be insufficient resources to provide enough of the service (leading to wait lists), or there may be other barriers to access that result in children and families not getting the services they need.

Wait lists were most often related to a lack of resources available from the actual service provider. Staff turnover, lack of specialized staff (either clinical or language skills-related), and general shortages of clinical staff (licensed psychiatrists, qualified evaluators, etc.) were all cited as reasons for wait lists. Overall, across all 20 counties reporting the use of wait lists, the challenge was that there are not enough providers to meet specific demands. This seemed to be the case particularly with some of the home-based and intensive family therapy programs. Supporting community infrastructures to increase the capacities of these programs (including in rural areas and for Spanish-speaking populations) would be one opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the Core Services Program, given the successful outcomes these programs have shown in the past, when implemented according to EBP.

By far the largest barrier to families accessing needed services that were available was transportation, with 25 counties reporting this as a problem. High gas prices and lack of adequate public transportation were cited across rural and urban counties and were not specific to any particular region. In addition, counties with larger geographic areas, typically rural in population density, had the additional burden of sheer distances that families were required to travel in order to obtain services.

More than one-third (38%) of counties reported that lack of access to transportation prevent families from accessing needed services. This barrier was reported across urban and rural counties and wasn't limited to large geographic areas.



As mentioned previously, high staff turnover and lack of staff with specific skill sets continue to be barriers to service in nearly all of the counties reporting such issues. Other barriers mentioned by counties include:

- Hours of service availability (families working)/scheduling issues (three counties)
- Issue of services to documentation/undocumented workers (two counties)
- Need for multiple services (two counties)
- Slow response from providers (two counties)
- Lack of parent cooperation/stigma associated with a local human services agency (two counties)



Core Services Implementation

Children Served by Core Services Program

Trails extracts for fiscal year (FY) 2007-08, identified 17,773 children served. This is 7% lower than numbers reported in previous fiscal years. However, this difference appears to reflect a combination of two factors. The first factor is the differences in data sources and methodology and Trails enhancements described in the Evaluation Methods section of this report. Second, there is likely a real decrease in the number of children receiving services due to a smaller COLA increase in funding over the past fiscal year.

Table 5: Total Number of Children Served: Core Services Program			
	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08
Total Un-duplicated Count	19,006 ⁶	19,152 ⁷	17,793

Figure 1 (page 28) shows most children served by the Core Services Program were White, non-Hispanic (57%) or Hispanic (38%). There was a fairly even distribution of girls (46%) and boys (54%) across the children served. The average age of children served by Core Services was 9.9 years old.

Table 6: Race/Ethnicity and Gender of Children Served		
	Core Services Children Served	
	Number of Children	Percentage
Female	8,218	46.2%
Male	9,575	53.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	150	<1%
Asian	97	<1%
Black or African American	448	2.8%
Hispanic	6,067	38.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	48	<1%
White (Caucasian)	8,977	56.5%
TOTAL	17,793	100.0%

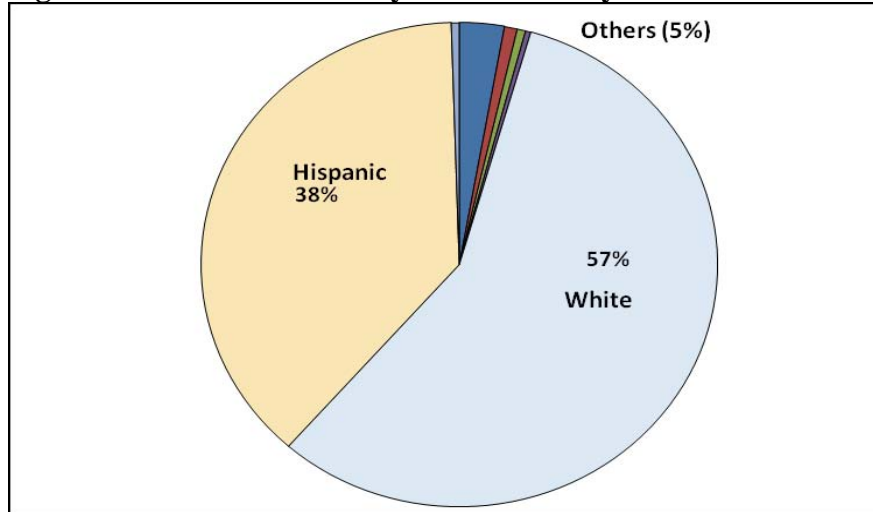
Race/Ethnicity was either missing or "unable to determine" for 1,909 cases.

⁶ This number is taken from the FY 2006-07 Commission Report.

⁷ This number is taken from the FY 2006-07 Commission Report.



Figure 1: Children Served by Race/Ethnicity



Services Provided

The count of services represent the number of individual authorizations of service entered into Trails and duplicates the count of children served, since one child may have received more than one type of service (or even multiple authorizations for the same service). A total of 50,814 services were provided to children and families during FY 2007-2008.

Table 7: Total Number of Services Provided: Core Services Program				
	FY 2004-05	FY 2005-06	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08
Total Number of Services Authorized	35,127	46,394	50,090	50,814

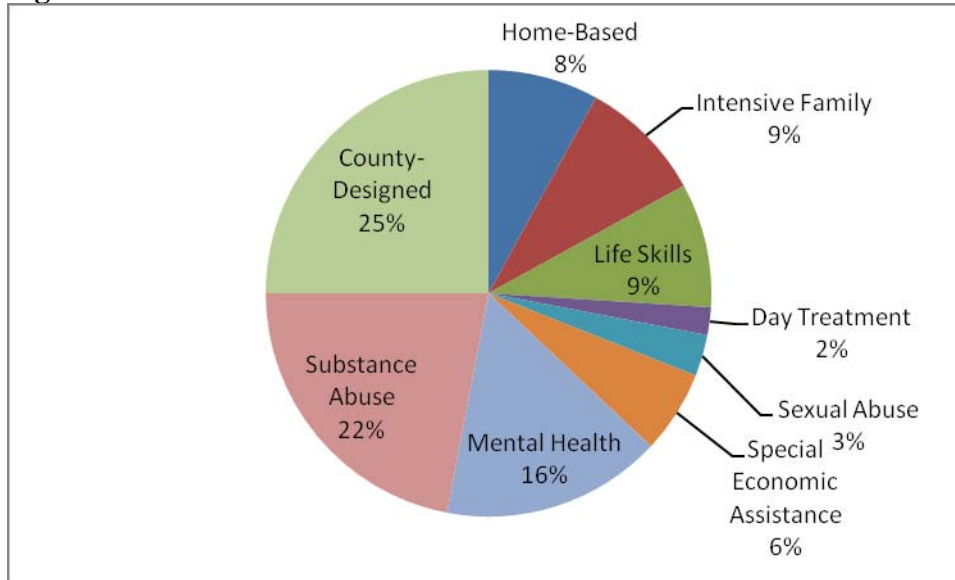
As seen in Figure 2, one quarter (25%) of all services authorized were County-Designed Services. This was the largest portion of all services authorized, illustrating how important these flexible services are in meeting the needs of children and families.

