

Fiscal Year 2026-27 Needs- Based Plan & Budget

Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania

Office of Children, Youth
and Families

**NEEDS-BASED PLAN AND BUDGET
NARRATIVE TEMPLATE**

Budget Narrative Template

The following pages provide a template for counties to use to complete the narrative portion of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB). All narrative pieces should be included in this template; no additional narrative is necessary. Detailed instructions for completing each section are in the NBPB Bulletin, Instructions & Appendices. As a reminder, this is a public document; using the names of children, families, office staff, and Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) staff within the narrative is inappropriate.

Avoid duplication within the narrative by referencing other responses as needed.

All text must be in either 11-point Arial or 12-point Times New Roman font, and all margins (bottom, top, left, and right) must be 1 inch.

Note: On the following page, once the county inserts its name in the gray shaded text, headers throughout the document will automatically populate with the county name. Enter the county name by clicking on the gray shaded area and typing in the name.

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NBPB
FYs 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27

Version Control	
Original Submission Date:	
Version 2 Submission Date:	
Version 3 Submission Date:	
Version 4 Submission Date:	

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Section 2: NBPB Development

1-1: Executive Summary

- Respond to the following questions.

The Philadelphia Office of Children and Families/ Department of Human Services (DHS)' mission, vision, and core values are to become the nation's leading child welfare agency that employs caring, committed professionals who use innovative and collaborative practices to strengthen families and communities. We strive to serve and support Philadelphia's children, youth, and families by building on their strengths to prevent dependency and delinquency and promote self-empowerment.

As part of our ongoing commitment to better serve Philadelphia's children, youth, and families, the Philadelphia Office of Children and Families / Department of Human Services (DHS) has refined our mission, vision, and values to reflect our current priorities and practices more clearly.

Mission: Serve and support Philadelphia's children, youth, and families by building on their strengths.

Vision: Philadelphia's children and youth thrive in their homes and communities.

Values: Respect, Transparency, Accountability, Equity, and Wellness.

Collaboration with youth, families, community members, service providers, judges, juvenile probation, and other stakeholders was instrumental in developing this Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB), which was informed by county data analysis and local, state, and national research to provide support to the goals of Improving Outcomes for Children:

- More children and youth maintained safely in their own homes and communities.
 - More children and youth achieving timely reunification or other permanency.
 - A reduction in the use of residential placements.
 - Improved child, youth, and family functioning.
- ☐ Identify the top three successes and challenges realized by the CCYA since its most recent NBPB submission.

SUCCESSSES

1. **More children and youth maintained safely in their own homes and communities.** DHS has **maintained significant progress** in safely reducing the number of children and youth in out-of-home placements by promoting their well-being within their own homes and communities. **There were 14% fewer youth in placement on March 31, 2025 (N=2,605) than there were on March 31, 2024 (N=3,054), and significantly (42%) fewer than on March 31, 2021 (N=4,528).** Our Hotline has seen a **significant increase in diversionary referrals**, rising from 4,397 in Fiscal Year 2020-21 (FY 21) to 5,367 in FY 22, with the trend continuing in FY 23 at 4,813 referrals. Diversionary referrals rose again to 5,355 in FY24 and reporting at 3,859 for Q1-Q3 FY25. The highlighted programmatic strategies below continue to contribute to this positive trend.
 - a. **The Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) has been a contributor in achieving this positive trend** by enhancing meaningful family involvement, fostering

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collaboration between the Court and DHS, and prioritizing the well-being of children and families. FEI has played an important role in driving the positive trend of keeping more children safely in their homes or with relatives by promoting meaningful family engagement, strengthening collaboration between the Court and DHS, and prioritizing the overall well-being of children and families. **DHS is committed to sustaining this progress through ongoing collaboration with our stakeholders to further enhance these positive outcomes.**

b. **Office of Children and Families (OCF) expanded the Out-of-School Time (OST) program.** OST has continually made significant progress in building staff capacity by retaining and training current staff to support students with special or complex needs and hiring dedicated staff to provide direct support. We have utilized funds to increase provider reimbursement rates, hire full-time case managers, attend trainings, and offer competitive wages to staff ensuring adequate staff capacity to serve our youth. During the 2024-25 school year, 9,821 youth were served at 137 OST sites. Since our last submission, OCF identified priority neighborhoods for FY24-25 OST sites based on community-level factors and existing free or low-cost OST programming. OCF prioritized placing programs in these neighborhoods to ensure more equitable access to programming. Moreover, OCF released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify new capacity-building resources for providers, aligning with current student needs such as literacy, social-emotional learning, accommodations for students with special or complex needs, and navigating the behavioral health system. As of March 31, 2025, OST afterschool programs served over 9,800 youth, an increase of over 1,400 additional youth since our last submission.

c. **OCF expanded our Integrated Case Management model** into all Community Schools, initially piloted in nine schools during the 2021-22 school year. As a component of Philadelphia County's primary prevention strategy, the integrated case management model supports families by connecting them to resources to stabilize them and prevent them from formally entering the child welfare system. The Integrated Case Management model has yielded positive outcomes since the expansion to more schools by consolidating attendance and general case management, thereby improving service coordination, and reducing duplicate referrals. As of March 31, 2025, 933 students received general case management services via this model. Additionally, **OCF continued to support Early Intervention truancy services** at nearly 100 schools through the case management model. During the 2023-24 school year, over 1,700 Early Intervention truancy cases were successfully closed, addressing barriers to attendance through case management services. Over 900 Regional Truancy Court cases were closed as the student was no longer truant. Of the 7,000 youth who received Early Intervention truancy services in school year (SY) 23-24, only 9% were referred to Regional Truancy Court.

d. **The Department and Philadelphia Family Court working in collaboration with the goal to preserve families and utilize resources to inform safety decisions regarding children and youth involved in custody matters.** DHS is requesting continued funding for Parenting Capacity Evaluations, on behalf of Philadelphia Family Court. This resource helps the Court make informed safety decisions for children and youth not currently receiving formal services. The mandated parent custody evaluations improve custody decisions by providing valuable insight into a parent's ability to safely care for a child and reduces the need for formal child welfare involvement. Since these evaluations are conducted by an independent third party, the fees cannot be waived for low-income individuals. The

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funding for required parenting evaluations will help to address the barriers related to health insurance not covering fees. The continual collaborating between DHS and Family Court has proven that there is a shared interest in keeping children and youth in their homes and communities under the care and supervision of their parents and reducing the need for formal child welfare services. Prioritizing this resource allows for us to continue those efforts.

2. **Serving older youth through prevention and diversionary efforts to support self-empowerment and reduce further dependency and delinquent involvement.**

In preparation for this year's Needs-Based Plan and Budget submission, DHS met with young adults who received services through our Achieving Independence Center (AIC). Many of these young adults provided positive feedback, particularly regarding the AIC and the continuum of services for older youth. During FY24, AIC served 897 young adults, which is a 47% increase in the number of youths served in the previous full fiscal year. Since our previous submission, our Fostering Youth Independence (FYI) program remains a key programmatic resource supporting young adults. See section 1-3c. *Service Array* for additional narrative on these programmatic strengths.

3. **A reduction in the use of residential placements.** Philadelphia County continues to enhance our focus on kinship and foster care community-based alternatives and supportive services for dependent youth who cannot safely be served in their home. With recent funding allocations, we are preparing to implement the training and support for kinship, foster families, and other caregivers to continue this positive trend. From March 31, 2021, to March 31, 2025, the number of dependent youths in residential care settings decreased by 56%, declining from 354 to 155. This reduction exceeds the overall decrease in youth in dependent placements (42%) during the same period, aligning with the county's goal of reducing reliance on residential care. Additionally, the 15% decrease from the previous year indicates sustained progress. As of March 31, 2025, only 6% of dependent youth were in residential placements, below the national average of 9.5%¹. This positive trend was further supported by full integration of the Professional Resource Parent Model and Kinship Navigator Model. See section 1-3c. *Service Array* for additional narrative on these programmatic strengths.

DHS remains committed to building an array of programs that support kinship, family-based and community-based placements, as well as evidence-based practices that promote positive outcomes for youth. This includes increased utilization in programs such as our Professional Resource Parent Model, Kinship Navigator, and the Crisis Access Link Model (C.A.L.M), further described in section 1-3c. *Service Array*.

CHALLENGES

1. **Ensuring a high-quality agency and provider workforce is sustained and supported despite profound labor shifts.** Since last submission, the Department has continued its commitment to sustaining and supporting a skilled and steadfast workforce. We have found success in our recruitment strategies which has been documented in section 3-1b Workforce. We continue to bring in more candidates department wide with quarterly classes, reoccurring exam announcements from OHR are posted to the city's website. Data has also shown that retention needs to be addressed as an important role in supporting and sustaining our workforce and despite our success with our recruitment strategies, we continue to face the challenge of retention. We have two strategies to combat staff the challenge of retention, we have been prioritizing the Bridge Unit, a transitional unit for new hires that utilizes seasoned supervisors to provide support and guidance to new staff that have just completed foundations training. The new staff spend six months in the Bridge Unit

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to further develop their skills through supervision, shadowing and constructive guidance. We have also began hiring Social Service Aides, who provide support to social work staff by assisting them with administrative and other duties such as appointment scheduling, client transportation, and visitation support. Due to these efforts, there has been a slight increase in retention. As we continue to usher in qualified candidates and continue in these efforts in retention, we are looking to continue our part in alleviating barriers and upfront clearances costs as well as 5-year renewals, providing safe and updated spaces for staff internally, coaching and training opportunities, hiring additional support staff, and exploring pay differentials for Investigative staff. More information on these efforts is in section 1-3c.

Complement.

2. **DHS continues to experience a challenge in reducing placement disruptions.**

Providing appropriate placement options for youth in the child welfare and crossover systems can be challenging, especially when they have complex social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Adding to this complexity, DHS has observed a rising trend of youth declining placement within the already limited pool of available and appropriate options, exacerbating the difficulty of finding suitable matches. DHS recognizes the significance of collaborating closely with the youth, their families, and other stakeholders to uncover and address the root causes of their hesitation to accept placement. Children in foster care during FY25 as of May 6th, 2025, who were in care for less than 12 months had an average of 2.0 moves per 1,000 days of care. Children in foster care during FY25 as of May 6th, 2025, who were in care between 12 and 24 months had an average of 1.0 moves per 1,000 days of care. Children in foster care in FY25 as of May 6th, 2025, who were in care greater than 24 months had an average of 0.9 moves per 1,000 days. For all categories of length of stay, Philadelphia was below the most recently available national average of 4.48 moves per 1,000 days.

3. **Overall permanency and timely reunification** continue to be an ongoing challenge for Philadelphia. Total children attaining permanency is lower than previous fiscal years and timeliness of permanency remains lower than previous years. Permanencies have decreased every full fiscal year since FY 2021. In Fiscal Year 2025, there were 808 total permanencies, which is lower than FY 2024 (1,027). In FY25, Reunification accounted for 33% of all permanence. These figures underscore the ongoing challenge and highlight why addressing this challenge is a key priority for DHS. DHS remains committed to building an array of programs that support timely reunification and permanency, further increasing our ability to achieve positive outcomes in this area. This includes increased utilization in programs such as the Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM) and Family Team Conferencing (FTC). Since our last submission, DHS has issued the RFP, selected a provider, and implemented the **Visitation House model**, an additional strategy to address the challenge, which is further described in section 1-3c. *Service Array.*

- ☐ Summarize additional information, including findings, related to the CCYAs annual inspection and Quality Services Review (QSR)/Child Family Service Review (CFSR) findings that will impact the county's planning and resource needs for FYs 2025-26 and 2026-27.

For the FY25 Annual State Evaluation (ASE), the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Southeast Regional Office of Children, Youth, and Families assessed 85 cases and 527 Human Resources records, resulting in 16 citations. DHS was issued a provisional license at the time of the writing of this narrative.

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Recommendations from the ASE encompass various measures, including in-person visits to CUAs to address non-compliance areas, updating the grievance procedure policy for children in out-of-home care, addressing cited practice issues during supervision and ongoing training, conducting quality checks via case file reviews, using clearance trackers to ensure staff have necessary clearances, and establishing a process to connect new hires to Mandated Reporting training.

CFSR activities for Round 4 will resume during the remainder of FY25 throughout FY26. A new CFSR activity includes a CFSR pilot, in which 4 cases will be selected to gauge CFSR processes and activities for the full round in FY26. CFSR has historically been conducted in person, but onsite case review activities will for FY25 and FY26 will remain virtual at this time. Philadelphia will continue to have the largest number of families interviewed compared to the other seven counties in the state that participate in the CFSR. The number of families involved and interviewed during the CFSR is typically 21 families in Philadelphia. There were 21 cases of the total 65 cases that were to be reviewed as part of Philadelphia's sample based on the sampling stratification that was submitted by PA DHS and approved by ACF. This considers the size of our system and the number of out of home cases.

- ☐ Identify the top three successes and challenges realized by JPO since its most recent NBPB submission.

SUCSESSES

1. **Serving and supervising youth safely in their own homes and communities through the expansion of diversion and prevention programming for youth impacted by or at risk of justice involvement.** During the 2024 calendar year, 2,077 juveniles were supported in their own homes and communities by formal court supervision, an 8.69% increase of youth remaining at home compared to the previous calendar year 2023 (n= 1,911). Additionally, 834 juveniles were successfully closed from formal supervision services, which is an increase in closures of 37.17% from the previous calendar year. Through deliberate stakeholder collaboration, the Juvenile Probation Department has been successfully able to continue its Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) mission for youth and families in Philadelphia, as apparent through the following programmatic supports that continue to aid in this success:
 - a. The Balanced and Restorative Justice Approach has continued to be pivotal in JPO's interactions, interventions, services, and support to youth and families in Philadelphia, which is evidenced by very encouraging measures for the 834 juveniles whose cases were closed in calendar year 2024. This approach continues to provide services such as purposeful and engaging outreach via field contacts within the communities as well as residential facilities, sports instruction through Sports for Juvenile Justice (SJJ), record expunction, confiscation of illegal firearms and narcotics, restitution collection for victims of juvenile crime, and completion of community services by youth under probation supervision. An overall 15,274 field contacts were conducted by JPOs to purposefully engage youth and families in their own communities and at residential facilities. Notably, 95.2% of the 834 juveniles who were formally discharged from supervision successfully completed supervision without a new juvenile offense resulting in a Consent Decree or Adjudication of Delinquency.

