

Updated –September 1, 2023

CAPACITY-BUILDING PLAN

Overview

Saint Francis Community Services in Texas is a nonprofit child welfare organization contracted as the SSCC (single source continuum contractor) in Region 1, serving 41 counties. As Region 1's SSCC, we provide community-based care services—a network of foster care, case management, kinship, reunification, and adoption services—to ensure that children and families receive the care, resources, and supports needed to achieve safety and wellbeing in permanency. Our direct work with clients includes, but is not limited to, delivering assessments, individualized case management services, child placement, coordinating services with local courts, schools, medical/behavioral and other providers, and ensuring that supports are in place to facilitate successful permanency. In the belief that healthy families are integral to a child's wellbeing, Saint Francis supports the healing of every child's family or caregivers (who may be biological, foster, kinship, or adoptive) in tandem with the child's case plan.

To provide healing and hope to 1,200 children in conservatorship within their own communities, we cultivate partnerships at the state, regional, and community level to decrease service gaps and meet the needs of those we serve. These activities include foster care home recruitment; training, and licensing; coordinating services with our provider network to secure placements in the least restrictive, most family-like setting possible; developing relationships with community partners and providers to whom clients are referred for services; and engaging members of the community at all levels as key stakeholders in our collective work to transform the lives of children in conservatorship and their families.

Plan of Action: Capacity Building

Saint Francis knows that capacity is dictated by multiple factors such as entry and exit of children in/out of homes, placement needs, community support services, training, and acuity of children. There are many factors that have contributed to the challenges of capacity in the state of Texas in the past several years, and the focus is to create necessary capacity to support our children and families long-term through short-term commitments.

Saint Francis intends to use designated funds provided by the legislature to build pillars for capacity growth. Saint Francis knows the needs of its communities, and we have spent several years in Region 1 determining the challenges of bringing in new operations and expanding capacity with current operations in our catchment area, while developing our network to care for children.

These challenges consist of the following:

- **Continuum of Services** – Children need the opportunity to heal in all settings and increasing placements for higher acuity youth in region through residential and foster parent models will ensure our success overall.
- **Support for Caregivers** – Foster parents, biological families, and kinship caregivers often need temporary support to provide care for children in our network. Whether it is filling the gap for daycare payments to preserve placement, providing rent for reunification, or installing windows for a kinship caregiver—these supports all lead to children receiving permanency.
- **Network Development** – our partners need support in developing their teams with new recruitment techniques, service delivery, and training so they can provide stability to children and their families.

Saint Francis will focus on creating the continuum needed in Regin 1 though our experience in stabilizing children and families to create capacity to serve children and their families.

Measurable Results

Barring any major additional changes to the existing plan, Saint Francis will be measuring the following to ensure we are accountable to the state of Texas, our communities, and the children and families we serve:

- 10% increase in placement stability for children
- 50% increase in Treatment Foster Care (TFC) Capacity in Region 1
- 15% increase in stabilization of kinship placements
- 25% increase in in-region placements for children
- 5% increase in placements of children in their communities

These will be accomplished by the end of the Fiscal Year 2024 with the targeted growth by the end of Fiscal year 2023.

SSCC Shared Costs: \$50,000

Saint Francis recognizes the need to work with other SSCCs that are currently in operation to optimize funding and share resources in this plan.

All SSCCs will distribute proportional distributions for the cost of the plan based on an internal methodology. This work will be monitored through an agreed upon Memorandum of Understanding

Treatment Foster Care (TFC): \$200,000

Saint Francis knows the importance of a continuum of service model where children from a residential setting can heal through a treatment family model. At the present time, Saint Francis has been able to secure four Treatment Foster Care (TFC) contracts in Region 1 and wants to ensure we continue to grow this necessary capacity to increase children remaining in their communities, creating permanency options, and transitioning children back to their families.

This funding will be spent on creating additional support to current providers in the TFC model and enhancing service delivery through a third-party vendor through a family support model. This model will work with our contracted agencies, their foster parents, and the children to help stabilize and ensure children receive adequate care. The intent is to increase TFC capacity by 50% from our current baseline through offering supports through a family model.

To further incentivize our TFC network, Saint Francis intends on awarding a \$5000 dollar award stipend for each new licensed TFC home, after 90 days of successful placement. Additionally, there will be an extra \$2000 dollar award (\$7000 dollar total) for licensing a new TFC contract home that works with human trafficking victims. This will also be paid out after 90 days of successful placement.

Process for Procurement

Saint Francis will create request for proposal process (RFP) that will be offered initially to local providers in Region 1, providers in Texas, and providers nationally to look at services in a family support model. This RFP will be tied to a grant distribution that will be monitored by our Capacity Building team with support from accounting to ensure funds are distributed and spent as intended.

The review of the RFP will be selected by the Capacity Building Community Advisory Panel and presented to Saint Francis leadership as a fair and consistent way for awarding funding for necessary capacity. The disbursement of funds will be monitored by Saint Francis.

Kinship Support: \$75,000

Saint Francis knows that kinship plays a vital role in building capacity in Region 1 as we must look at children in unlicensed settings to offer proper support and development for those caregivers. This includes supporting kinship and fictive kinship in the successful licensure for children in their care, along with adding a family-finding function that gives kinship supports the ability to become licensed for the care of children in short and long term out-of-home care. Saint Francis would like to continue to increase stability of children placed in kinship placements by 15% in the 2024 Fiscal Year.

Saint Francis will work with its partner agencies to create a fund designated for the support of kinship licensing in Region 1. This funding will support necessary items that are current challenges in licensing kinship homes. These items include and are not limited to the following: compliance items, windows, air-conditioners, beds, fixtures to bring homes up to code, automobile challenges, and other items as needed.

Process for Payment

Saint Francis will work with our partner agencies who support kinship licensing through a designated fund that can be paid through an invoice system based on prior approval for services. The focus will be to support families who can meet licensing requirements, near or close to the home study completion. Saint Francis will direct pay or reimburse agencies based on their preference and utilize members of our team for verification of services.

Network Development/Caregiver Support: \$235,000

Saint Francis has identified in the past 24 months that our partners' capacity to work with harder-to-place children has a direct correlation to their training and development with practices that support safety and wellbeing for our children. In the past year, Saint Francis has gained in-region capacity, however, has lost capacity for hard-to-place children across the state for multiple reasons. Saint Francis will be working with its partner network to identify areas of training, development, and to look at evidenced-based practices that ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. This will create the necessary skillset to ensure we preserve and create new capacity that is equipped to care for Region 1 children.

In this model, Saint Francis will work with providers through a majority vote and direct pay third party entities to support with best practice models in Region 1. The goal is to strengthen our partner network to feel confident in working with children with increased challenges, while ensuring they have the skillset to work through healing.

Process for Payment

Saint Francis will direct pay through our A/P system for the services rendered in Region 1 with half payment at contract and full payment once it has been fulfilled. Saint Francis will track funds through our accounting department monthly. Agencies will have the opportunity to look at payment for services with prior approval from Saint Francis.



Providing healing and hope
to children and families