The next most common type of services authorized was substance abuse services (22%) and mental health services (16%) for children and families. Day Treatment (2%) and Sexual Abuse/Offending (3%) services were the least frequently utilized, which is consistent with county reports that these services are not adequately available in many areas.

Intensive family therapy and life skills program each made up 9 percent (9%) of the services authorized, while home-based services made up 8% of the services authorized.



Figure 2: Distribution of Services Authorized



County Breakdowns of Services and Children Served

County	Services	Children	County	Services	Children
Adams	2,138	1,123	Jefferson	5,505	1,721
Arapahoe	3,873	2,008	Larimer	5,904	1,868
Boulder	1,357	719	Mesa	1,089	387
Denver	10,430	3,299	Pueblo	2,183	835
El Paso	8,406	1,612	Weld	1,704	664



Table 9: Balance of State Counties in FY 2007-08: Services & Children Served					
County	Services	Children	County	Services	Children
Alamosa	510	211	Kit Carson	132	34
Archuleta	105	78	Lake	89	38
Baca	10	6	LaPlata/San Juan	648	220
Bent	53	26	Las Animas	72	51
Broomfield	245	88	Lincoln	69	41
Chaffee	63	35	Logan	176	93
Cheyenne	5	4	Moffat	397	157
Clear Creek	52	36	Montezuma	174	112
Conejos	126	59	Montrose	404	162
Costilla	16	8	Morgan	503	213
Crowley	22	13	Otero	106	64
Custer	11	6	Ouray/San Miguel	52	20
Delta	315	156	Park	124	63
Dolores	31	16	Phillips	19	15
Douglas	149	97	Pitkin	20	12
Eagle	188	112	Prowers	135	87
Elbert	160	80	Rio Blanco	108	47
Fremont	1145	294	Rio Grand/Min	117	64
Garfield	447	180	Routt	179	54
Gilpin	51	32	Saguache	32	28
Grand	157	52	Sedgwick	23	7
Gunn/Hinsdale	67	46	Summit	142	52
Huerfano	163	91	Teller	298	123
Jackson	17	8	Washington	15	11
Kiowa	9	4	Yuma	74	51



Cost of Core Services

Overall Expenditures. In FY 2007-08, a total of \$ 49,848,547.67 was expended on the Core Services Program. This figure encompasses all statewide county and tribal expenditures, including additional funding requests made beyond the original funding allocation, the use of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars and county money to supplement the Core Services Program allocation. Overall, Core Services funding was supplemented by an additional \$874,484.23 to meet basic needs. These supplemental funds helped to fill serious gaps in services to the un-served and underserved, as well as services by culturally and linguistically competent service providers. This remains a persistent challenge in preventing OOH placements.

The method for calculating costs is outlined in detail in the methodology section of this report and represents a calculation of a daily cost per individual child served, using the actual number of days service was received (as recorded in the Trails data system). This change from previous reporting represents an effort to increase the accuracy of cost calculations by accounting for the actual amount of time that an individual child is served within the fiscal year. This method, however, does not represent an actual amount of service because the number of days that a child spends enrolled in a service does not translate directly into days of actual treatment and days across service types varies greatly. For example, a child receiving MST might be enrolled for four months and receive direct services three times a week. However, a child receiving substance abuse treatment may attend a monthly group session for the same four-month period, translating to the same overall number of days enrolled, but significantly less actual direct treatment. It is also important to note that, as previously discussed; there is some undercounting of children (and therefore days of service) in Trails because county-provided services are not always consistently entered as service authorizations.

As data collection under Trails is enhanced, it is the intent of this evaluation to work towards further refining cost calculation methods in order to continue to improve this measure. Because cost calculations in this report differ from previous reporting, comparisons with previous years' costs should be done with the differences in mind, if at all.

The average cost for service was \$9.66 for every day that a child was enrolled in Core Services, translating into a statewide average of \$293.66 per month per child served. Monthly costs per child did vary greatly across county, as they have in the past. County costs are shown in the following tables.



Average Monthly Costs Per Child Served

Table 10: Costs Per Service	
County	Average Monthly cost per child
Largest 10 Counties	\$285.15
Remaining counties	\$320.72

Average costs for the largest 10 counties was lower than for the other counties in the state. This is to be expected given that, for many programs the same infrastructure costs must be paid even as fewer clients are served. Some counties have achieved cost savings by combining resources, but it still remains a greater financial challenge to fund many types of programs in less densely populated areas.

Table 11: Average Monthly Costs Per Child – Largest 10 Counties			
County	Average Cost	County	Average Cost
Adams	\$445.76	Jefferson	\$175.09
Arapahoe	\$314.39	Larimer	\$227.23
Boulder	\$486.65	Mesa	\$294.30
Denver	\$441.75	Pueblo	\$146.17
El Paso	\$244.84	Weld	\$188.76

Table 12: Monthly Costs Per Child – Remaining Counties			
County	Average Cost	County	Average Cost
Alamosa	\$340.98	Kit Carson	\$219.04
Archuleta	\$496.75	Lake	\$425.55
Baca	\$1,058.83	LaPlata/San Juan	\$254.28
Bent	\$359.77	Las Animas	\$1,193.54
Broomfield	\$205.62	Lincoln	\$988.26
Chaffee	\$672.32	Logan	\$384.73
Cheyenne	\$1,339.19	Moffat	\$26.51
Clear Creek	\$477.04	Montezuma	\$271.82
Conejos	\$124.98	Montrose	\$295.86
Costilla	\$629.94	Morgan	\$206.85
Crowley	\$407.87	Otero	\$307.23
Custer	\$58.89	Ouray/San Miguel	\$662.07
Delta	\$258.39	Park	\$1,079.57
Dolores	\$129.46	Phillips	\$299.68
Douglas	\$432.62	Pitkin	\$615.74