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b. The Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring program continues to serve as an alternative to secure detention or placement, enabling youth to remain safely in their communities. As Juvenile Probation continues to strengthen community-based programming, the use of GPS remains increasingly important for at-risk youth. In 2024, the GPS unit monitored 1,885 youth, with 920 monitored as an alternative to detention and 925 as an alternative to placement. The utilization of GPS monitors may contribute to savings in juvenile justice secure detention. We are requesting maintained funding for purchasing GPS units. Not only does the GPS programs provide additional opportunities for the youth in their own communities and promote the reduced use of residential placement services, it also has shown to be cost effective, in saving taxpayer dollars and lowering per diem costs. Additionally, there has been a steady increase of youth successfully discharged from GPS year to year. With the continued successful use of the GPS program, DHS is requesting maintenance funding.

c. Additionally, Community Supervision continues to be an essential part of treatment and rehabilitation for our most vulnerable youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System. While on supervision, youth are required to work on skill building activities and cognitive behavioral interventions that are part of their case plans. Within Juvenile Probation, there are 10 probations units that meet regularly with youth and families in communities across Philadelphia. In 2024, field, virtual, and telephone contacts have been successful in engaging youth and families to aid youth on supervision and promote connectivity. Community-based JPOs supervised over 1,121 youth in 2024. Upon discharge from probation supervision, 64.8% of youth were attending school with passing grades. 105 of those students obtained their High School Diplomas or completed their G.E.D.s. Additionally, 15.4% of youth were employed full or part time. Through the community supervision approach, positive outcomes and family engagement remain paramount in ensuring the youth find success in their goals.

d. Decreased Census at PJJSC has continued to be a goal for JJS. Since our last submission, JJS has continued in its effort to decrease the census within the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC) by prioritizing diversionary and collaborative programming to service our justice-involved youth. As those efforts continue throughout the city and find success in family and community-based alternatives, the volume of youth entering and staying at PJJSC has notably decreased. PJJSC has been under licensure capacity since the previous fiscal year and continues to average around 170. Additionally, within the prior 3-4 months, that number has dropped even more to around 140 youth currently within the detention center. As the census at PJJSC continues to trend downward, DHS and JJS have begun implementing diversionary efforts to support DHSs vision of children and youth thriving in their own homes and communities. Through programs such as Community Supervision (as discussed above) or Intensive Prevention Services (IPS), JJS aims to divert youth from secure detention, prevent recidivism, and support successful reintegration. More information on prevention and intervention programs can be found in Section 1-3c, Community Based Diversionary Service Array.

2. **Strengthening Community-Based Responses for Youth at Risk of Justice System Contact.**

a. Our Community Evening Resource Centers (CERCs) continue to provide programming and services that empower our youth to make appropriate decisions and reduce recidivism through skill-building techniques, counseling, mentors, and

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positive recreational activities. Data suggests that not only are youth attend CERCs but are also staying connected to the programming. During the first three quarters of FY 2025, Community Evening Resource Centers served 1,153 youth over 21,404 visits.

b. Our Intensive Prevention Services (IPS) program serves as a community-based prevention service designed for youth who may be at risk of involvement with the Juvenile Justice System. Tailored for individuals aged 10 to 19 facing challenges within their homes, schools, and communities, IPS offers meaningful on-site activities aimed at preventing further involvement with the juvenile justice system. The number of referrals to intensive prevention services rose from FY20 (N=686) to FY24 (N=991). In the first three quarters of FY 2025, 958 youth have been referred to IPS services, a 44% increase in referrals compared to the same period in FY24 (667 referrals). With a focus on comprehensive family engagement, IPS continues to take a multifaceted approach to addressing the needs of the youth it serves.

3. Creating a process for family engagement and community collaboration.

Philadelphia DHS and Juvenile Probation continue to foster intentional family engagement through the implementation of interventions that prioritize best outcomes for the youth and families involved with the justice system. The following strategies illustrate our focus on supportive family-based, parent and youth centered programming.

a. Multidisciplinary Discharge Planning (MDP) meetings continue to support the successful reintegration of our youth with the collaboration of various agencies and stakeholders. Key participants of the meetings include the youths and their families as we prioritize our goals to ensure we are building off the family's strengths with an emphasis on ways to prevent re-entry into the justice system. MDP meetings ensure all participants have the same goal in mind and that the youth and family are connected to services to help propel them to those goals. With this collaboration, we can continue to exemplify our commitment to intentional family engagement.

b. Juvenile Probation Community Relations Unit continues to engage community members to provide information on services and supports that Family Courts offers. The unit works to gather all resources that would assist JPOs, probationers, and the families with hopes of improving outcomes. This unit not only provides resources to the communities it serves but also facilitates wellness events for staff, community events for youth at PJJSC and youth in the community by collaborating with Philadelphia School District to promote safety within schools and collaborating with Philadelphia Mural Arts Program for youth to experience enriching lessons through art. The JPO Community Relations Unit has been instrumental in its continued efforts of providing supports, promoting wellness and safety, and engagement of youth at all levels within the community.

CHALLENGES

1. Staff retention at Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Service Center.

JJS has continued in its efforts of stabilizing the number of staff to combat this challenge. Since last submission, the number of staff within the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center has increased and on-boarding numbers have remained consistent. JJS continues to prioritize regular job announcements, onboarding new JDC staff quarterly, and focused on restructuring training and professional development to promote efficiency in meeting regulatory staff training obligations. PJJSC has filled approximately 90% of the JDS supervisory vacancies, strengthening supervisory oversight for residential operations. While PJJSC has achieved a greater staffing capacity, it also has a retention rate of approximately 80% for JDCs in FY25. A well-trained and stable workforce remains a priority for ensuring high-quality care and

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supervision of youth at PJJSC and JJS will continue to prioritize ways to ensure recruitment and retention numbers continue to improve.

2. Youth involved community gun violence resulting in juvenile justice involvement.

Since last submission, the Philadelphia youth involvement in gun violence has continued a steady decline. Between 2019 and 2024, Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) records show 4,640 incidents of youth (age 0-25 years old) gun violence victimization involving 4,425 unique youth. 19% (889) of these incidents resulted in a fatality. The number of gun violence incidents with a youth victim has decreased by 59% from peak of 1,020 in 2020 to 624 in 2024. Over the same period, Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) records show 1,767 incidents where a young person (age 0-25 years old) was arrested for involvement in gun violence. 1,392 unique youth were arrested over this period. The number of gun violence arrests involving an alleged youth perpetrator has decreased 33% from 372 in 2021 to 250 in 2024. This decrease echoes the decline in the number of youth gun violence victimization incidents by year. These trends in youth gun violence involvement reflect broader city trends. Over the same period, the Police Department's Crime Statistics website shows a 52% decrease in homicides from 562 homicides in 2021 to 269 in 2024. Although gun charges have slightly declined, they are still higher than pre-covid numbers.

3. Reintegration efforts to support the reduction of recidivism with justice-involved youth.

The reintegration service continuum is a challenge, as youth returning home from Juvenile Justice placements are at high risk to recidivate within 8 to 12 months post discharge. There is a critical need to strengthen reintegration efforts and develop programs that offer structure and support to youth returning from placement. Current reintegration services are insufficient to meet the complex needs of these youth. A comprehensive reintegration approach should include robust workforce development initiatives. These efforts must focus on preparing youth for employment, connecting them with job opportunities, and providing mentorship to support their reentry and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Employment has been shown to significantly decrease the chances of youth engaging in delinquent behavior or transitioning into the adult correctional system. Due to this challenge, JJS has made substantial efforts to address the need for successful reintegration by prioritizing the utilization and the expansion of programs that aim to combat re-entry into the justice system by providing supportive services such as the **Cornerstone Reintegration program**, which JJS is preparing for implementation to help connect newly discharged youth to a support system and provide treatment programs and case management. Additional information on the supportive intervention programs used to address this challenge can be found in section 1-3c. *Service Array Challenges*.

- ☐ Summarize any additional areas, including efforts related to the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) and the data and trends related to the Youth Level of Service (YLS) domains and risk levels impacting the county's planning and resource needs for FYs 2025-26 and 2026-27.

The Philadelphia Juvenile Probation Office (Juvenile Probation) and DHS-Division Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) remains committed to providing programming practices relative to the most current and valid research findings. Research has shown that when applying effective programming, there is a reduction in recidivism. Within the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES), there are four stages to assist local jurisdictions to effectively implement programming: Stage 1, Readiness, Stage 2, Initiation, Stage 3, Behavioral Change,

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and Stage 4, Refinement. The JJSES emphasizes the needs of the youth and their family, that assists the JPO with selecting the appropriate community-based resources for the youth.

An important portion of this strategy has shown to be the Youth Level of Service (YLS) tool. The YLS tool considers the youth and their family's criminogenic needs and risk level to determine the appropriate level of supervision, overall risks, and services required. The YLS tool remains a consistent and successful instrument, with increased numbers in completed YLS assessments. With the YLS tools, we can see that when the appropriate services are provided for the top 3 criminogenic needs, the risk to reoffend can decrease. Additionally, the Graduated Response Approach is another core aspect of the JJSES, which allows juveniles the opportunity to earn incentives for completing and meeting goals, short-term and long-term, and receiving interventions for non-compliance.

Community Evening Resource Centers (CERCs) continue to allow youth to remain in their communities with meaningful programming under structured supervision. More information on CERCs can be found on page 23.

Juvenile Probation and Philadelphia DHS supports Pennsylvania's Juvenile Task Force recommendation to expand the Police School Diversion program to include a pre-arrest diversion program for youth with misdemeanor charges. This initiative aims to reduce minority youth involvement in the justice system by diverting them to community-based interventions. By focusing on rehabilitation and support, the program addresses minor offenses through community-based solutions that tackle underlying issues and promote positive youth development. In addition to the programmatic investments in section 1-3c, Service Array. For FYs 26-27:

Juvenile Probation and Philadelphia DHS have requested continued funding in several areas to support its initiatives, including:

- Graduated Response incentives, which continues to help juvenile offenders reach their goals through incentives and provide interventions when necessary.
- Global Positioning System unit which continues to be a successful alternative to secure detention and prioritizes Philadelphia County's goal of keeping youth safe within their own homes and communities.
- Gender-specific program into the services offered to juvenile offenders involved in violent crimes or gun violence. This program aims to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of female youth in the juvenile justice system, including those who have experienced trauma, poverty, sexual violence, and school suspension or expulsion.
- Gun violence prevention, including research planning-project manager, program implementation-project manager, and the development and expansion of gun violence prevention programs throughout the city.
- The Community Service and Restitution Fund, to address the increase in restitution amounts of juveniles.
- The Probation Community Relations Unit, to support community engagement efforts.

Our support of the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office diversionary programs helps to combat youth violence and involvement in the juvenile justice system.

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office and Philadelphia DHS have requested new or expanded funding for the following services to further enhance our Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES):

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- Additional staff for Cora Family Advocacy counseling services: Since last submission allocated funds were used to hire two additional counselors and this significantly improved service capacity and access for youth transitioning back into the community. More information on the CORA expansion request can be found on page 26.
- PJJSC is preparing for the implementation of technology-based communication and educational resources within our juvenile justice facility and enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the day-to-day functionalities of the PJJSC residential staff by way of centralizing the collection and oversight of pertinent operational information to ensure the safety and security of residents and staff.
- Intensive Prevention Services (IPS), to continue the successful diversionary efforts, we are requesting an expansion to better serve justice involved youth across the city by improving service quality, extending support beyond program completion, enhancing staffing, and increasing capacity to meet rising referrals through a new citywide police diversion initiative.
- YesCare Corporation, an expansion has been requested to hire additional full and part-time nursing staff that would be able to provide on-going 24-hour, 7 days a week medical service to youth at PJJSC. Staffing enhancements will provide the necessary support to meet the medical needs of the youth, improve operational efficiency, and ensure continuous, high-quality healthcare services.
- Cornerstone Reintegration Service continues to offer case management and supportive services 45-60 days prior to a youth's discharge from justice placements with the possibility of extended services for up to 5 months, proving to be substantial for youth to reintegrate successfully. An expansion to this program will provide vital support for youth re-entering their communities, reducing recidivism, and improving educational and employment outcomes.
- Workforce Development for Reintegrated Youth is a new program aimed at supporting youth recently released from juvenile detention facilities by providing pre-employment training, connect youth to meaningful job opportunities, and offer wraparound educational support. The youth are assigned trained mentors who will guide them through the critical transition period and through this intentional mentorship and best-practice strategies, the program aims to increase graduation and overall stability for the youth.
- In-Home Detention continues to serve as a detention alternative to residential detention at the PJJSC and the CBDS, allowing youth to remain in their communities as they await their adjudicatory hearing. An expansion of this program will increase the amount of youth being served in their own homes and communities, reduce the use of residential facilities, reduce community gun violence, and link youth to community-based programming and trade/vocational opportunities.
- Evening Reporting Centers, continue to provide nightly programming for youth and support youth at different stages of the court process. An expansion has been requested to hire additional staff to serve more youth and continue in the effort to decrease the amount of youth requiring placement at residential facilities and continue to offer counseling, tutoring, BARJ, conflict resolution, job readiness, community vocational training linkages, assistance with obtaining vital documents, recreation, nightly meals, and transportation.
- Urban Youth Alliance (Philly Connect) continues to utilize individualized mentoring and intense participant engagement strategies aimed to help youth develop goals through community and social connection.
- Entrepreneurship (Glitz and Glamour) continues to empower youth through creativity and entrepreneurial work, providing youth with resources, mentorship, and support needed.
- Educators 4 Education (E4E), continues to provide mentorship in a one-on-one and group setting following a trauma-based approach, offering both school and community-based

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mentoring, E4E provides tailored programmatic needs for each youth involving mentorship, case management, paid employment opportunities, and academic achievement.

- Career Readiness (CAPP), continues to provide career readiness skills, offering customized training programs that highlight core skills required for youth to pass the construction and building trade unions apprenticeship tests.
- Collective Climb continues to help youth resolve conflicts through personal reflection and honest face-to-face conversations with their loved ones and individuals impacted by their actions ensuring positive outcomes for all involved parties and aiding in healthy and successful reintegration.

- **REMINDER:** This is intended to be a high-level description of county strengths, challenges, and forward direction. Specific details regarding practice and resource needs will be captured in other sections of the budget submission.

1-2: Determination of Need through Collaboration Efforts

- Respond to the following questions.

- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of staff, consumers, communities, and stakeholders in determining how best to provide services that meet the identified needs of children, youth, and families in the county. Describe the county's use of data analysis with the stakeholders toward the identification of practice improvement areas. Counties must utilize a Data Analysis Team as described in the NBPB Bulletin Guidelines, Section 2-4: Program Improvement Strategies. The Data Analysis Team membership should be reflective of the entities identified. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improvement. Counties do NOT need to identify activities with EACH entity highlighted in the instruction guidelines but provide an overview of activities and process by which input has been gathered and utilized in the planning process. Address engagement of the courts, service providers, and County Juvenile Probation Offices separately (see next three questions).

In the preparation of this year's Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB), Philadelphia DHS engaged stakeholders, including staff, clients, providers, legal advocates, and community advocates, to share our data analysis and identify areas for practice improvement in the following venues:

- Quarterly Child Welfare Operations (CWO) Collaborative meetings, which include both DHS and Community Umbrella Agency (CUA) operations.
- Structured presentations with youth at the Achieving Independence Center, biological parents at the Achieving Reunification Center, CUAs, provider agencies, attorneys, and staff across several DHS divisions.
- Individual meetings with members of the legal community and community advocates.

In July 2024, DHS held a public hearing to discuss the Department's priorities for FY 26, including the NBPB and crucial services for families and children served by DHS and Juvenile Probation. Advocacy groups, elected officials, contracted service providers, and DHS staff were invited to provide feedback.

In addition to the above core meeting and public hearings, other venues for gathering this information included:

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- Systems of Care work being led by the City's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disabilities (DBHIDS), Office of Addiction Services (OAS).
- JPO units continuously collaborate with Pennsylvania State Police, Philadelphia Police Department, Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General, Septa Police Department, and multiple neighboring PA counties to ensure the needs of our youth involved in the justice system are addressed and those families involved in the justice system can receive the appropriate programming to address any gaps.
- JJS collaborated with Juvenile Probation, the Defender Association, District Attorney's Office, School District, PADHS, and other stakeholders in the ongoing implementation of several core strategies of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).
- JJS leadership facilitates multiple convenings that promote cross-system collaboration. The PJJSC Social Services staff conduct multi-discipline team reviews. Meeting participants include, but are not limited to, the following: youth, parents/legal guardians, probation officers, Community Behavioral Health (CBH) representatives, University of Penn/Hall Mercer Clinicians, Defender Association of Philadelphia, and reintegration programs. The purpose of this meeting is to assess the needs of youth discharging from detention placement and develop appropriate plans to support youth transitions. Additionally, the PJJSC' leadership engages in quarterly meetings with key external stakeholder leadership to review the population census, systemic challenges, and the capacity of the service continuum for juvenile justice. Participants include Family Court, Juvenile Probation, the Defender Association, the District Attorney's Office and CBH. The purpose of the meeting is to remove systemic barriers that contribute to long stays for youth in placement, disproportionality, and recidivism.
- Philadelphia's Juvenile Probation management team collaborated with county and state committees, including the Juvenile Court Judge's Commission (JCJC) Technology Committee, Graduated Response Committee, Local Regional Planning Groups, and PA Justice Network.
- Philadelphia County participated in Georgetown University's Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities Certification and Capstone Project and continues to utilize the knowledge gathered to address racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. **Led by Family Court Administration and Juvenile Probation, with partners such as the Philadelphia Police Department, community organizations, the District Attorney's Office, and the Defender Association.** Implemented in late 2023, the capstone project expanded the school-Based Diversion program to include a pre-arrest diversion for community offenses. The project is now embedded within processes of the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC) which is operated by the City of Philadelphia.

By looking closely at different data points, like child maltreatment rates, participation in family support programs, foster care placements, how resources are used, and overall outcomes. DHS has gained meaningful insight into where we need to continue to improve to support children, youth, and families. In this NBPB submission, we have outlined the steps we continue to take to provide better services and outcomes for families across Philadelphia County.

- Summarize activities related to active engagement of contracted service providers in identifying service level trends, strengths and gaps in service arrays and corresponding resource needs. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improvement in the engagement of service providers in the NBPB process.

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The PMT Data Analytics team within Performance Management and Technology (PMT) actively collaborates with contracted service providers to identify service trends, strengths, gaps, and resource needs. This includes holding regular meetings to review progress, address service delivery challenges, and explore opportunities for program expansion. Monthly and quarterly data reviews help address identified gaps and ensure providers receive the necessary support. Additionally, providers are expected to engage clients for feedback to ensure services meet community needs. Annual evaluations conducted by the PMT division also help maintain service quality.

Other key activities such as Closing the Loop meetings, quality assurance sessions, site visits, and AFCARS reconciliation calls support contract monitoring and annual evaluations. These efforts are essential for tailoring services to children, youth, and families while ensuring efficient use of resources. For PJJSC programs, all contracted providers are required to participate in monthly meetings with PJJSC leadership to address concerns, examine service trends, and identify areas for improvement and resource planning. Providers are provided with daily, weekly and monthly reports to support in trend identification and supporting the day-to-day work.

DHS has not encountered any challenges in collaborating with our contracted provider community regarding improving service provider engagement in the NBPB process.

- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of the courts in the NBPB process, specifically identification of strengths and gaps in service arrays and corresponding resource needs. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improved engagement with the courts.

The DHS Commissioner and other cabinet members continue to maintain regular meetings with court officials, including the Administrative Judge, Chief of Juvenile Probation, and Court Administration. These meetings serve to pinpoint both strengths and gaps within the current service continuum, along with corresponding resource requirements. By engaging in ongoing discussions and consultations, both parties strive to enhance service delivery and outcomes by scrutinizing trends in service utilization and identifying areas ready for improvement.

The Court continues to actively participate in various activities, such as providing feedback on competency, practice, and training needs, and engaging in data review and analysis. Overall, this process enables DHS to allocate resources effectively and continuously improve service delivery and outcomes.

- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of the County's Juvenile Probation Office in the NBPB process, specifically the identification of in-home, prevention or rehabilitative services needed to assist with discharge of delinquent youth from out-of-home care or decreasing recidivism. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improved engagement in the NBPB process.

DHS continues to actively engage the Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) in the NBPB process by working collaboratively to identify in-home, prevention, or rehabilitative services needed to support the discharge of delinquent youth from out-of-home care or decrease recidivism. This collaboration involves identifying gaps and challenges in the service array and developing solutions to address those gaps.

Since our last submission, DHS and JPO have significantly improved coordination efforts between Juvenile Probation and JJS, as identified by our increase diversionary efforts leading to

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decreased community gun violence, decreased PJJSC census, and increase in diversionary program utilization. Both parties have continued to enhance communication and partnership efforts, and these outcomes have provided and contributed to our successes since our last submission.

- ☐ Identify any strengths and challenges engaging and coordinating with law enforcement on Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Teams (MDIT) and in joint investigations of child abuse.

DHS continues to maintain a well-established relationship with law enforcement on facilitating Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Teams (MDIT) and in joint investigations of child abuse. Our Philadelphia Safety Collaborative (PSC) model is a one-stop, child-friendly facility where the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS) Specialty Investigations, Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) Special Victims Unit, Philadelphia Children's Alliance (PCA), the District Attorney's Office, behavioral health agencies, Children's Collaborative Clinic, and DHS Nursing staff are co-located. These multi-disciplinary investigative partners are committed to adhering to collaboratively developed procedures and using a team approach to investigate reports of child sex abuse and child victims of human trafficking (CVHT).

PCA continues to conduct regular program committee meetings to evaluate and enhance the operations of the PSC, including developing and revising protocols, and addressing systems issues. All participating agencies continue to adhere to established protocols for forensic interviewing, electronic recording, medical assessments, victim support services, mental health treatment and referral, and case tracking. The goal of this collaboration is to promote continued investigatory and prosecution efforts, as well as safety, healing, and restorative justice for children and youth who have experienced abuse and victimization.

1-3 Program and Resource Implications

- ➔ **Do not address the initiatives in Section 1-3 unless requested below;** address any resource needs related to all initiatives by identifying and addressing within the ADJUSTMENT TO EXPENDITURE request.

1-3b. Workforce

Please respond to the following questions regarding the county's current workforce recruitment and retention efforts:

- ☐ Identify successes the county has experienced implementing recruitment and retention strategies since its most recent NBPB submission.

Philadelphia County continues in its efforts to recruit and retain a stable and skilled workforce despite the ongoing challenge of ensuring a high-quality agency and provider workforce. DHS has continued in the implementation of quarterly classes for Social Work Service Manager (SWSM) Staff and Juvenile Detention Counselors (JDCs), bringing on larger groups, regularly announcing exams and open positions, and covering all costs of required clearances, which has proven successful. DHS notes that while recruitment efforts are successful, retention has become an area of note and efforts to also prioritize retention have also been continued. DHS continues to offer competitive salaries and invest in the profession development of staff. Additionally, DHS has continued the use of the Bridge Unit, where newly hired staff receive continual training with close supervision before their final assignment. This effort has shown

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some improvement in retention among newer staff. Another successful effort has been the hiring of Social Service Aides, who are able to tackle some of the administrative work of DHS Investigative Staff, providing support to staff, as discussed in the Executive Summary section. DHS continues to find success in these efforts with a steady increase of new hires and retention rates. The retention rate for SWSMs increased from 89.96% in FY24 to 90.20% in FY25. Similarly, the retention rate for JDCs increased from 60.33% in FY24 to 81.33% in FY25. The Department has also seen a retention rate increase from 86.32% in FY24 to 90.34% in FY25. These strategic initiatives and adjustments, and those further demonstrated in section 3-1c Complement of this narrative, have collectively supported our efforts to address the challenge of maintaining a more stable and well-staffed workforce within DHS.

- ☐ Identify major challenges impacting the county's workforce recruitment and retention experience since its most recent NBPB submission.

In addition to the national labor trends impacting the human service sector and despite our incremental progress over the last year, Philadelphia County continues to analyze recruitment and retention to sustain a stable workforce, particularly in our investigative units and at the PJJSC Based on exit interview and survey data, the most common reasons for employee departures include personal reasons, such as family commitments and health issues. Employees specifically noted that the work/life balance is hard to maintain, especially with mandatory overtime, the stressful and unsafe working conditions, feelings of lack of support from leadership, and no increase incentives this fiscal year. Voluntary resignations occur, often due to employees finding better job opportunities elsewhere, highlighting the competitive job market. These factors collectively underscore the need for funding maintenance for our key strategies in section 3-1c Complement of this narrative to support efforts to address these challenges.

- ☐ Describe the county's efforts and strategies to address employee recruitment and retention challenges and needs since its most recent NBPB submission. Identify whether the county has obtained any data or collected feedback on effort/strategies implemented to assess effectiveness.

*This question will be answered after the public hearing.

Philadelphia continues to take a multi-pronged approach to addressing recruitment and retention of qualified staff as detailed in the responses to the above questions about successes and challenges. Additional information can be found in the response in Section 3-1c *Complement*.

- ☐ Identify key areas where technical assistance may be needed in this area.

None currently.

1-3c. Service Array

Please respond to the following questions regarding the county's current service array and identification of gap areas that will be addressed through the plan:

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- ☐ Through the data analysis and stakeholder discussions in the development of the plan, identify any strengths in existent resources and service array available to address the needs of the children, youth and families served.

DHS' data analysis and stakeholder discussions identified these STRENGTHS in existing resources and service array:

The Professional Resource Parent Model (PRP) - continues to be a strength as this model aids in the reduction of the use of congregate care and allows for the provision of an intensive, highly coordinated, trauma-informed, and individualized approach to the foster home placement of children and youth who have complex emotional and behavioral needs. Since our last submission, DHS has continued to work toward decreasing the percentage of youth in residential treatment. Currently, there are 19 certified PRP parents and 18 children placed in the PRP homes. Youth placed in PRP homes are engaged in clinical services and reunification engagement. As of January 2025, the cumulative average of youth stabilization in a PRP home is 11 months. As of April 2025, there are 4 youth on the waiting list. However, the list has been as high as 15 youth over the past fiscal year with the longest waiting period of 15 months. **DHS is requesting funding maintenance** of this program to address and support family-based, and community-based placement options and the reduction in the use of residential placements as noted in the executive summary.

The Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) framework - FEI has played an important role in driving the positive trend of keeping more children safely in their homes or with relatives by promoting meaningful family engagement, strengthening collaboration between the Court and DHS, and prioritizing the overall well-being of children and families. Building on the baseline data from Calendar Year 2020 (CY20), which revealed that 72% of children participating in Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings (CRRFMs) were able to remain at home or be placed with kin, DHS continued its efforts in CY24 and conducted 987 CRRFMs, serving 1,426 children. Of those children who started at home (n=685) at the time the CRRFM was conducted in CY24, 83% (n=568) remained at home, 9% (n=63) stayed with kin. **DHS is committed to sustaining this progress through ongoing collaboration with our stakeholders to further enhance these positive outcomes.**

Kinship Navigator Program Model - continues to establish a strong network of kinship support for youth in out-of-home placements by identifying and engaging kinship options for children and youth, both in residential placement and non-emergency situations. Since our last submission, DHS has submitted 160 referrals to Kinship Navigator and those referrals have been generated from the DHS childcare room, shelter care, congregate care, specialized care facilities, and delinquent facilities. Of those youth referred, the provider has accomplished the following: 52 identified kinship caregivers, 36 identified kinship supports, 15 reunifications supported, 7 declined services/AWOL, 6 unidentified supports, and 4 remained in care with kinship support. **DHS continues to support the development of highly trained professional resource parents, identifying and removing barriers to support kinship caregiver and supporting those caregivers through foster Care Training supports.**

Aligning prevention resources: To better serve older youth, DHS has established an integrated leadership and management structure within the Older Youth Services Region. This ensures comprehensive oversight of all aspects of our work with this demographic, including managing Older Youth Transition meetings, Resumption of Jurisdiction, National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)/Credit Check, mentoring programs facilitated through Girls Track,

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Boys Track, and the Philadelphia Youth Leadership Council, Independent Living Services, Community-Based Older Youth Contracts, and the Achieving Independence Center (AIC). As part of our commitment to support older youth, we continue to leverage the Fostering Youth Independence (FYI) program, which has remained a strong resource supporting young adults providing housing vouchers and support for up to three years to individuals aged 18-23 who have aged out of foster care and are now experiencing or at risk of homelessness. As of FY24 Q2 40 housing vouchers were provided to young adults. Currently, DHS has been able to serve 332 families and young adults with housing assistance. **In FY25-26, DHS is ready for implementation of the additional funds to expand these resources related to serving older youth.**

Fostering Youth Independence (FYI) continues to provide housing vouchers and support for up to 3 years to individuals aged 18-23 who have aged out of foster care and are now experiencing or at risk of becoming homeless. There has been a steady increase of youth receiving vouchers, each fiscal year these vouchers have been successfully allocated resulting in those youth obtaining safe and stable housing necessary to support their transition into adulthood. DHS received 75 FYI vouchers from HUD in FY 22 which were fully allocated. This positive trend continues as our older youth continue to receive support through these housing vouchers.