Table 12: Monthly Costs Per Child – Remaining Counties			
County	Average Cost	County	Average Cost
Eagle	\$136.99	Prowers	\$355.49
Elbert	\$363.51	Rio Blanco	\$525.46
Fremont	\$220.54	Rio Grand/Min	\$308.26
Garfield	\$267.11	Routt	\$310.61
Gilpin	\$271.17	Saguache	\$209.10
Grand	\$120.83	Sedgwick	\$252.60
Gunn/Hinsdale	\$212.65	Summit	\$1,247.87
Huerfano	\$152.42	Teller	\$236.50
Jackson	\$208.95	Washington	\$405.13
Kiowa	\$1,192.86	Yuma	\$1,933.26

Supplemental Funding Sources

As mentioned previously, Core Services Program allocations were often supplemented with other county funds in order to provide needed services to Core Services families. The table below shows the distribution of other sources of funds across each county.

Table 13: Supplemental Funding Sources							
County Name	✓ Indicates Funding Source is Used to Provide Core Services						
	County Funds	Grants	Gates Foundation	TANF	Family to Family	Safe and Stable Families	Other Funding Sources
Adams							
Alamosa	✓						
Arapahoe				✓		✓	
Archuleta				✓			✓
Baca							
Bent	✓					✓	
Boulder	✓			✓			
Broomfield	✓	✓				✓	✓
Chaffee							
Cheyenne				✓			
Clear Creek	✓			✓			
Conejos				✓			
Costilla							
Crowley							
Custer							
Delta							
Denver	✓						



Table 13: Supplemental Funding Sources

	✓ Indicates Funding Source is Used to Provide Core Services						
County Name	County Funds	Grants	Gates Foundation	TANF	Family to Family	Safe and Stable Families	Other Funding Sources
Dolores							
Douglas	✓						
Eagle							
El Paso	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Elbert				✓			
Fremont		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Garfield	✓			✓		✓	✓
Gilpin							
Grand							
Gunnison	✓						
Hinsdale	✓						
Huerfano	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Jackson							
Jefferson	✓	✓		✓			
Kiowa	✓						
Kit Carson	✓			✓		✓	✓
La Plata				✓			✓
Lake	✓						
Larimer	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Las Animas	✓			✓		✓	
Lincoln	✓			✓			
Logan				✓			✓
Mesa	✓					✓	✓
Mineral	✓			✓			
Moffat							✓
Montezuma							✓
Montrose	✓			✓		✓	
Morgan	✓					✓	✓
Otero						✓	
Ouray							
Park	✓						
Phillips							✓
Pitkin	✓						
Prowers	✓					✓	
Pueblo							
Rio Blanco							
Rio Grande	✓			✓			



Table 13: Supplemental Funding Sources

	✓ Indicates Funding Source is Used to Provide Core Services						
County Name	County Funds	Grants	Gates Foundation	TANF	Family to Family	Safe and Stable Families	Other Funding Sources
Routt	✓						✓
Saguache				✓			
San Juan				✓			✓
San Miguel							
Sedgwick							
Southern Ute							✓
Summit	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Teller		✓		✓		✓	
Ute Mountain							
Washington							
Weld				✓			✓
Yuma				✓			



Collaboration Efforts

The Colorado Department of Health and Human Services (CDHS) emphasizes three major collaborative initiatives designed to assist county human service departments, including the Core Services Program, to maximize the resources available to children and families in their communities. These three initiatives are the Family-to-Family initiative, Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, and the Collaborative Management Program, authorized by House Bill 04-1451. A matrix illustrating participation in these initiatives, by county, is presented below.

Table 14: County and Tribal Collaborative Efforts					
	Program Name				
	✓ Indicates County Participates				
County Name	Involved in Collaborative Efforts	Family-to-Family Site	Incorporate Family to Family Principles	Promoting Safe and Stable Families Funding	Collaborates Through HB-1451
Adams	✓		✓	✓	✓
Alamosa	✓		✓	✓	✓
Arapahoe	✓		✓	✓	
Archuleta	✓		✓	✓	
Baca	✓		✓	✓	
Bent	✓	✓		✓	
Boulder	✓		✓	✓	✓
Broomfield	✓		✓	✓	
Chaffee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cheyenne					
Clear Creek					
Conejos	✓		✓	✓	✓
Costilla	✓				
Crowley	✓		✓		
Custer			✓	✓	
Delta	✓		✓	✓	
Denver	✓	✓		✓	✓
Dolores	✓				✓
Douglas	✓		✓		
Eagle	✓		✓		✓
El Paso	✓	✓		✓	✓
Elbert	✓	✓		✓	✓
Fremont	✓	✓		✓	✓
Garfield	✓	✓		✓	✓
Gilpin	✓				



Table 14: County and Tribal Collaborative Efforts

	Program Name ✓ Indicates County Participates				
	Involved in Collaborative Efforts	Family-to-Family Site	Incorporate Family to Family Principles	Promoting Safe and Stable Families Funding	Collaborates Through HB-1451
Grand	✓		✓	✓	✓
Gunnison	✓			✓	✓
Hinsdale	✓			✓	✓
Huerfano	✓			✓	✓
Jackson		✓			
Jefferson	✓	✓		✓	✓
Kiowa	✓				
Kit Carson	✓	✓		✓	
La Plata	✓		✓	✓	
Lake	✓		✓		
Larimer	✓		✓		✓
Las Animas	✓		✓	✓	
Lincoln	✓		✓		
Logan	✓		✓		
Mesa	✓	✓		✓	✓
Mineral	✓				
Moffat	✓		✓		
Montezuma	✓			✓	✓
Montrose	✓		✓	✓	
Morgan	✓		✓	✓	✓
Otero	✓		✓		
Ouray	✓				
Park	✓		✓		
Phillips	✓				
Pitkin	✓		✓		
Prowers	✓		✓	✓	
Pueblo	✓		✓	✓	✓
Rio Blanco	✓		✓		
Rio Grande	✓				
Routt	✓		✓		✓
Saguache			✓		
San Juan	✓		✓	✓	
San Miguel		✓			
Sedgwick	✓				✓
Southern Ute Tribe	✓				