The Crisis Access Link Model (CALM) CALM is a short-term, voluntary mobile service that supports children, youth, and their resource parents. By providing rapid, solution-focused interventions, education, and connections to other supportive services, CALM aims to stabilize placements, reduce referrals to higher levels of care, and keep children and youth connected to their communities and support systems. Since its inception, CALM has assisted a total of 659 cases, serving 539 unique youth. Additionally, only 89 youth (those with complex emotional and behavioral health needs) have received support multiple times through CALM, with some accessing the service more than twice. Presently, CALM is operational in six out of the ten geographical areas served by Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs). During FY25, CALM has served a total of 344 cases, serving 294 unique youth. A full system integration is anticipated by the end of FY26. A **funding maintenance** is required for non-Medicaid reimbursable components, such as the Coping Kits and a program analyst for the Philadelphia Crisis Line, who will coordinate across agencies and providers and handle quality assurance, program evaluation, and performance management of CALM.

The Food and Wellness Network (FAWN) helps to maintain children in their own homes and divert families from formal child welfare services by serving families in Philadelphia affected by food insecurity and in need of additional wellness resources. FAWN's model revolves around establishing a comprehensive wellness hub, offering personalized support services, health and wellness programs, and connections to community resources to address the root causes of food insecurity. By utilizing food as a starting point, FAWN challenges traditional food pantry approaches and moves towards providing trauma-informed, equity-focused services to empower communities to improve their health, resilience, and self-sufficiency. FAWN is currently implemented in two locations in Philadelphia: the Tilden Community School Model, located in Tilden Middle School in Southwest Philadelphia in an area served by one of our Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs), and the Rising Sun Community Wellness Hub Model at the Rising Sun Health Center in the Olney/Logan section of Philadelphia in an area served by four of our CUAs. The FAWN models provide three main pillars of service: food distribution, case management, and health and wellness programming. Both locations include

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food pantries and formula/diaper/wipes distribution, connection with community resources, and workshops such as cooking and nutrition classes, financial literacy, chronic disease management, and wellness and wellbeing workshops related to the social determinants of health. A case management program began in 2024 which included a six-month one-on-one support to improve self-efficacy and self-sufficiency and increase family stability. FAWN conducted a total of 46 workshops in 2024, with plans to track client attendance starting in the summer of 2025.

In FY25 FAWN served a total of 4,360 unique clients and 1,528 families, including 710 new families through its food distribution services. Recognizing the consistent need for food resources and support in systematically disinvested communities, FAWN strives to provide ongoing assistance and empowerment to build healthier and more resilient communities. **In FY 25-26, DHS is ready for implementation of the expansion of this model.** The anticipated number of unique families served for FY2026 is around 2,200. While aspects such as health monitoring and client feedback surveys are not currently tracked, they will be tracked in the future.

OCF-Prevention: OCF continues in its efforts to utilize these proven strategies to realize DHS' success of more youth remaining safely in their home and communities. By addressing barriers before formal child welfare involvement and supporting vulnerable families and children with educational and behavioral needs, OCF can continue in this mission to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children it serves.

As mentioned in the executive summary, OCF continues to make significant progress in its support of students with special or complex needs through its hiring of skilled and dedicated staff to provide direct support. OCF continues to maximize allocated funds to increase staff wages, and ensure the youth served are adequately supported. Additionally, an RFP was released to identify new capacity-building resources for providers, to expand resources further and extend the reach to students and families in need or at risk. OCF has also continued to expand the Integrated Case Management into all Community Schools, supporting families by connecting them to resources that promote and prioritize stabilization before entering the child welfare system. Additionally, OCF continues to support Early Intervention Truancy Services, addressing barriers to case closure and increasing attendance for youth facing further discipline due to truancy. OCF's Truancy Intervention and Prevention Services (TIPS) has continued to coordinate and facilitate services for those children, youth, and families who are identified as truant in collaboration with system partners to provide early intervention, regional truancy court assistance, and family court assistance. **An expansion of this service** has been requested to add an additional case manager to continue in the support of families facing truancy.

Additionally, Career Connected Learning PHL (C2L-PHL), continues to be a collaborative effort between the OCF, DHS, Philadelphia Works, Inc., and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), ensuring that students are engaged in meaningful on-the-job experiences that expose them to career options and pathways, leading to self-empowerment and career and personal advancement. **An expansion has been requested for this program to meet the demand of youth workforce opportunities.** Year after year, C2L-PHL has solicited between 13,000-18,000 applicants for between 5,000-8,000 slots.

Philly Families CAN (PF-CAN) Support Line: The Support Line continues to provide resource connection and home visiting support to families with children ages 0-5. PF-CAN received referrals for 721 families. The primary referring providers were medical professionals representing 24% of the referrals, with social media/website referrals accounting for 19%.

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Among all referrals made to PF-CAN, the Centralized Intake Coordinators were able to complete an intake assessment for 35% of families. Of the families with completed intakes, all were referred to a home visiting program or had a soft referral to another community resource. The Concrete Goods Fund became active March 2023, and PF-CAN became the sole distributor on July 1, 2024. From October 1, 2024- March 30, 2025, approximately \$380,000 of the concrete goods budget was utilized to support families throughout Philadelphia. These funds have directly assisted 257 families, comprising 570 children. The budget was used to provide financial assistance towards housing, utilities, and furniture. 41% or \$157,298.80 of the funding was used to support housing related needs including rent or mortgage arrears and security deposits for new housing or leasing. 23% or \$86,454.15 was used to buy furniture including beds for children. The Department of Public Health's Division of Maternal, Child, and Family Health (MCFH) currently operates the PF-CAN Support Line, and the goal is to expand this work. The expansion will allow the Support Line to provide resource connection and home visiting to families with children aged up to age 17. This became effective on January 6, 2025. Also, the expansion will allow for the prioritization of the development and tracking of service slots across City of Philadelphia departments that serve children and families in the top 25% of census tracts with the most reports to DHS. As implementation of the expansion launches, an increase in the number of families referred to PF-CAN is expected due to expansion of services for families with children ages 4-17 years, the support navigation through eNoble, and the connection of streamlined services through the Concrete Goods Fund.

DHS is requesting additional funding for the following three strategies that will further support our families and provide preventative and supplementary services. First, we have expanded Philadelphia's existing PF-CAN from serving families with children aged 0 – 5 to families with children up to age 17, with resource connection and home visits. Second, we will be developing and tracking prioritized service slots across the city of Philadelphia departments that serve children and families in the top 25% of census tracts with the most reports to DHS. Within these hot spot census tracts, we will work with the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) to connect families referred to the PF-CAN with all public benefits for which they are eligible. CEO is collocated at Congreso de Latinos Unidos, which is one of DHS' Family Empowerment Centers and a non-profit organization designed to provide parenting, housing, healthcare, domestic violence, employment training and education support to the community. And lastly, the connection to diversionary services to provide community case management to families with children of all ages. Through a tiered expansion approach, referrals to Family Empowerment Centers and Services will be designed to support resource connections with referrals made from PF-CAN. An expansion of these services will enhance our ability to connect families of all ages to diversionary services and community-based case management, supporting early intervention, and reducing the risk of deeper system involvement.

DHS can systematically improve outcomes for youth involved in dependency in part due to the system partnerships which are outlined below. We can continue to promote independence, well-being, and successful outcomes of youth in the child welfare system and strengthen our service array.

- **The Defender Association of Philadelphia's Child Advocacy Unit Peer Program and Youth Action Board:** The Child Advocate Unit (CAU) recognizes that by supporting children and youth and their families through Peer Advocates with lived expertise, the outcomes are positive, consisting of better outcomes for older youth, the identification of appropriate services and systemic improvements. Incorporating peer advocates allows CAU

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to promote the Philadelphia Department of Human Services' goal to becoming an Anti-Racist Department and also plays a crucial role in the FEI goal of enhanced legal representation by improving the CAU interdisciplinary model of representation. Additionally, the Youth Action Board also continues to support our Improving Outcomes for Children (IOC) goals by fostering strong outcomes for youth in our systems by creating a voice for current and former youth served by the Defender Association and serve as an influence on all future youth served in this capacity.'

- **The Support Center for Child Advocates (SCCA) Empowering Older Youth Project:** This project provides specialized services to prepare aging-out youth and young adults to access needed services, stabilize in the family or their residences, participate in education and vocation projects, and transition out of care into stable, productive, independent adulthood. Of the 900+ clients served by Child Advocates each year, approximately 200 are older youth aged 16+ who have experienced abuse and neglect, lack familial support, and need the additional support and attention. In the first three quarters of FY24-25, during the period in which Child Advocates was awarded funding for the Empowering Older Youth Project, Child Advocates has represented 175 youth aged 16 and older. Of the 44 clients aged 16+ whose cases closed since funding began, 17 clients (39%) remained with parent/caregiver, were reunified, or had PLC; 18 clients (41%) aged out at the age of 18+ with adequate supports; 1 client (2%) aged out at the age of 18+ without adequate supports; 3 clients (7%) were adjudicated delinquent or had adult criminal charges; and 5 clients (11%) were missing at the time the case was discharged. Overall, 80% of our older youth clients experienced positive outcomes upon exiting the child welfare system.
- **The CWU Redaction Project** is a crucial initiative that supports the DHS Law Department's obligation to provide client files to requestors in accordance with relevant laws. The CWU manages requests from external entities for files within DHS, including records maintained by Community Umbrella Agencies (CUAs) serving DHS-involved families. The Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law restricts access to family records and investigation files to specific individuals and entities. In 2021, the CWU handled approximately 1,499 requests, with the workload distributed among unit attorneys. However, in 2022, the workload surged to around 3,420 requests due to the resumption of hearings in Domestic Relations and Criminal Courts, many of which were pending from before the pandemic. The expansion of the program is necessary to address the increased volume of requests. This surge has strained the legal staff's capacity to manage their caseloads effectively. Beginning in 2023, the CWU started utilizing document review services from contractors to handle DHS records requests. Three contract attorneys were engaged full-time, but despite their efforts, a significant number of requests remain outstanding. From July 24, 2023, to April 15, 2024, the CWU received 1,101 requests, with the contractor handling 987 of them. **We anticipate that the approval of new funding allocations for the expansion will alleviate this challenge, allowing staff attorneys to focus on advancing the department's priority of timely permanency and reunification for families.**

Additionally, DHS can systematically improve outcomes for youth involved in delinquency service array.

Juvenile Probation Community Relations Unit engages with community members to provide information on services and supports that Family Courts offers. The unit works to gather all resources that would assist JPOs, probationers, and the families with hopes of improving outcomes. This unit not only provides resources to the communities it serves but also facilitates wellness events for staff, community events for youth at PJJSC and youth in the community by collaborating with Philadelphia School District to promote safety within schools and collaborating

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with Philadelphia Mural Arts Program for youth to experience enriching lessons through art. The JPO Community Relations Unit has been instrumental in its continued efforts of providing supports, promoting wellness and safety, and engagement of youth at all levels within the community.

Resources to Divert Youth from JJS Residential placement: These resources have ensured that alternatives to group settings within the juvenile justice system can be provided to youth when it is deemed safe. Utilizing standardized screening tools, such as the PaDRAI and the Youth Level of Service (YLS) facilitate the utilization of community-based services. Community-based services, such as Evening Reporting Centers (ERCs) and In Home Detention (IHD), offer various benefits, including increased family involvement, enhanced youth engagement, and improved outcomes. Additionally, youth under probation can engage in the DHS Community Service and Restitution initiative, enabling them to perform service and earn money to settle restitution fines and close their cases. Additionally, strategies include expanding slots at the Evening Reporting Centers (ERCs) to reduce the census count at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC).

Community Based Diversionary Service Array: The Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) has come under a direct mandate to bolster its diversion activities, and refrain from arresting juveniles and youth under the ages of 18 for lower-level infractions. In anticipation of the influx of juveniles and youth within JJS' diversion continuum, and in collaboration and alignment with the PPD, DHS is requesting assistance in enhancing our current menu of community-based diversionary alternatives to detention to adequately support the PPD and their diversionary efforts.

DHS' Division of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) partnered with the Philadelphia Police Department to expand diversion and intervention programs, including Intensive Prevention Services (IPS), Evening Reporting Centers (ERC) and In-Home Detention (IHD), in high-arrest neighborhoods. Additionally, the implementation of the Group Violence Intervention program further strengthened prevention efforts for youth affiliated with neighborhood groups. These efforts created new referral pathways and increased program capacity across the service continuum.

- **Evening Reporting Centers (ERCs):** Since last submission, the Juvenile Probation Department continues to collaborate with four ERCs, who are instrumental in providing judiciary alternatives to detention and alternatives to placement options as well as assisting youth toward best outcomes at every point of involvement in the Juvenile Justice System.
- **Intensive Prevention Services:** This program continues to serve our youth as an effective diversionary program for those who may encounter the justice system. Since last submission, IPS has already begun to successfully expand to a city-wide model and its partnership with PPD has made that expansion possible. Instead of being arrested, youth now can be referred to IPS by the police, further strengthening trust within the family and communities and fostering positive outcomes. Philadelphia DHS is anticipating additional pathways of diversionary program referrals as well as court ordered community-based referrals in the upcoming fiscal year. In part, the anticipated increase will be a result of stakeholder collaboration and partnerships i.e., Police-School Diversion protocol, Juvenile Access Center (JAC), and the Police Department's upcoming Citywide Diversion initiative. These new pathways will provide a potential influx of more than 200 additional youth per fiscal year. There is an anticipated need not only for diversion programs but for Alternative to Detention (ADT) programs i.e., ERCs. The expanded allocation for staff will be

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needed to adjust to the influx of youth through the new citywide diversion programs pathways/initiatives as some of these youth will be court ordered to ADTs.

- Community Evening Resource Centers (CERCs): CERCs continue to provide programming and services that empower our youth to make appropriate decisions and reduce recidivism, through skill building techniques, counseling, mentors, and positive recreational activities. By providing these intervention services earlier on in the continuum, CERCs have been instrumental in the decreased number of youth entering the juvenile justice system. During the first three quarters of FY 2025, Community Evening Resource Centers served 1,153 youth over 21,404 visits. Data suggests that not only are youth attending CERCs but are continuing to stay connected to the programming.
- The number of referrals to intensive prevention services rose from FY20 (N=686) to FY24 (N=991). In the first three quarters of FY 2025, 958 youth have been referred to IPS services, a 44% increase in referrals compared to the same period in FY24 (667 referrals). With a focus on comprehensive family engagement, IPS continues to take a multifaceted approach to addressing the needs of the youth it serves.
- In-home Detention: See page 11 for more details.