Table 14: County and Tribal Collaborative Efforts

	Program Name ✓ Indicates County Participates				
	Involved in Collaborative Efforts	Family-to-Family Site	Incorporate Family to Family Principles	Promoting Safe and Stable Families Funding	Collaborates Through HB-1451
Summit	✓		✓	✓	
Teller	✓		✓	✓	✓
Ute Mountain Tribe					
Washington	✓		✓	✓	
Weld	✓		✓	✓	✓
Yuma	✓				

Family-to-Family

Family-to-Family is a child welfare initiative that promotes family-centered, community-based approaches to casework practice. The underlying principals of the initiative are 1) that the safety of children is paramount, 2) children belong in families, 3) families need strong community supports, and 4) child welfare systems need to partner with the community and other public systems in order to achieve positive outcomes for children. This initiative is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and is supported by DCW as a best practice model for out-of-home placement and foster care reform. Last year, the DCW's Core Services/Family Commission Report discussed a phased implementation strategy engaging 11 new counties each year, ultimately reaching 95% of children served in the state. The remaining counties would be incorporated through county-to-county knowledge transfer.

Individual County Family Commission Reports indicate that 12 counties had implemented Family-to-Family by FY 2007-2008, up from seven counties last year. Family-to-Family sites are evenly distributed across the geographic areas of the state and include a mixture of urban and rural, as well as small, medium and large counties.

Table 15: Counties Implementing Family-to-Family

County	County Characteristics		
	Region	Urbanization	Size
Bent	Southern	Rural	Small
Chaffee	Mountain	Rural	Medium
Denver	Front Range	Urban	Large
El Paso	Front Range	Urban	Large
Elbert	Eastern	Rural	Small



Table 15: Counties Implementing Family-to-Family			
Fremont	Mountain	Rural	Medium
Garfield	Western	Rural	Medium
Jackson	Mountain	Rural	Small
Jefferson	Front Range	Urban	Large
Kit Carson	Eastern	Rural	Small
Mesa	Western	Mixed	Large
San Miguel	Western	Rural	Small

These counties are at various stages of implementation, but all are working on continual training, of staff and community leaders, as well as networking with vital components of the community.

Programs are beginning to report positive outcomes in their communities. County-level family court systems and community organizations are beginning to embrace the Team Decision Making (TDM) model, which is leading to enhanced service delivery—in line with the Wraparound treatment model that has shown promise in national evaluations.

Following is an excerpt from Jefferson County’s report on its Family-to-Family implementation:

“Children, Youth and Families (CYF) continue to look at data related to the practice change to Family-to-Family. Data continues to show that the movement towards Family-to-Family has reduced court filings, less children entering out-of-home care, less time in out-of-home care, and less children re-entering out-of-home care once they have returned home. CYF continues to evaluate data trends with the goal of having data systems in place to track all of the information needed to make informed decision about the program this coming year.”

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program

PSSF programs aim to promote safety, permanency, and well-being for children by providing support to families in a flexible, family-centered manner through community collaboration. Three specific populations are targeted by PSSF: adoptive families and those planning to adopt, time-limited reunification families and other at-risk families and children. PSSF Programs aim to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, and to ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption, or by an Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA).



A total of 36 counties reported implementing the PSSF Program. This is slightly fewer than the 40 reporting implementation of the program last fiscal year⁸. Ten (10) of these counties also reported being Family-to-Family sites. The counties implementing these programs relied on these funds to augment Core Services to meet the needs of children in need of adoption or family reunification services that exceed those available through Core Services. In addition, counties reported that these funds were used in collaborative efforts with community-based agencies to serve children awaiting family reunification or adoption.

Collaborative Management Program (CMP)

The Collaborative Management Program (CMP) was authorized in state statute under House Bill 04-1451 (HB 04-1451). The intent of the program is to promote collaboration among providers to simplify service delivery and to promote the inclusion of families in case management plans. In its initial implementation year, six counties participated in the CMP. This fiscal year, 25 programs reported implementation of the CMP in their communities. These collaborative efforts allow counties to expand their services to children and families to provide some services (such as day treatment and substance abuse treatment) to children and families.

Effects of Community Collaboration on the Core Services Program

While all counties may not formally participate in the collaboration initiatives outlined above, it is important to note that nearly all (89%) of counties reported that collaboration efforts are a part of their Core Services Program (see Table 14, starting on page 36, for a matrix showing collaborative efforts by county). These counties report that these efforts have allowed them to extend a greater number of treatment options to families, with many discussing the benefits of collaboration in providing Wraparound Services.

Nearly all of the counties (89%) reported participating in some kind of collaborative effort with other agencies in their community.

- 17 counties reported that collaboration has allowed them to expand their array of services, to fill gaps in service, and/or to reach new populations; including increasing capability to offer EBPs, including MST, FFT, DBT, Nurse-Home Visitation, and Wraparound Services delivery
- 12 counties reported improved delivery of services, including delivering services in a more timely manner, earlier identification of at risk children and families; increased efficiency and convenience for families

⁸ It should be noted that one PSSF site, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe did not submit an individual Family Commission Report for this report. This tribal nation has an extremely limited administrative support services infrastructure.



- Two counties within this group specifically mentioned making access to services easier for families
- Three counties in this group specifically cited a reduction in the duplication of services
- Five counties reported collaboration has increased consistency in service provision across multiple agencies
- Three counties cited that collaboration has improved staff working conditions

Counties also reported multiple positive child welfare outcomes, involving child safety, permanency, and well-being that has been observed as the result of their collaborative efforts.

- 16 counties reported decreases in the use of OOH placements
 - This included 13 counties reporting fewer placements and three counties reported shorter stays in placement
- Three counties reported an increase in the use of kinship care
- Two counties reported a decrease in school truancy

Some counties reported challenges to collaboration, most commonly territory and turf issues (specifically cited by four counties). However, all of the counties did report building good relationships with community partners and success in coming together as a service community to better serve children and families.



Core Services Program Outcomes

Case Disposition by Type of Service. Evaluating outcomes for the Core Services Program represents more than just a response to the legislative requirement to provide “. . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program.” It is a commitment made by DCW to the people of Colorado that must be supported through actionable data over multiple years across 64 diverse, and sometimes differing, counties and two sovereign tribal nations each with their own, localized vision of that mission. Furthermore, the definition of effectiveness is a narrow balance between competing goals of keeping children safe and promoting health and stability by keeping children and families together whenever possible. There is tremendous pressure on all child welfare systems to promote safe and stable families, but no tolerance for systems that allow children to be harmed. Providing DCW with reliable, useful data that answers all of the often-conflicting questions asked is therefore critical. This report represents the next step in moving toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program.

In addition to the DCW requirements and desires to evaluate program effectiveness, the federal standards defined through the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) and measured in the Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) to help shape the specific evaluation goals, as outcome data will be used for both state and federal oversight. Within these two sets of criteria, the ultimate assessment of the effectiveness of the Core Services Program will be the degree to which these services aid DCW in meeting its mission to help “Colorado’s Children live in safe, healthy and stable environments.”

Below is a list of the first, preliminary, set of outcome measures for which data is already collected in the Trails data system. A future component of this evaluation will be to identify additional measures for which data may either already be available or for which additional data collection can be implemented in order to augment these initial outcome measures.

- **Leave reasons** (case dispositions): These are the case dispositions entered into Trails by the caseworker. Reasons for leaving service are translated into five outcome categories, listed later in this section. Previous reports have indicated that enhancements to Trails are ongoing, and with each system improvement, data becomes reliable and more valid as an indicator. The data presented here represent baseline data for the past two fiscal years (2006-2007 and 2007-2008). The degree to which this baseline data accurately reflects the outcomes of the Core Services Program will be a continued discussion with DCW as the evaluation develops.
- **OOH placements** during Core Services delivery and in the 12 months following Core Services termination. Twelve months post-termination data is currently available for all children terminating services during FY 2006-2007. This represents the evaluation baseline for post-termination data for FY 2007-08 child services.



- **Length of time placed OOH** during Core Services delivery and in the 12 months following core services termination.
- **Reports of abuse/neglect** during Core Service delivery and in the 12 months following core services termination.

For future outcome and program evaluation efforts, effectiveness will be gauged differently for each of the following three subgroups specified for the evaluation because each group faces a different balance in risk and protective factors:

- **Group A: Children never placed OOH** – For these children, measurement of effectiveness must take into account a higher relative risk to each child’s safety, because this group of children received Core Services while remaining within the home environments that led to their involvement with the child welfare system. If children are harmed while remaining at home, questions will be asked as to (1) whether the right decision was made to leave the child in their home and (2) whether the right services were provided to support safety.
- **Group B: Children placed OOH who receive Core Services** – For these children, safety remains important, but the measurement of effectiveness must address justification for removing the child from home. If children are safe, but end up being placed out-of-home for long periods of time, two questions will be asked: (1) whether the right decision was made to take each of these children out of their homes and (2) whether the right services were provided to support their achievement of healthy and permanent, stable living arrangements.
- **Group C: Children placed OOH who do not receive Core Services** – Core Services offer a path for children and families to safety, permanency, and well-being. However, children placed out-of-home often have access to additional services through other systems, such as Colorado’s Medicaid Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs), SB-94 Detention Continuum Program, and sometimes the optimal path involves other services. If outcomes for children placed OOH who do not receive Core Services differ from those of the other two groups, two questions will be asked: (1) whether the right decision was made to not provide Core Services and (2) whether the right alternative services were provided.

The evaluation team will work closely with the DCW to explore these questions and ensure that the evaluation is targeting the most critical – and evaluable – outcome areas. TriWest will spend the first half of the next fiscal year reviewing these groups, the main questions posed for each, as well as the data available to begin a comparative analysis of program outcomes and cost-effectiveness.



Currently, baseline data is presented for all children served by the Core Services Program. As the evaluation is more fully developed, these baseline data will be broken down into the categories outlined above in order to account for differing risk levels and differing expectations regarding out-of-home placement for the group. In addition, ensuring that Group C can be identified and represents an accurate comparison will be the focus of next year's evaluation efforts.

Leave Reasons – Services Outcomes

The table below shows the link between services outcomes and the leave reasons recorded in Trails. Leave reasons are broken into three main outcome categories:

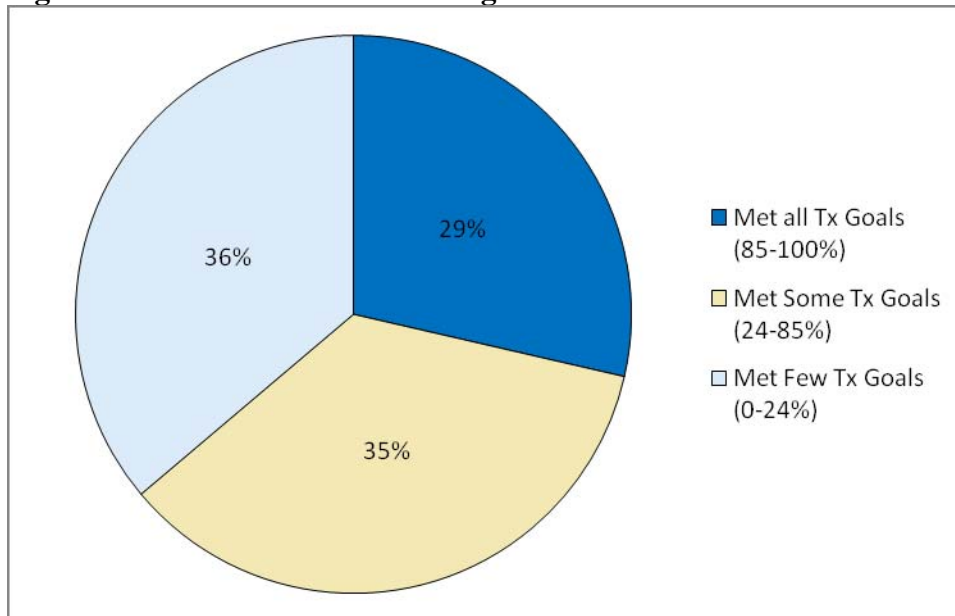
1. Client met **all or substantially all of the treatment goals**
2. Client was not completely successful, but **met a substantial portion of goals**
3. Client **met few, none or substantially none** of the treatment goals
4. Not applicable: Administrative closures/cases closed upon assessment