Expansion of capacity for Cora Family Advocacy Program: DHS is requesting funding to increase staffing to expand the capacity of the Cora Family Advocacy program. This program has continued to provide child and family-centered counseling services to families at elevated risk for involvement in the juvenile delinquency and dependency systems. In FY25, increased funding enabled the hiring of two additional counselors and the creation of 12 counseling slots specifically for youth discharged from the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC). These additions significantly improved service capacity and access for youth transitioning back into the community. The increased capacity will help reduce wait times and ensure timely support for youth reentering their communities.

The Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Approach continues to be pivotal in JPO's interactions, interventions, services, and support to youth and families in Philadelphia, as discussed in the Executive Summary JPO Successes the BARJ approach continues to provide services such as purposeful and engaging outreach via field contacts within the communities as well as residential facilities, sports instruction through Sports for Juvenile Justice (SJJ), record expunction, confiscation of illegal firearms and narcotics, restitution collection for victims of juvenile crime, and completion of community services by youth under probation supervision. An overall 15,274 field contacts were conducted by JPOs to purposefully engage youth and families in their own communities and at residential facilities. Notably, 95.2% of the 834 juveniles who were formally discharged from supervision successfully completed supervision without a new juvenile offense resulting in a Consent Decree or Adjudication of Delinquency.

Since last submission, the rate of community gun violence has shown some fluctuations but continue to be a concern for JPO and other justice system community partners for the safety of Philadelphia youth. JPO continues its collaborative work to help address these concerns. JPO's Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) and the Juvenile Enforcement Team (JET) units continue to focus on youth who are most at risk of being involved in gun violence. DHS and JPO recognize the urgent need for additional strategic investments in community-based gun violence prevention programs. Integrating these programs into existing services like Intensive Prevention Services can significantly contribute to efforts aimed at addressing gun violence involving youth. By focusing on prevention, intervention, and support, DHS, JPO, and justice system community

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partners aim to create safer environments for our youth and mitigate the devastating impact of gun violence on their lives.

DHS continues in its support of DAO's Juvenile Diversion Programs and the strengthening and expansion of those diversionary networks that directly contribute to key outcomes, including community safety, victim restoration, and youth accountability. Moreover, sustaining this diversion network is not just beneficial but essential to achieving a balanced justice approach – one that prioritizes rehabilitation without compromising community safety. By supporting and growing our program partnerships, we can ensure that every diverted youth has access to the resources they need to break cycles of justice involvement and contribute positively to their communities.

Each diversionary program is crucial as the effectiveness of juvenile diversion relies heavily on the interconnectedness of its partners. No single organization can meet the diverse needs of justice-involved youth alone. By working together, our partners address critical areas such as education, mental health, workforce development, prosocial skill development, moral reasoning, and wraparound support, creating a holistic support system that reduces recidivism and increases long-term success.

DHS is continually working to improve outcomes for all children and youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice system through the systemic practices outlined below.

Journey to become an Anti-Racist Organization:

Embarking on a transformative journey towards becoming an anti-racist organization has been a cornerstone of Philadelphia DHS's efforts to address systemic inequities within our child welfare system. This commitment to equity for Black and Brown children and families is evident in our ongoing efforts to integrate anti-racist principles across all operational functions. Supporting this critical work requires continued funding to sustain the efforts for FY 26 and FY 27. In FY 25, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) supported DHS in implementing key strategies, such as the revision of the DHS Mission, Vision, and Values from the lens of race equity; established an anti-racist practice model and proactive policy development utilizing race equity impact assessment tools. CSSP introduced the Logic Model to DHS as a road map to obtain desired outcomes from a race equity lens for children and families served by DHS.

Moving forward, **we seek to maintain funding support for FY 26 and FY 27** to embed division-specific anti-racist strategies across all facets of DHS. CSSP will continue to provide technical assistance and support in various areas of this system.

During the past year, Philadelphia DHS has initiated a comprehensive training curriculum focused on racism in child welfare practice and the adoption of anti-racist principles. Phase 1 of this training began March 2024 marking a significant milestone on this journey. Thus far, DHS has trained 1002 staffers across all workforce agencies on anti-racism practices. Furthermore, DHS in partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) has conducted a policy training to strengthen equity in our ongoing policy development. Moreover, with the continued support of CSSP, we have revised our mission, vision, and values through an equity lens, ensuring the operationalization of these core principles in our service delivery to children and families. For FY 26, DHS requests funding to expand its contract with CSSP. This expansion will facilitate the review, revision, organization, and integration of existing Child Welfare Operations and Juvenile Justice Division policies into updated, uniform manuals. These manuals will conform to current law, regulations, and state guidance; be written using an anti-

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racist and trauma-informed lens; be housed in a central, universally accessible location; and utilize technology to support staff in navigating and locating policies.

Becoming a Trauma Informed Organization: In FY23-24, Philadelphia DHS initiated a multi-year system enhancement to foster a trauma-informed and healing-centered environment, aligning with the Commonwealth's goals. DHS staff and leaders have shown strong support for this approach. A system-wide environmental scan, including a Trauma Informed Culture Assessment (TICA) survey, stakeholder interviews, and a Workforce Wellness and Resilience (WWR) Analysis, identified strengths and areas for growth. Year 2 will focus on addressing secondary traumatic stress (STS) through continued WWR Training. As of March 2024, 1407 staff have been trained, with all DHS and CUA staff to be trained by December 2025. To sustain this trauma-informed framework, DHS is requesting annual funding for the Workforce Well-Being Resiliency training, including a three-day Train the Trainer (TTT) model.

- ☐ Identify information on any specific populations determined to be under served or disproportionately served through the analysis.

Ethno-racial Disparities and Disproportionality:

DHS strives to reduce disparities in the child welfare and juvenile justice system by addressing systemic biases and implementing fair and unbiased practices, ensuring equitable treatment and outcomes for all youth. Through DHS' collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania and Casey Family Programs, an Entry Rate and Disproportionality Study was launched and found that Black children were over-represented among those reported to the Hotline, while White children were under-represented. In Philadelphia, although Black children make up 42% of the total child population, they constitute 66% of those reported to DHS. Conversely, White children, comprising 35% of the child population, account for only 12% of DHS reports. These findings underscore the urgent need for concerted efforts to promote equitable outcomes for all children and families.

Additionally, the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Performance Management & Technology (PMT) Unit noted a key insight into the overrepresentation of Black youth and male youth among individuals discharged from court supervision via the Recidivism study. This disproportionality is particularly pronounced in recidivism rates for these groups. While a direct statistical correlation between race, gender, and recidivism has not yet been formally established, anecdotal evidence suggests a strong link. Further insight into this issue comes from the Juvenile Justice Neighborhood study of areas with high arrest rates, which revealed two significant data points tied to disproportionality, which are youth arrests are increasingly concentrated in predominantly Black communities and youth involved in the justice system often reside in census tracts with moderate—not high—levels of poverty, indicating that factors beyond economic status contribute to these outcomes. Due to these findings, DHS is requesting new funding for Reintegration and programming around Recidivism to address this trend. More information can be found in Section 1-3c Diversionary Service Array Challenges.

Furthermore, DHS routinely collects and reports data on youth's ethno-racial identity as part of our Quarterly Indicators Report. As of June 30, 2024, dependent and juvenile justice-involved youth had a similar ethno-racial composition, with an over-representation of Black youth for all services. While juvenile justice-involved youth had a slightly larger proportion of Black youth and a slightly smaller proportion of White youth, most of the dependent youth were Black (66%),

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followed by Latino (17%) and White (10%). In contrast, most of the juvenile justice-involved youth were Black (83%), with 12% being Latino, and only 3% being White. Ethnicity data was unavailable for a small number of youths.

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) Efforts

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to improving affirmative practice standards for LGBTQIA+ youth, parents, and families within the child welfare system. Recognizing the unique challenges and disparities faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals in child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In FY 25, DHS partnered with a qualified consulting team, Abt Global to provide training, technical assistance, and co-designed solutions with people identifying as LGBTQ+ and those with intersecting identities across the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to develop recommendations for organizational policies, processes, and practices.

The system enhancement aims to prepare DHS and CUA with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively support LGBTQIA+ youth and their families, while also providing technical assistance to foster care and juvenile justice providers, to ensure they are equipped to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth and families.

Abt Global LLC (Abt) is a consulting and research firm that works to promote equity and improve the quality of people's lives. For over 50 years, Abt has been an engine for social impact, fueled by caring, curiosity, and innovative research and technical assistance (TA) that moves people from vulnerability to security worldwide.

- ☐ Identify service array challenges for the populations identified and describe the county's efforts to collaboratively address any service gaps.

DHS' data analysis and stakeholder discussions identified these CHALLENGES in existing resources and service array:

Reducing placement disruptions and effectively providing appropriate placement options for youth with complex social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Building on the data mentioned above in the Executive Summary Section. To address this challenge, DHS is focusing on the utilization of the following programs and strategies:

- **Salvation Army New-Day to Stop Human Trafficking:** This program continues to provide technical assistance and clinical support to youth who are survivors of or at risk of sexual and/or labor trafficking. Program services are available to all DHS-involved youth, aged 12-20, regardless of gender identity or expression. The duration of services is based on the individual's needs and desire for support while served by DHS.
- **Merakey Engagement Center:** In collaboration with CBH (Community Behavioral Health), the Merakey Engagement Center continues to provide evaluations and short-term therapy to identified youth, focusing on stabilizing their behavioral health needs. The center's objective is to offer comprehensive services that remove barriers to care and enhance access to high-quality treatment. It functions as a six-month bridge program for medication management and does not handle crises or provide inpatient care.
- **Child Care Room Alternative for Males:** Building upon the successful integration of a similar model for females, **in FY 25-26, DHS is seeking an expansion of funding allocation for this service.** This expansion program aims to establish a temporary shelter for male youth aged 13-18 who are awaiting longer-term placement. The primary goal is to

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divert this population from staying overnight in the DHS Child Care Room by providing a specialized setting for assessments, interventions, and supports on a short-term basis, ensuring their safety until suitable placement or reunification can be arranged. Mirroring the female model, this service must operate 24/7 and adhere to all state licensing standards.

This facility will be able to accommodate 12 to 15 male youth.

- **Educational Stability & Support Transportation:** Philadelphia DHS, through its Education Support Center (ESC), continues to prioritize educational stability for children and youth in out-of-home care. ESC supports the behavioral and educational needs of students during first-time placements, placement disruptions, and discharges. A key component of this stability is ensuring that students can remain in their school of origin following a Best Interest Determination (BID) conference. This school year (FY24-FY25) so far 56.3% of students with School District and Philadelphia DHS held BIDs remained in their school of origin. Precisely 450 students remained in their school of origin and based on previous trajectory and the number of BIDs, we anticipate an increase as we aim to keep students at their school of origin for the remainder of the school year. For example, in FY24 63% remained in their school of origin after a BID conference. In FY 26_27, DHS is requesting an increased funding allocation to support and sustain transportation services.

Building an array of programs to further decrease use of residential placement: Reducing the use of residential placement and providing appropriate placement options for youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems is a key priority for DHS. DHS remains committed to building an array of programs that support kinship, family-based and community-based placements, as well as evidence-based practices that promote positive outcomes for youth. This includes the following programs and strategies:

- **Professional Resource Parent Model** – See description above regarding service array strengths.
- **Kinship Navigator Program Model** – See description above regarding service array strengths.
- **Crisis Access Link Model (C.A.L.M)** – See description above regarding service array strengths.
- **Training and support for foster parents** continues to assist foster families who regularly face various challenges while caring for youth with complex emotional and behavioral health needs. Integrated into this training strategy is the evidence-based clinical modality – Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Incorporating DBT continues to aid Foster Parents in skill development that is crucial to navigate the unique challenges associated with caring for youth with higher needs. This training continues to impart core DBT skills and behavioral principles to help resource parents enhance communication, manage emotions, and cope with stress. In FY27, DHS is requesting an expansion of this funding allocation. With an expansion, we aim to increase the number of providers that offer this training, ensuring that more resource parents are appropriately trained to address and navigate the complex needs of our children and youth, with the aim of a continued decrease in the number of placement disruption.
- **Dependent/Delinquent Foster Care** – DHS is **requesting new funding** to provide **foster care services to vulnerable at-risk cross-over dependent/delinquent youth** ages, male and female, 10 to 17 with a trauma-informed lens who need foster care placement. This is a specialized treatment foster care program that includes specialized training in juvenile justice and trauma informed care for foster parents. This service would provide a placement for cross-over youth and/or delinquent youth who do not have parental or guardian support and serve as a step-down and least restrictive placement for crossover youth detained at

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the PJJSC releasable and awaiting dependent placement. This will also provide placement alternative to remove younger low-level or first-time offenders from secure detention if appropriate. The goal of the program is to decrease use of secure placement for cross-over youth awaiting dependent placements. DHS will need four foster homes to serve the identified population of youth. The anticipated start date is July 2025.

Permanency, especially timely reunification, remains a challenge for Philadelphia. The total number of children achieving permanency is lower than in previous fiscal years, with the timeliness of permanency also falling below previous benchmarks. Timely reunification or other forms of permanency is a key objective of DHS. **An enhancement to DHS's permanency planning programmatic approach is parent and child visitation.** Visitation Houses will provide environments conducive to developing healthy family relationships, situated in neutral and least restrictive settings possible. The department recognizes the importance of consistent, meaningful, and nurturing parent-child visitation for successful and timely reunification. Research indicates that early and frequent visitation not only increases the likelihood of children being reunified with their parents but also mitigates the trauma experienced during placement. **The Department is currently in the final stages of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify a provider to support and implement these efforts.**

Navigating challenges in finding suitable placements for shared case youth with firearm charges and displaying "aggressive" or delinquent behavior remains a significant concern for the DHS. On May 19th, there were 7 youth in PJJSC considered "releasable to DHS/CUA," with an average length of stay of **44** days from admission. These youths faced initial rejections due to the nature of their delinquent charges, particularly gun charges, assault, or sexual offenses, along with assessments of aggressive behavior and previous difficulties adjusting in dependent placements. Moreover, some were deemed ineligible due to special needs, such as being too young (under 13 years old) or having an IQ below 70. **Response to this challenge**, we plan to continue seeking a provider for our dual residential-private residential placement model. Concurrently, we are adapting our strategy by developing a Delinquent Foster Care Model tailored to meet the complex needs of justice-involved youth. Furthermore, we have issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Community-Based Detention Shelter (CBDS) specifically to accommodate the increasing number of females detained at the PJJSC. Additionally, we continue to utilize our Safety Valve process to proactively manage this challenge.

Increase in the rate of community gun violence involving youth continues to be an area of concern for DHS, JPOs, and other community partners. Addressing juvenile violence is vital to ensuring our youth can thrive academically, while also ensuring that each youth under supervision is able to grow and become productive citizens. Juvenile Probation continues to collaborate with law enforcement partners, completing intentional investigations, enforcements, and interventions to ensure our juvenile high-risk population were not further exposed or involved in gun violence. Combined efforts of the Office of the Attorney General's Gun Violence Task Force have aided in the confiscation of weapons and illegal substances from youth under Juvenile Probation's purview, in which 49 illegal firearms were successfully confiscated in 2024, an increase of 88.4% since 2023. Additionally, the Violence Prevention Partnership (VPP) and the Juvenile Enforcement Team (JET) units within the Juvenile Probation Department, focus on youth who are most at risk if being involved gun violence. Their efforts include, but are not limited to, warrant services, probation searches, debriefing interviews, area patrols, and high intensity supervision for youth within specified police districts within the City of Philadelphia. With assistance and collaboration with law enforcement partners regarding community targeted

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field operations, the VPP and JET units work to positively impact the lives of young people under supervision, while also considering the community protection portion of the Balanced and Restorative Justices principles. Juvenile Probation has also partnered with the Community Relations Unit (CRU), to engage community members and make outreach to gather resources that would assist JPOs, probationers, and their families with the hopes of improving outcomes. The CRU have been instrumental in providing support and resources to schools identified as Philadelphia's gun violence schools, facilitating restorative justice programs, participating in youth led panel/conferences, and creating community events and initiatives.

Reentry of youth back into PJJSC. In FY25, there were 1,486 youth who entered the PJJSC. Repeat entry into the PJJSC was common. Of the youth who entered the PJJSC in FY25, almost one quarter (27%) had entered the PJJSC prior to FY25, and 8% had received a previous juvenile justice placement service. Additionally, half of the youth who entered PJJSCA in FY25 had more than one stay during the fiscal year, with a maximum of 13 stays. In response to this identified challenge, **DHS is requesting an expansion of this funding allocation** for our Cornerstone Community Pathways for Reintegration service. This request aims to expand our capacity to support reintegrated youth and their families. This service specifically targets 12 youth and their families who have been released from secure detention with no further court involvement or child welfare oversight. Utilizing the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2), the program identifies potential mental/emotional distress and behavior problems that may require immediate intervention from a behavioral provider or a more intensive response, as well as informing post-discharge case management. This initiative works towards enhancing our delinquency prevention approach to prevent reentry into PJJSC, primarily focusing on youth released from the PJJSC without probation supervision. Moreover, additional supportive interventions provided by Cornerstone providers will further facilitate successful discharge processes from PJJSC and promote family and community reintegration. This service specifically targets 12 youth and their families who have been released from secure detention without court or child welfare oversight. Utilizing the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI-2), the program identifies potential mental/emotional distress and behavior problems that may require immediate intervention from a behavioral provider or a more intensive response, as well as informing post-discharge case management. This initiative works towards enhancing our delinquency prevention approach to prevent reentry into PJJSC, primarily focusing on youth released from the PJJSC without probation supervision. Moreover, additional supportive interventions provided by Cornerstone providers will further facilitate successful discharge processes from PJJSC and promote family and community reintegration.

- **Juvenile Justice Reform Act (JJRA) and ACT 96** - The implementation of the JJRA and Act 96 provisions and the shortage of placement resources and community services, still impacts the length of stay at the PJJSC. Data derived from the JJRA and ACT 96 underscores the persistent challenges. At the end of FY25Q3, 40 youth faced adult charges, and the PJJSC has regularly held between 30 and 50 youth facing adult charges since the law changed. Before the law changed, at the end of FY21 Q3, only eight youth facing adult charges were held. These youth typically have a longer stay than youth who are only involved in juvenile court due to the lengthier adult court process. **Act 96 and JJRA youth** average 114 days stays, compared to 54 days for juvenile court-involved youth.
- **Implementation of advanced technology to manage residents, support timely incident reporting, upgrade technology-based communication, youth accountability and youth monitoring while promoting safety and security within PJJSC.** With the allocated funds, DHS is **ready to implement** the technology-based upgrades to PJJSC to support the youth residing at the facility. These improvements enhance reports, monitoring, communication,

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and overall safety of our youth and staff. With digital devices such as tablets and mobile phones for youth, they are offered the opportunity for education, communication, entertainment, and accessibility. Currently, PJJSC has analog phones that necessitate staff intervention for call transfers after verifying contact information, potentially causing delays in communication between youth and their parents, family members, or advocates if staff assistance is not readily available. Via Path phones allow for the preloading of each resident's approved contacts, limiting other calls and preventing three-way calls for security purposes. The system generates detailed reports on each youth's phone history, including numbers dialed, dates, start/end times, and call duration. Additionally, calls can be recorded to address stakeholder concerns regarding accusations against youth. Moreover, equipping all youth with access to tablets loaded with essential facility information documents (e.g., daily schedule, medical request forms), educational content, and entertainment materials empowers them and supports their independent study. The Via Path Program also offers translation support for documents and subtitles for media content, addressing language barriers. Additionally, WiFi Cisco allows for proper control and segmentation of the network. Additionally, Cisco wireless will work without internet which is essential as this becomes part of critical infrastructure. Guardian RFID will enable PJJSC staff to monitor youth's locations and support compliance regulations of regular safety checks. Additionally, the technology will enable aggregate reporting of program and school attendance during a youth's placement in detention. It also will enable detailed electronic documentation through handheld scanners, allowing staff to be mobile, to ensure mandated services and program attendance.

With upgrades to these internal systems, consistent compliance with required residents' safety checks, staff/resident ratio, youth activities and family contacts can be met. As the needs of the youth evolve, PJJSC will utilize this modern technology to assist with maintaining safety and security of youth while in care.

Intermediary Evaluation Pilot, DHS works with multiple intermediaries to manage a range of programs from OST career connected learning, to personnel contracts. Currently, evaluations are done mostly by the individual program and audit staff, but not in a systemic or coordinated way. To ensure the efficacy of these intermediaries, DHS is seeking to build a new model of fiscal and programmatic oversight. This model will be interdisciplinary in nature and will be designed to ensure specific outcomes that will support the children and families in Philadelphia. One key priority of this new monitoring system will be to work with programming staff to ensure that DHS' programs are targeting youth most in need.

☐ Identify key areas in which technical assistance may be needed.

None currently.

1.3g Substance Affected Infants (SAI) and Plans of Safe Care (POSC)

➡ Respond to the following questions:

☐ Describe how the CCYA collects data related to POSC in which the CCYA acts as the lead agency.

When DHS acts as the lead agency, and the Substance Affected Infant (SAI) indicator is selected by the Childline, POSC-specific data fields become visible in our Philadelphia Family

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Data System (PFDS), and DHS may enter Yes/No to the following questions: “Was a Plan of Safe Care Developed?” and “Was a referral made as a result of the Plan of Safe Care?”

DHS’s ability to collect data in our data system related to the POSC has been limited since implementation. Nearly three-quarters of families receiving a POSC do not have the SAI indicator checked. There are discrepancies between how reporting sources (such as the birth hospitals) and ChildLine define an “affected” infant. Reporting sources are defining “affected” as being exposed to substances in utero and the identified child may or may not be experiencing physical symptoms from the exposure. The SAI indicator, however, is most often assigned only to the infants who are experiencing physical symptoms. Thus, reporting sources are developing POSC based upon exposure due to maternal substance use independent of the infant’s physical response to the exposure. In absence of the SAI indicator, POSC data cannot be collected accurately in our data system.

The POSC-specific data fields in our system cannot be populated unless the SAI indicator is checked. Due to this limitation, DHS tracks POSC-specific data manually in an Excel spreadsheet, which is updated monthly. DHS cannot collect data directly from the POSCs, as they are sent in PDF or Microsoft Word formats. DHS then distributes the POSC to the appropriate party (e.g., DHS investigator, CUA case management team, or prevention provider), and the document is added to the family’s case record.

The Philadelphia County Plans of Safe Care Steering Committee is exploring several strategies to advocate for alignment of the PaDHS definition of “affected” with the reporting sources shared definition. In addition, representative from DHS-CWO, DHS-PMT, DBHIDS, and PDPH serve on the recently implemented POSC Core Team. The statewide multi-disciplinary group began meeting in February 2025 with objectives to understand the counties’ common issues related to the POSC implementation, develop shared goals to streamline and strengthen processes, discuss, and plan for the action steps necessary to achieve the goals. The overarching objective of this workgroup is to better serve families and substance-affected infants through access to appropriate resources and coordinated, impactful service delivery.

☐ Describe how the CCYA collects data related to POSC in which the CCYA does NOT as the lead agency.

PFDS collects data on the Substance Affected Infant (SAI) indicator as selected by PaDHS ChildLine when generating General Protective Services (GPS) or Information Only (INO) reports. When the SAI indicator is selected, the Plans of Safe Care (POSC) data fields become visible in our data system-PFDS, allowing POSC-specific data to be collected. Additionally, ChildLine collects the SAI Notification Reason (which identifies the type of substance affecting the infant) and the reporting source (usually the birth hospital) at the time of report generation. Generally, the reporting source creates the POSC and sends a copy to the DHS for distribution to the appropriate party (e.g., DHS investigator, CUA case management team, or prevention provider).

☐ Describe how the CCYA works with other county offices and community-based agencies to disseminate information related to SAs and POSC to physical health care and drug and alcohol treatment providers.

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In Philadelphia, POSCs are developed collaboratively by county systems, including referrals to early intervention and drug and alcohol services. Other county-based services are also involved based on family needs. Information is shared at monthly POSC Steering Committee meetings, covering healthcare provider referrals, engagement with Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) providers, and discussions regarding Substance Affected Infants (SAIs) and POSCs. These meetings facilitate coordination and decision-making to meet family needs and provide appropriate services.

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA engages other county offices and community-based agencies to support the on-going implementation of POSC.

A monthly POSC Steering Committee is led by a community-based prevention provider. The committee invites participation not only from the medical community but also from the mental health and drug and alcohol community, early intervention services, and other providers involved in the well-being of infants. Importantly, a parent with lived experience also contributes to the committee, ensuring that the perspectives of those directly affected are heard and considered.

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA works with other county offices and community-based agencies to disseminate information related to the effect of prenatal exposure to substances and POSC to pregnant and parenting people and other caregivers.

Philadelphia DHS collaborates with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disabilities, the Office of Homeless Services, and other community-based services to facilitate the sharing of information regarding substance exposure and Plans of Safe Care (POSC).

- ☐ Describe any other anticipated practice and/or fiscal impact of this provision.

There is a need for increased collaboration and coordination in the delivery of intervention services to children and families, prioritizing the least restrictive approach.

- ☐ Identify areas of technical assistance needed by the CCYA related to POSC.

None at this time. We anticipate that DHS's involvement with the statewide Core Team will address any needs for technical assistance through collaboration with other counties and the CCYA partners.

1-3j. Family First Prevention Services Act

- ➔ Respond to the following questions:

Title IV-E Prevention Services Program

- ☐ Describe the CCYAs engagement with community-based service providers regarding the selection and implementation of EBPs, regardless of their allowability under the Title IV-E Prevention Program.

Philadelphia DHS issued a request for proposals in FY22 for an additional Healthy Families America program and Maternity Care Coalition was awarded. Implementation has included a presentation to the Child Welfare Operations Collaborative meetings, direct referral

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conversation with individual Community Umbrella Agencies, and promotional emails being sent system wide to education case workers about the service and encourage referral. In addition, in partnership with our primary Independent Living Older Youth provider, we have targeted this program for parenting youth as well. A presentation was provided to Older Youth staff and at a housing program for parenting youth (Northern) to encourage and support referral.

DHS engaged with internal and external stakeholders, including community-based service providers, through targeted conversations. In FY 22-23, Philadelphia DHS completed a global provider readiness analysis to determine what implementation and infrastructure support our provider community required to sustain and scale our EBP utilization strategy. Results revealed: (1) a need for systematized use of trauma assessment tools and comprehensive trauma training, particularly for non-direct staff; (2) knowledge of and positive attitudes toward EBPs among staff coupled with a need for capacity-building to support EBP implementation; (3) the need for integrated data systems across providers to support CQI efforts in place; and (4) a need for more residential placement providers to adopt the residential placement specialized setting requirements associated with Family First implementation in Pennsylvania. The insights gained from this readiness assessment continue to be instrumental in guiding our planning and implementation strategies to support the needs of our provider community.

1. Over the past fiscal year, DHS has continued to take strategic steps to prepare for the implementation of Evidence Based Practices (EBPs) in response to the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Given the high threshold for inclusion in the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, DHS will continue to develop and implement programs for their impact on diverting children and youth from care rather than purely for their ability to receive federal reimbursement.

☐ Describe any barriers/challenges experienced by the CCYA in claiming Title IV-E reimbursement for prevention services. How is the CCYA working to address those barriers/challenges?

* This question will be answered after the public hearing.

☐ Community Pathways support the delivery and planning for evidence-based prevention services for a child who does not have an open case with the child welfare agency and does not require immediate child welfare intervention but meets Pennsylvania's definition of Candidate for Foster Care. County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) must determine candidacy and eligibility for the selected prevention service. The CCYA may contract with approved community-based providers to develop or approve a child-specific prevention plan, provide prevention plan case management, conduct ongoing safety and risk monitoring and assessments, and/or deliver approved evidence-based prevention services as agreed upon in their contract. Processes set up by CCYAs must be reviewed and approved by OCYF. Share whether this is an option the CCYA is considering.

DHS is currently assessing the fit and feasibility of implementing Community Pathways (aka Innovation Zones) in Philadelphia.

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- ☐ Identify any areas of technical assistance that the county may need in this area.

None currently.

1-3p. Assessing Complex Cases and Youth Waiting for Appropriate Placement

- ➔ Please respond to the following questions regarding your county's local processes related to assessing service level needs for complex case children and youth:

- ☐ What is the cross-agency process developed in your county to support children and youth when the needs identified require the expertise of multiple systems? Please include information related identification of partner agencies who are a part of the county's integrated children's service planning team, the referral process and identification of team leads. Does your county have a dedicated employee who coordinates and/or facilitates planning efforts across all systems? If yes, how is that position funded and where is the position housed?

In Philadelphia County, a multi-disciplinary service planning team has been established as part of a collaborative cross-agency process to support children and youth with complex needs that require expertise from various systems. This team comprises representatives from partner agencies such as the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Office of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services, the School District of Philadelphia, Juvenile Probation, Courts, the Department of Public Health, Community Behavioral Health (CBH), and other relevant agencies as needed. The team works collaboratively to identify and address the needs of children and youth, developing comprehensive service plans that encompass all required resources and supports. This coordinated approach ensures that all agencies involved work towards common goals. To further foster collaboration, Philadelphia's cross-agency process incorporates monthly meetings between DHS and CBH to discuss behavioral health services for dependent children. These regular gatherings help ensure that children receive suitable care and enable prompt resolution of any issues or concerns.