Table 16: Leave Reasons Linked to Services Outcomes	
Outcome	Leave Reasons
Client meets all or substantially all of treatment goals (85% - 100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Home, Cased Closed/Success • In Home, Client Still Involved in Case (no additional Core Services)
Client was not completely successful, but met some substantial portion of treatment goals (25% - 84%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Home, Follow Up (with additional Core Services) • Out-of-Home, (with another Core Service) • Moved Out of County/Agency/Tribe/State • Same Service Type, New Provider • Same Provider, Same Service
Client met few, none, or substantially none of the treatment goals (0% - 24%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client Refused Service • Out-of-Home Placement • Runaway • Incarceration • Detention • Parents Failed to Provide Adequate Structure/Safety • Other
Not Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death • Hospitalization • Opened in Error • Provider Service Closed • Case Transferred to another County/Agency • Business Office Correction • Payee Wrong Code • Contract Expired • Inactive Core Service
Closed Upon Assessment (N/A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed Upon Assessment



For the purposes of establishing a baseline score for future evaluation efforts, analyses are presented for outcomes, overall, for the Core Services Program as well as for each individual service type. Because the last two outcome categories (Not Applicable, and Closed Upon Assessment) both involve case dispositions that are outside of the influence of the actual service type, these cases (17.6% of all service authorizations) are not included in the calculations of the percentage of services ending in a positive, moderate, or negative disposition. Also, it is important to note that the number of service authorizations included in this analysis is smaller than that reported in the total services received, because it only includes those services that ended in this fiscal year (n=36,483).

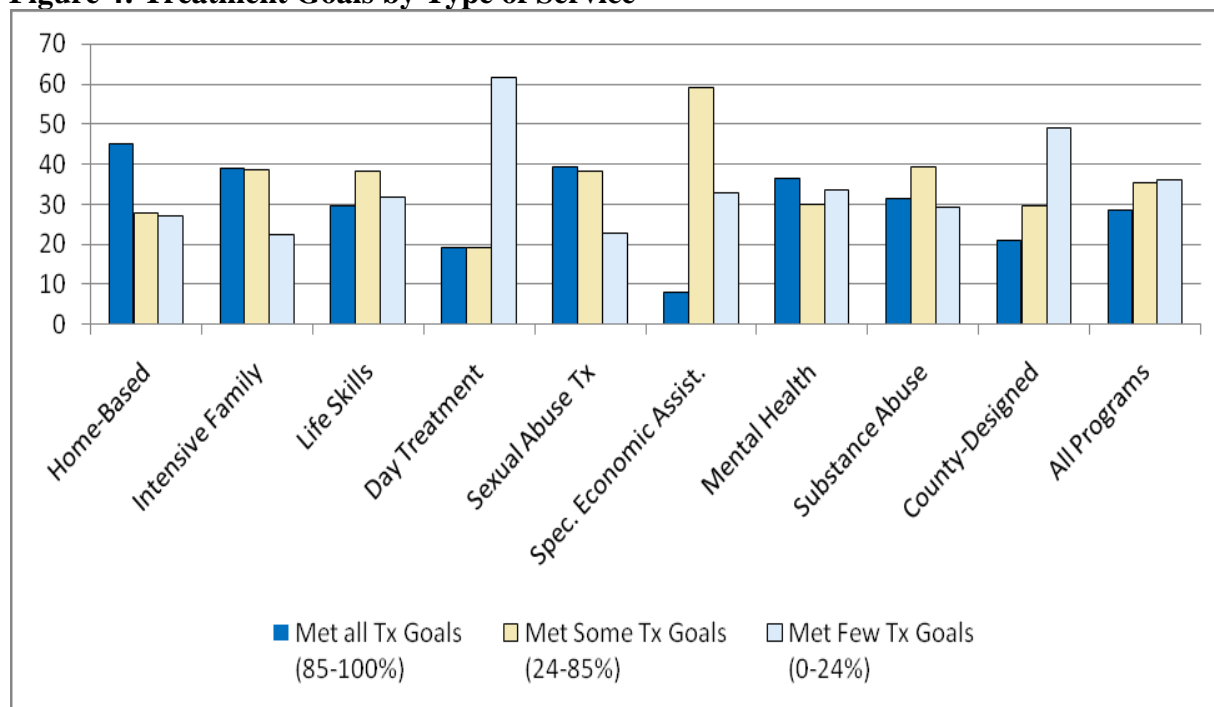
Figure 3: Service Goals for All Programs



As seen in the figure above, program outcomes were fairly evenly distributed across positive, moderate, and negative outcomes. About 29% of all service authorizations were ended with the child meeting all or substantially all treatment goals. About 35% of authorizations ended with the child being not completely successful, but meeting some or substantial treatment goals. More than one-third of children (36%) met few, none, or substantially none of the treatment goals. However, it is noteworthy that a significant 64% of the population served by the Core Services Program has met some or all treatment goals.



Figure 4: Treatment Goals by Type of Service



Home-based services were the most likely services to end with children meeting all or substantially all treatment goals (45%). More than one-third of children receiving Intensive Family Therapy, Mental Health, and Sexual Abuse Treatment completed the service completing all or substantially all of their treatment goals. Children in Day Treatment programs were the most likely to use services meeting few, none, or substantially none of their treatment goals (62%), followed by County-Designed Services, where nearly half (49%) of children used the service meeting few, none or substantially none of their treatment goals.

OOH Placements

One of the main priorities of the Core Services program is that children remain in the home whenever possible during the time during which they receive services. However, in many cases, in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect, Core Services must be delivered while the child is placed OOH.

As shown in Table 17, the same percentage of children (18%) receiving Core Services in fiscal years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 were placed out-of-home during the time they were receiving services.



Table 17: Children Placed OOH During Core Services Delivery	
Fiscal Year	Percent of Children Placed OOH
FY 2006-2007	18.0%
FY 2007-2008	18.3%

****Note:** Fewer children served during the time periods ended their episodes during FY 2006-2007. Many children served during the period ended services in FY 2007-2008.

In addition to keeping children in the home during Core Services delivery, the program also aims to deliver services that will prevent subsequent OOH placements once the children and family have completed treatment. For all children who completed the Core Services Program in FY 2006-2007, 35 percent were placed OOH (for at least one day) within 12 months of the termination of their last Core Service authorization. This proportion cannot yet be computed for the current fiscal year covered in this report because 12 months have not elapsed since the termination of FY 2007-2008 services. This will serve as a baseline proportion for comparison in future evaluation reports. In the FY 2008-2009 report this table will be updated to show findings for children completing services in FY 2007-2008.