In instances where a satisfactory solution cannot be reached for a child or youth with multi-system needs who is receiving services from multiple county agencies or organizations, Philadelphia DHS collaborates with regional or state-level partners to tackle these complex situations. When a child or youth's needs necessitate more intricate planning beyond the capacities of individual agencies, it is recommended that all human services agencies/providers in the county, alongside the child or youth's family or guardian, come together as a unified team to address their needs. This joint county team approach aims to resolve challenging issues at the local level. If the county complex planning team has exhausted all local/county options, solutions, and resources and still cannot address all the needs, the case is then referred for assistance from the appropriate department's regional office.

In Philadelphia, a dedicated staff member from the Deputy Commissioner's team for Child Welfare Operations is responsible for overseeing the coordination and facilitation of planning efforts across all systems.

- ☐ Identify how the county has engaged systems outside of the county human services system, including for example the education and physical health systems, in this cross-agency planning process. How is child specific information shared across systems?

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Please see the response immediately above this question, which explains how our county has engaged partner agencies from multiple systems, including the School District of Philadelphia and the Department of Public Health, in our multi-disciplinary service planning team to provide support for children and youth with complex needs.

- ☐ In FY 2024-25, how many children were served through your county complex case planning process?

There have been 94 complex case planning meetings completed in 2024.

We are continuing our effort to establish an official policy for the Complex Case Review process. This policy will ensure that staff are informed about the availability of this teaming process and its benefits. By formalizing the process, we aim to spread awareness among staff members and encourage their participation in this valuable initiative.

- ☐ What creative processes or services has your county developed to meet the needs of the complex children in your care?

Additionally, see response above and Section 1-3c. *Service Array* analysis of information, which identifies our strengths in existent resources and service array available to address the complex needs of the children, youth and families served. The request for new programmatic investments, the Child Care Room Alternative for Males, and the Delinquent foster care model, demonstrates the innovative services being developed to meet the needs of complex children in Philadelphia County.

- ☐ Identify any areas of technical assistance the county may need in development, or improvement, of its cross-system integrated children's team.

Because DHS works very closely with the OCYF Southeast Regional Office on complex cases, no technical assistance is needed at this time.

1-3r. Family Reunification Services

➡ Respond to the following questions:

- ☐ What are the current services and activities provided to support family reunification efforts?
- **Family Finding** is a service designed to identify, locate, and engage relatives of children in out-of-home care to establish lifelong connections and a sense of belonging. It focuses on finding permanent connections within a kinship system to support the transition from care to adulthood.
 - **Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM)**: involves bringing together family members and professionals to make decisions regarding the care of children. It emphasizes a strengths-based approach, including outreach to family members and private time for families and support networks to discuss options and plan interventions.
 - **Family Team Conferencing (FTC)**: facilitates discussions among family, friends, and child welfare professionals to explore options, plan interventions, and make crucial safety and permanency decisions for children.
 - **Family Unification Program (FUP)/Rapid Re-housing for Reunification**: a targeted program focuses on providing rapid re-housing services to families to eliminate housing as

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an obstacle to reunification. By ensuring stable housing, it works to reduce delays in the reunification process and prevent children from returning to DHS care.

- ☐ What were the total costs of services and activities to provide family reunification services in SFY 2024-25?

For total costs of services and activities to provide family reunification services in SFY 23-24 is \$2,353,113.

Note: The final costs number above is from last year's submission. The new number will be updated once available.

Section 2: General Indicators

2-1: County Fiscal Background

- ☐ Indicate whether the county was over or underspent in the Actual Year and reasons why.

Yes. The County's initial Act 148 Invoice Submission in the Actual Year is in overmatch. The county expects that this \$11M overmatch will be reduced back into allocation when TANF and IV-E FC allocations have been invoiced to date.

The county experienced some delays in Title IV-E FC invoicing due to delays in medical eligibility determinations after switching to a new case management system. In order to not create an inaccurate billing of non-eligible youth, the county made the decision to delay invoicing on all outstanding determinations. This caused a lag in Title IV-E FC invoicing, compared to invoicing at this time in the prior fiscal year.

- ☐ Is over or underspending anticipated in the Implementation Year? Explain why.

Yes. The county currently anticipates overspending in the implementation year. This is due to an increase in fringe benefits and indirect costs that were not taken into consideration during the prior year Needs Based Budget. The county will ensure that these costs are properly documented within the budget submission documents and included in the Plan Year requests.

- ☐ Address any changes or important trends that will be highlighted as a resource need through an ADJUSTMENT TO EXPENDITURE submission.

Two significant trends affecting our largest Adjustments to Expenditures for the third fiscal year in a row are the need for expanded prevention services as well as rising placement provider costs.

The county is embarking on a strategy to incrementally increase provider placement rates to not only take into consideration staff retention and inflation, but also the continued affect rising insurance costs have had across the system.

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- **PLEASE NOTE: Capture any highlights here that are not addressed in the Program Improvement Strategies narrative (Section 2-4)**
General Indicators Data is not available currently.

2-2a. Intake Investigations

Insert the Intake Investigations Chart (Chart 1).

Click to Paste HZA chart

2-2a. Ongoing Services

Insert the Ongoing Services Chart (Chart 2).

Click to Paste Chart

2-2a. JPO Services

Insert the JPO Services Chart (Chart 3).

Click to Paste Chart

2-2b. Adoption Assistance

Insert the Adoption Assistance Chart (Chart 4).

Click to Paste Chart

2-2c. Subsidized Permanent Legal Custody (SPLC)

Insert the SPLC Chart (Chart 5).

Click to Paste Chart

2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

Insert charts related to out-of-home placements where trends are highlighted (Charts 6-22).

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[Click to Paste Chart](#)

2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

Insert charts related to out-of-home placements where trends are highlighted (Charts 6-22).

[Click to Paste Chart](#)

2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

Insert charts related to out-of-home placements where trends are highlighted (Charts 6-22).

[Click to Paste Chart](#)

2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

Insert charts related to out-of-home placements where trends are highlighted (Charts 6-22).

[Click to Paste Chart](#)

2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

Insert charts related to out-of-home placements where trends are highlighted (Charts 6-22).

[Click to Paste Chart](#)

2-2e. Aging Out

Insert the Aging Out Chart (Chart 23).

[Click to Paste Chart](#)

2-2f. General Indicators

Insert the complete table from the *General Indicators* tab. **No narrative** is required in this section.

[Click to Insert Part 1 from General Indicators Sheet](#)

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[Click to Insert Part 2 from General Indicators Sheet](#)

[Click to Insert Part 3 from General Indicators Sheet](#)

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2-2g. through 2-2i. Charts

- NOTE: The section is optional and applies to CCYAs and/or JPOs.
- NOTE: If inserting charts, identify the data source and parameters and include only one chart per page.
- ☐ Insert up to three additional charts that capture the drivers of county services and supports the county's resource request. For example, these charts may be related to prevention or diversion activities or may be specific to areas or demographics that are driving influences on county resources and practices.
- ☐ Counties may use data charts as provided by PCG or any other county data available. County specific charts outside of PCG data charts must clearly identify the source of the data.

Click to Paste Chart

Click to Paste Chart

Click to Paste Chart

Chart Analysis for 2-2a. through 2-2i.

- **NOTE:** These questions apply to both the CCYA and JPO.
- ☐ Discuss any child welfare and juvenile justice service trends and describe factors contributing to the trends noted in the previous charts.

Note: In addition to the General Indicators, DHS has used data from its Quarterly Indicators Report (QIR) to assess trends in service delivery and usage, where appropriate. The QIR is a public facing report that summarizes trends in across all major areas of child welfare and juvenile justice services provided by DHS. Quarterly Indicators Reports can be found at: <https://www.phila.gov/documents/community-oversight-board-data-report/Each>. All data is through the end of Fiscal Year 2024 (December 31, 2024).

Service Trends

The number of children accepted for intake investigations decreased by 3.2% from FY 20 to FY 24. While the number of children accepted for intake investigations increased in FY 22 and FY 23 as compared to FY 21, the number decreased from 20,383 in FY 23 to 17,191 in FY 24. Specifically, the number of children accepted for intake decreased by 15.7% from FY 23 to FY 24. The number of families accepted for investigations has had a similar trend, decreasing by

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2.9% from FY 20 to FY 24 but increasing by 18% from FY 21 to FY 23, before decreasing again in FY 24.

Since FY 20, the number of children and families receiving ongoing services has been declining. Overall, FY 20 to FY 24, the number of children served has decreased by 31.9% and the number of families served has decreased by 24.6%. The number of children placed has also decreased from FY 20 to FY 24 by 38%.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health restrictions to mitigate transmission, Hotline reports and investigations declined, likely due to families having less contact with mandated reporters. Following the Stay-at-Home Order, DHS Hotline reports dropped 40% in March and April 2020, and there were a fewer number of reports for the remainder of FY 20 and for FY 21. In FY 22, Hotline reports and Investigations returned to pre-COVID levels. In FY 23 and FY 24, the number of families reported to and investigated by DHS remain at pre-COVID levels. Although reports and investigations have increased, DHS continues to reduce the number of families, children, and youth, receiving compulsory safety services. After an increase in FY 22 for the first time since FY 19, Hotline reports have stabilized (see Figure 8). Following COVID-19 restrictions, DHS' Hotline experienced a roughly 40% drop in reports from March to April 2020. Reports steadily increased in the two years that followed but remained below pre-COVID levels, until FY 22. In FY 24, Hotline reports remained roughly equal to reports received in FY 23.

Following large observed decreases in Hotline reports during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic mitigation efforts, Hotline reports increased by 6.2% between FY 22 and FY 24. The total number of Hotline reports in FY 24 was 13.7% higher than the total number of Hotline reports in FY 20.⁵

DHS has continued to close more families' cases than it has accepted for service; DHS closed 440 more families' cases than it accepted for services in FY 24. ⁶ Additionally, there was a 17.1% decrease in the overall number of children receiving formal in-home services from June 2023 to June 2024. During this same period, the number of youths receiving in-home non-safety services, which are formal child welfare services provided in the home to youth without active safety threats (e.g., court-involved truancy cases), decreased by 15.1%. During this period the number of youths receiving in-home safety services, which are formal child welfare services designed to safely keep children in their own homes while mitigating any active safety threats, decreased by 21.3%.⁷

The total number of youths in dependent placement declined by 13.3% from June 30, 2023, to June 30, 2024.⁸

The number of youths receiving Juvenile Probation services has declined from 2,389 youth in FY 20 to 2,245 youth in FY 24, representing an overall decrease of 6%. The number of children in community-based placements steadily declined from FY 20 to FY 24, decreasing by 69%. While the number of children in institutional placements decreased from FY 20 to FY 22, there was a 22% increase in the number of children with institutional placements from FY 22 to FY 24. Overall, the number of children in institutional placements still decreased by 2.1% in FY 24 compared to FY 20.

Adoption Assistance and Subsidized Permanent Legal Custody (PLC)

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The number of children receiving adoption assistance on the first day of the fiscal year increased between FY 20 and FY 24 by 6.2% from 6,405 to 6,805 children. Total days of care for children receiving adoption assistance increased by 3.9% from FY 20 to FY 24.

The number of children with a Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship (SPLC) in placement has consistently decreased over time, with an overall decrease of 15.9% from FY 20 to FY 24; the total days of care decreased by 14.9% in this period.

Placement Data

Between FY 20 and FY 24, the number of dependent children and youth receiving dependent family foster care on the first day of the FY decreased overall by 35.2%. Similarly, between FY 20 and FY 24, there was a 38.2% decrease in non-kinship dependent foster care and a 32.9% decrease in kinship care. Non-kinship care has declined at a higher rate than has kinship care, and this is consistent with DHS' goal to place more children with family and kin rather than with unfamiliar caregivers. While the overall numbers of children in care have decreased it is important to note that the children who remain in care and their families have more complex needs and require more intensive supports, especially as DHS continues to prioritize family-based placements and decrease the number of youths in residential placements.

From FY 20 to FY 24, on the first day of the fiscal year, there was a 59.8% decrease in the number of youths receiving dependent residential services (e.g., institution-level) and a 64.3% decrease in the total days of care. During this same time, there has been a 49.3% decrease in the number of youths placed in dependent community residential settings (e.g., group home level), and a 46% decrease in the total days of care during this period. The total number of youths receiving dependent residential services has continued to decrease.

From FY 20 to FY 24, there was an 77.3% decrease in the number of youths placed in delinquent community residential settings and an 85.5% decrease in youth receiving delinquent residential services on the first day of the fiscal year. During this same time, the total days of care for youth in delinquent community residential settings, and receiving delinquent residential services, decreased by 77.4% and 85.4%, respectively. These decreases coincide with DHS's goal to reduce the use of residential placement for both dependent and delinquent youth committed to DHS. While delinquent residential placements decreased, the number of youths placed in juvenile detention has increased by 61% from FY 20 to FY 24.

Between FY 20 and FY 24, placements in dependent Supervised Independent Living (SIL) settings have decreased by 32.1%; total days of care also decreased in this interval by 15.4%. Placements in delinquent SILs have decreased by 90% to 1 youth in FY 24; total days of care decreased by 88%.

Over the past five fiscal years, the total number of youths receiving dependent alternative treatment and days of care for youth receiving dependent alternative treatment has decreased by 35.5% and 27.6%, respectively.

Aging Out Youth

The number of youths aging out of care decreased by 35.8% from FY 20 to FY 24.

The number of youths aging out with a permanent residence decreased by 47.9% from FY 20 to FY 24, and the proportion of youth with this support out of all youth aging out has decreased (57% had a permanent residence in FY 20 compared to 46% in FY 24). Compared to FY 20, the

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number of youths with a source of income in FY 24 decreased by 45.3%; the proportion also decreased (50.5% had a source of income support in FY 20 compared to 43% in FY 24). Similarly, the number of youths who aged out with a life connection decreased by 49.2% between FY 20 and FY 24, and the proportion of youth who had a life connection decreased from 65.2% in FY 20 to 51.6% in FY 24.

- ☐ Describe what changes in agency priorities or programs, if any, have contributed to changes in the number of children and youth served or in care and/or the rate at which children are discharged from care.