Table 18: Children Placed OOH within 12 Months Following Core Services			
Fiscal Year	Number of Children Placed OOH	Percent of Children Placed OOH	Mean (Average) Days in Placement
FY 2006-2007	1,586	34.6%	98 days

Most of the counties reported that some of the service availability and access challenges discussed earlier in this report lead to more out-of-home placements and that addressing some of the service barriers (lack of resources, lack of qualified treatment professionals, and the need for more immediate intervention) could potentially decrease out-of-home placements. In addition to service availability issues, counties indicated that court decisions regarding placement often took the issue out of child welfare control.

A prevailing anecdotal perception on the part of the survey respondents is OOH placements experienced fairly large declines over the past decade, but the data-driven reality is these declines have leveled off in the past few years.

Additional Program Outcomes

Other data currently recorded in Trails, including reports of child abuse and neglect as well as the achievement of child welfare safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes through treatment goals may be useful in the future to add to the outcome evaluation. However, at this time, more discussion is needed between TriWest Group and DCW to fully operationalize these variables and to understand their use in the Trails data system. Preliminary analyses on these variables do show some promise for future study, but need further investigation before baseline measures are agreed upon and established.



In addition to the current variables captured by Trails, TriWest will continue to work with DCW to explore other potential measures to include in evaluating the success of the Core Services Program.

County Reports of Program Successes

Forty-eight (48) counties shared success stories and/or information about new program innovations in their individual Family Preservation/Core Services Reports. The avoidance of OOH placements was clearly a focus across all of these counties in terms of primary Core Services treatment goals. However, individual counties success stories also included references to multiple strategic objectives that could prove to be important future outcomes to be measured for the Core Services Program. These include:

- improving family relationships,
- improving life skills for children and parents,
- reduction of child abuse and neglect,
- and the reduction of child behavior problems.

The brief vignettes that follow represent summaries of anecdotal accounts of a few success stories. The vignettes were selected from the many accounts submitted in the Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Reports as a sample to represent the experiences of large, medium and small counties, as well as urban and rural areas. These stories offer a glimpse into how the Core Services Programs brings an array of community agencies and programs together to serve children and families, prevent out-of-home placements and reduce child abuse and neglect. Please note that individuals are not identified with their real names in these stories in order to maintain client and family confidentiality. A substitute name is however used to keep the account as real and human as possible.

A large, urban county provided the following account of how Core Services was used to assist a local family:

“The Smith case opened August 2007 due to the two year old child found by construction workers wandering in their construction site wearing nothing but a dirty diaper. The child was malnourished as he was in the 5th percentile for weight. He had been left in the care of his father who is developmentally disabled and heavily medicated for Bipolar Disorder.

The child was initially placed in the care of his maternal grandparents to avoid foster care placement. In-home services were initiated. He received a developmental assessment and began receiving speech therapy and occupational therapy weekly. The caseworker came with parents to attend this evaluation to work on techniques during visits in the home for encouraging the child to speak more. The case worker and the parents child-proofed the home, moved the animals into the basement, set up a cleaning



schedule to keep the home clean, and created a safety plan so that the child would not be left alone with the father until his medication was stabilized.

The father was also referred to adult education services and a parenting program for fathers with Developmental Disabilities. Both parents also received family advocates. [With services in place] the child was able to return to his parents. The caseworker continued coming into the home 2-3 times a week to work with the parents and child until the case was closed successfully.”

A small, rural county provided the following account of the use of Core Services to prevent out-of-home placement:

“This is a family of five daughters and a single mother. The mother and her children had to move to a different community in our county and the children had to begin school at a new school due to the mother ending a relationship with her boyfriend who had provided support and had relationships with her daughters as a father figure. The girls, who had always done well in school, began failing classes, getting into fights, suspended, and one of the girls who was twelve, was expelled from the school. Family Preservation was put into place for the whole family, as well as individual counseling. Day Treatment was used for the twelve year old who had been expelled. Four of the girls participate in the County-Designed Mentoring Program. The family has remained together and has participated and almost completed the Family Preservation Program. They have received help with their roles in the family, and are happier and acting more supportive to each other.”

Core Services successes involve not only keeping families together and maintaining children in a safe home environment, but also in improving juvenile behavioral outcomes. The following was shared by a medium-sized county, with an urban and suburban population mix:

“Joe was referred to the Community/Family Response Team due to behavioral issues, past substance use, and truancy. Joe participated in the Truancy Reduction Program with goals to maintain Joe in the home, reconnect him with school, maintain requirements of the Truancy Reduction Program, and address drug and alcohol issues and past sexual abuse.

At the conclusion of the program Joe was clean and sober. He stated that he had made a commitment to himself not to use again, and recognized that he felt better being sober (healthier and calmer). During the program he only missed school if he was scheduled to appear in court. When we first started working with Joe, he was failing all of his classes. At the end, Joe had achieved the highest GPA he's ever had and expressed excitement for the next



school year. In addition, both Joe and his mother completed intake evaluations for continued treatment and support of their sobriety. Joe's mother was also clean and sober at the conclusion of the program and had found a full-time job."

In addition to stories of individual family success, counties shared stories of how they have been able to implement new services to meet the special needs of families in their communities. In some cases, counties have been able to implement programs, such as Family Drug Courts, that have recently been identified as cost-effective Child Welfare interventions. A small, rural, Western-Slope county shared the following story:

"Through grant funding from the Daniels Fund, El Pomar and the Cocker Kids Foundation we have established an IOP (Intensive Outpatient Program) [to augment our Core Services array for previously underserved populations]. This is a community-based treatment and support program for clients in Criminal Drug Court and our newly established Family Drug Court. Our treatment team and Board are committed to the continuing growth of the project. Clients are being served by a case manager, program coordinator and a pool of trained volunteers. We continue to have the psychologist who developed the County-Designed Treatment Model serve in a variety of capacities. Much of the treatment portion of the program is contracted through the Substance Abuse Treatment portion of our Core Services for those clients who qualify. Additional services for many of our clients fall under the Mental Health, Intensive Home based or Intensive Family Therapy programs."



Conclusions and Recommendations

The current report represents the first step in moving toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program. This report fulfills the legislative mandate and serves as a foundation for future evaluation and reporting that will further explore the impacts and processes of the Core Services Programs.

The Division of Child Welfare and the county and Tribal Family Preservation/Core Services Commissions have undertaken a comprehensive effort to improve services for children and families. These efforts have brought significant attention and improvements to the overall array of services across the state. While enhancements in the type, quality and availability of evidence-based services remains in early stages of its evolution, there are some emerging findings pointing to positive progress in this system change effort.

The Core Services Program supports empirically supported intervention models to reduce abuse and neglect and avoiding out-of-home placement. Available data point to promising impacts and outcomes for the Core Services Program in protecting children in Colorado from abuse and neglect and in supporting families in addressing challenges and avoiding out-of-home placements. As the evaluation is further developed in coming years additional understanding of the mechanisms and outcomes of the program will be explored.

Counties are implementing the Core Services program with significant creativity and resourcefulness. Through collaboration and creative programming, Counties are maximizing scarce resources to provide access to promising services in their communities. Similarly, Counties are engaging in efforts to tailor services to the needs, constraints and cultures of their communities.

Gaps in the service array challenge County efforts to provide services to children and families. To a significant extent, County efforts to match children and families to needed services depend on the existing local and regional service array. As the system moves towards more evidence-based assessment and matching of children to services it will be critical to engage service providers collaboratively to ensure that available services meet local needs.

Information tracking is improving but still is in need of improvement. In order to use evaluation resources to effectively support management and program improvement decisions it is necessary to have reliable and accessible data. We strongly support the work that is being done and that has been proposed to enhance the Trails system so that the counties and the Division can have a greater confidence in the numbers of services and children served, as well as the capacity to more precisely link services and costs to outcomes.



Appendix A

Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Survey



Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Survey

Fiscal Year 2007-2008

Colorado County
Name:

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Contact Person for Questions about Survey Responses:

Name:

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Title:

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Phone:

--

E-mail:

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TriWest Group is a Colorado-based evaluation company selected to work with The Colorado Department of Human Services to conduct the evaluation of the Family Preservation/Core Services Program and prepare the Department's annual Family Preservation Commission Report.

Each year local Family Preservation Commissions are required to complete a survey on the status of Core Services and the programs available in each County. The information you provide through the attached survey will be combined with other sources of information including the Colorado Trails database to form the content for the required annual report. Input from local Family Preservation Commissions provides a context for the quantitative data elements and represents an opportunity for your County to tell the story behind the numbers.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Please return completed survey by **July 31st**.
- Please be sure to include complete contact information above in case we have any questions or there are problems with the transmission of the survey to us.
- If possible, ***please complete the survey electronically*** using MS Word and email completed surveys to **Erin Hall** at ehall@triwestgroup.net.
- If you need to send us a hard copy there are two choices:
 - MAIL to: TriWest Group, 4450 Arapahoe Ave., Suite 100, Boulder CO 80303
 - FAX to: TriWest Group – 970-672-4944
- Please call Erin Hall at **303-544-0509, extension 7** with any questions about the survey.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!



Capacity and Array of Services

1. Core Services programs available in the county in FY 2007-2008:

1.1. Please indicate which of the following programs were available in FY 2007-08.

Core Services Programs	Available FY 2007-08? Check One	Comments
Home-Based Intervention	Yes ___ No ___	
Intensive Family Therapy	Yes ___ No ___	
Life Skills	Yes ___ No ___	
Day Treatment	Yes ___ No ___	
Sexual Abuse Treatment	Yes ___ No ___	
Mental Health Services	Yes ___ No ___	
Substance Abuse Treatment Services	Yes ___ No ___	
Aftercare Services	Yes ___ No ___	
County-Designed Services	Yes ___ No ___	

1.2. If County-Designed Services were available, please describe the types of services:



2. Please describe any services that are needed but currently not available in your county.

_____N/A (*the menu of Core Services available in our county are adequate to address the needs of children at imminent risk of placement*)

3. Are there waiting lists for services?

Yes ____ No ____

(If yes, please explain what policy or program issues are involved and if the issues identified have been resolved.)

4. Are there other barriers preventing some families from accessing services?

Yes ____ No ____

(If yes, please explain what policy or program issues are involved and if the issues identified have been resolved.)



5. Does your county believe the number of children served as reported in Trails differs from self-reported data?

Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, please provide additional information as to why.)

6. Does your County's Family Preservation/Core Services Commission have any recommended changes to the annual Commission Report?

Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, please describe).

Anecdotal Information (successes or failures)

7. Please describe any successes or failures you would like to share, innovative services, cooperative programming or other unusual approach to Core Services within the County.



Collaboration

8. What is your county doing to **collaborate** with other state, county and/or local initiatives to serve your community?

9. Is your county a *Family-to-Family* site?

Yes ___ No ___ (If yes, please describe).

If your county is not a Family-to-Family site, but you incorporate its principles into your Core Services practice, please describe those efforts.

10. Do you have *Promoting Safe and Stable Families* funding for services?

Yes ___ No ___ (If yes, please describe).

11. Does your county collaborate through HB 04-1451?

Yes ___ No ___ (If yes, please describe).

12. How have these collaborative efforts made a difference?



13. Please describe the policy and program issues in your county that are affecting out-of-home placements? Are these issues driving increases or reductions in placements?

14. Please describe the policy and program issues in your county that affect the length of stay for children placed out-of-home.

14.1. Are these issues driving increases or reductions in length-of-stay?

15. If your county could change and/or modify the Core Services Program, what would you recommend?

16. Has the Core Services funding affected your county's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) scores for stability in placement?

Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, please describe).



17. What proportion of the Core Services delivered in your county was funded via sources outside the Core Services line item?

17.1. Please indicate those sources in the table below and the types of Core Services purchased. If you are not sure of the actual amount, please estimate the percentage of your Core Services that were funded from that source.

Funding Source	Amount or Estimated Percentage of Services Provided with Funding Source	Type of Service Provided
County		
Grants		
Gates Foundation		
TANF		
Family-to-Family		
Promoting Safe and Stable Families		
Other (Write in:) _____		
Other (Write in:) _____		

Membership of Family Preservation Commission:



Signature of the Commission Chair