These changes include:

- **Diverting Families who are reported to the Hotline:** Continued training in Hotline Guided Decision Making and use of Field Screening Units has served to safely divert families from being accepted for investigation. To increase support for safe diversion DHS established a Hotline Monitoring unit consisting of program analysts and a supervisor. This unit monitors Hotline calls, providing valuable call-related data to assist managers in their decision-making and improve overall efficiency.
- **Reducing CUA CM caseloads:** DHS has focused on ensuring that only cases with identified safety threats are accepted for ongoing services. This practice has helped reduce caseloads for Community Umbrella Agency (CUA) case managers. Reduction in caseloads allows CUAs to make better use of such strategies as guided case reviews and monthly reports have been implemented to monitor and review cases, ensuring that ongoing formal case management services are provided when needed for reunification or safe case closure.
- **Prevention Diversion and successful case closures:** DHS, in collaboration with CUA partners and Juvenile Probation, has worked on preventing cases from being accepted for ongoing services when they are not necessary or have successfully closed cases that no longer require intensive oversight. Administrative court reviews and targeted case reviews are used consistently to support efforts in safely discharging children and youth from care and closing families' cases.
- **Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) and Crisis Rapid Response Meetings:** DHS has taken steps to significantly enhance our family engagement activities and establish supportive connections for young people through FEI. This initiative promotes kin involvement, which increases the likelihood of children and youth remaining in their own homes or being placed with kin if out-of-home placement is necessary. Additionally, supportive connections for children help to reduce the impact of trauma and stabilize both placement and in-home situations.
- **Implementation of a public health approach:** DHS and JPO prioritize community and youth safety through a public health lens, addressing underlying factors that contribute to justice involvement. This proactive approach reduces the need for youth to enter or remain in care.
- **Expansion of primary prevention efforts:** Efforts are focused on preventing youth from entering the formal child welfare and juvenile justice system by providing targeted resources and interventions to at-risk youth and their families.
- **Emphasis on community-based programs and partnerships:** Prioritizing community-based programs and establishing partnerships allows for tailored services that meet the specific needs of youth, while promoting their connection to supportive community networks.

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- **Addressing ethno-racial disproportionality:** DHS strive to reduce disparities in the child welfare and juvenile justice system by addressing systemic biases and implementing fair and unbiased practices, ensuring equitable treatment and outcomes for all youths.

- Provide a description of children/youth placed in congregate care settings.

The Department continues to prioritize reducing the use of residential placements, aiming to keep youth in their own homes and communities. However, youth placed in residential settings often require more structured services to address their complex needs. Many of these youth have been exposed to sustained forms of abuse, neglect, and maltreatment, leading to significant emotional and behavioral health challenges. The circumstances that necessitated placement often exacerbate these issues. Youth identified for residential services may exhibit specialized behavioral health needs, including behaviors associated with acute or complex trauma from various forms of child maltreatment such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, and exposure to domestic violence. These youth frequently experience symptoms of trauma and face social and emotional instability, making their safety an ongoing concern.

Of youth placed in dependent congregate care as of June 30, 2024: **Sex:** 56% were male. **Age:** 70% were between the ages of 11 and 17 years old, and just under one in four (23%) were 18 or older. **Race/Ethnicity:** Just over two thirds (68%) were Black and just under one in six (16%) were Latino.⁹ **Placement Type:** Over half of youth (54%) were placed in group homes and just over one in five (21%) were placed in an institution that was not a residential treatment facility.¹⁰ Of youth placed in delinquent residential placement **Sex:** Nearly all (93%) were male. **Age:** 70% were between the ages of 11 and 17, and 30% were 18 or older. **Race/Ethnicity:** Most youth were Black (83%) or Latino (12%).¹¹ **Placement Type:** almost 3 in 5 (59%) were placed in a state institution. [OB]

- ☞ Consider the children and youth who have the following characteristics, by race, age, and gender:
 - *Intellectual disability or autism.*
 - *A behavioral health impairment.*
 - *A physical disability.*
 - *Involvement with JPO; and*
 - *Identify as LGBTQ.*
- Identify the service and treatment needs of the youth counted above with as much specificity as possible.
- ☞ The below questions may assist in development of a response:
 - *What are the service and treatment needs?*
 - *Why can those services and treatment needs not be met in the community?*
 - *What barriers exist to accessing service and treatment needs in the community?*

Many youths who are placed in residential placement settings, including community-based group homes, institutional facilities, or psychiatric residential treatment facilities, require specific services and treatments to address their behavioral health needs. These services aim to support their overall well-being and facilitate their successful transition into adulthood. The following elements are crucial for meeting the service and treatment needs of these youth:

- **Behavioral Health Services:** Youth in residential placement often require access to comprehensive behavioral health services. This includes individual therapy, group therapy,

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family therapy, and psychiatric evaluations. These services are essential for addressing emotional and behavioral challenges and promoting positive mental health.

- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Many youths in residential placement have experienced trauma. Therefore, it is important to provide trauma-informed care to address their specific needs. This involves specialized interventions, such as trauma-focused therapy or expressive arts therapy, to help them process their experiences, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and promote healing.
- **Medication Management:** Some youth may require psychotropic medications to manage mental health symptoms. Proper medication management, including psychiatric evaluations, medication monitoring, and coordination with prescribing professionals, should be included in their treatment plan.
- **Educational Support:** Collaborating with educational professionals is crucial to address the educational needs of youth in residential placement.
- **Transitional Planning:** As youth in residential placement approach the age of transitioning out, it is important to develop a comprehensive plan for their successful transition into adulthood. This involves life skills training, vocational support, assistance with housing, and connections to community resources that can support their independence and long-term stability.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Involving families and supportive community members in the treatment process is crucial for the well-being of youth in residential placement. Collaborating with families, conducting family therapy sessions, and facilitating connections with positive support systems in the community promote a sense of belonging and contribute to their overall growth and development.

☐ Please describe the county's process related to congregate care placement decisions.

☒ The below questions may assist in development of a response:

- *What policies are in place to guide decision making?*
- *Who oversees and is part of the decision?*
- *Are youth involved in the decision-making? If so, how?*
- *How is the decision reviewed?*

DHS's process for determining the appropriateness of residential placement for youth involves two main processes: the Level of Care (LOC) Assessment and the Commissioner's Approval Process. The LOC tool is completed by the DHS's Central Referral Unit (CRU) for all children and youth who require placement except for those being placed in kinship care, while the Commissioner's Congregate Care Team (CCCT) determines whether to approve or deny the congregate care placement based on a comprehensive summary from the CRU. DHS aims to exhaust kinship care and foster care options before considering residential placement; youth can provide input during the interview process and identify potential kinship caregivers.

Residential placement decisions for shared case youth require close collaboration between the Commissioner's Approval Process, Courts, and the Juvenile Probation Office (JPO). These stakeholders work together to ensure that the decision regarding residential placement is made in the best interest of the youth involved.

☐ How has the county adjusted staff ratios and/or resource allocations (both financial and staffing, including vacancies, hiring, turnover, etc.) in response to a change in the population

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of children and youth needing out-of-home care? Is the county's current resource allocation appropriate to address projected needs?

In response to changes in the population of children and youth needing out-of-home care, Philadelphia is adjusting staff ratios and resource allocations.

DHS is working to address staffing levels in key areas, such as case management and youth detention counselors, to better serve the number of children and youth in need of care. Philadelphia County is making funding requests to meet the projected needs of both child welfare and juvenile justice systems and has adjusted financial resource allocations to support increased services and programs to meet the needs of this population. Additionally, Philadelphia County is **requesting funding maintenance** to support recruitment and retention of highly qualified attorneys for the Philadelphia Law Department's Child Welfare Unit (CWU) to continue to make meaningful impacts for children in both the dependent and delinquent court systems and standardize best practices. In addition to a request for funding for promotions and raises, Philadelphia is requesting funding for training and conference opportunities for CWU attorneys. Opportunities to engage in professional development and networking improves morale and retention and is essential for the unit to remain up to date on changes in federal and state law, best practices, and innovative court programming.

Philadelphia has also implemented strategies to address staff turnover and vacancies, such as offering competitive compensation packages and professional development opportunities (*see response to 3-1c. Complement for further detail*). Philadelphia regularly monitors staffing levels and resource allocations to ensure that they are appropriate to address projected needs. Despite these efforts, the county continues to face challenges in addressing labor shortages both at the county level and across the provider network.

To ensure the best outcomes for vulnerable children, youth, and families, Philadelphia County is **requesting additional investments to support our incremental approach to increasing foster care and kinship care rates**. Adequate funding is necessary to sustain our efforts in recruiting and retaining qualified caregivers, providing them with the necessary resources and training to offer safe and nurturing environments. This increased allocation will support our system's efforts to reduce the use of residential placements and promote stability and well-being for those in care.

Note: The charts and responses below are from last year's submission. The data for these charts and responses is received by the counties from the state and has not yet been received.

2-3a Population Flow

Insert the Population Flow Chart

Click to Paste Chart

2-3b Permanency in 12 Months (Entry)

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Insert the Permanency in 12 Months (Entry) Chart

Click to Paste Chart

This indicator reports on the percentage of children and youth who enter care in a 12-month period and discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care. The national performance standard is 40.5%. A higher performance of the measure is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

2-3c. Permanency in 12 Months (in care 12-23 months)

Insert the Permanency in 12 Months (in care 12-23 months) Chart

Click to Paste Chart

This indicator measures the percent of children and youth in care continuously between 12 and 23 months that discharged within 12 months of the first day in care. The national performance standard is 43.6%. A higher percentage is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

2-3d Permanency in 12 Months (in care 24 Months)

Insert Permanency in 12 Months (in care 24 Months) Chart

Click to Paste Chart

This indicator measures the percent of children who had been in care continuously for 24 months or more discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day in care. The national performance standard is 30.3%. A higher percentage is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

2-3e Placement Stability (Moves/1000 days in care)

Insert the Placement Stability (Moves/1000 days in care) Chart

Click to Paste Chart

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This indicator measures the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care for children and youth who enter care. The national performance standard is 4.12 moves. A lower number of moves is desirable in this indicator.

- ☐ Does the county have less placement moves than the national performance standard?

2-3f Re-entry (in 12 Months)

Insert the Re-entry (in 12 Months) Chart

Click to Paste Chart

This indicator measures the percent of children and youth who re-enter care within 12 months of discharge to reunification, live with a relative, or guardianship. The national performance standard is 8.3%. A lower percentage is desirable in this indicator.

- ☐ Is the county's re-entry rate less than the national performance standard?

2-4 Program Improvement Strategies

For FY 2026-27, counties will fully evaluate their performance in achieving permanency and stability for children and youth who enter placement. The analysis of current practices and services toward meeting the national performance standard for timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability in placement will identify areas in which targeted program improvement is warranted. This analysis will also help to identify areas of technical assistance needed at the county level to address challenges identified. In addition, the areas of technical assistance identified on the county level across all counties in the commonwealth will help to identify areas that need addressed through a statewide focus. As part of the analysis, counties should take a holistic view of the data available to them, including information in the data packages provided, county-specific data, general indicators, etc.

As part of the data packages, counties were also provided data regarding:

- re-entry and reunification for dependent children and youth only (no SCR);
- children whose placement stay was 30 days or less.
- the number of children entering foster care for the first time who were in previous adoptions; and
- removal reasons for children and youth in placement.

Counties that do not meet or exceed national performance standard must identify program improvement strategies based on their analysis. Based on the county analysis of the data presented in 2-2a through 2-2i and 2-3a through 2-3f, as well as other county data reviewed, counties may also choose to consider other areas in which program improvement strategies have been identified. The following questions and steps outlined below will assist counties in identifying priority outcomes and identification of practice improvement strategies.

1. ANALYSIS

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The analysis phase consists of two iterative steps: data analysis and root cause analysis. Initial data analysis can begin the root cause analysis process and the root cause analysis process often requires additional data analysis as one continues to seek more information about why a problem exists.

In addition to utilizing the analysis of the national performance standard for timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability in placement, the county should consider conducting additional analysis to define problems to be addressed. The county may consider conducting analysis to determine if children and youth who do not achieve permanency in 12 months, do not have placement stability (less than four moves), and do not re-enter care differ from those who DO. The following questions should be considered in this analysis.

- a. Are there any distinctions in age, gender, race, disabilities, etc.?

Note: The data to respond to this question is received from the state and has not yet been received. Philadelphia DHS does not have internal data to respond to this question.

The following information was reported in last year's submission and was derived using the analyses conducted by HZA for Philadelphia County. Specifically, DHS asked: Of the children who enter care in a 12-month period, what percentage discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care and did this percentage vary by age, gender, and race/ethnicity?

- **Age:** Between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021, children aged 6-12 more frequently achieved permanency within 12 months of entry compared with children aged 13-17 and 0-5. For this cohort, 16.2% of children aged 0-5 achieved permanency; 16.8% of children aged 13-17 achieved permanency; and 18.4% of children aged 6-12 achieved permanency. These trends were not consistent for children who remained in care beyond 12 months. Among children who were in care continuously for 12-23 months as of 10/1/22, children aged 0-5 and 6-12 more frequently achieved permanency within the next 12 months compared to children aged 13-17 (22.6% and 22.2% vs. 15.7%, respectively).
- **Gender:** Between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021, children who were identified as male achieved permanency within 12 months of entry at a slightly higher rate than children identified as female (17.73% vs. 16.17%, respectively). For children who remained in care beyond 12 months, male children achieved permanency at roughly the same frequently as female children. Among children who were in care continuously for 12-23 months on 10/01/21, 16.62% of male children achieved permanency within the next 12 months compared to 24.17% of female children.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021, children identified as Black or Hispanic more frequently achieved permanency than children who identified as White (17.69% vs. 14.29% vs. 9.68% respectively). These trends did not remain consistent for children who were in care beyond 12 months. Among children who were in care continuously for 12-23 months on 10/01/21, 15.96% of Black children achieved permanency within the next 12 months, compared with 20.00% of Hispanic children and 32.41% of White children.

Placement Stability

Note: The data to respond to this question is received from the state and has not yet been received. Philadelphia DHS does not have internal data to respond to this question. The following is a calculation of placement stability without reference to age, gender, or race/ethnicity:

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To calculate placement stability for each agency, PMT used the following combination of former and current Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) measures:

1. Of all children in foster care during FY24 who were in care for less than 12 months (as of the last day of FY24), what is the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of care?
2. Of all children in foster care during FY24 who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months (as of the last day of FY24), what is the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of care?
3. Of all children in foster care during FY24 who were in care for at least 24 months (as of the last day of FY24), what is the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days?

Children in foster care during FY24 who were in care for less than 12 months had an average of 3.6 moves per 1,000 days of care. Children in foster care during FY24 who were in care between 12 and 24 months had an average of 2.0 moves per 1,000 days of care. Children in foster care in FY24 who were in care greater than 24 months had an average of 1.8 moves per 1,000 days. For all categories of length of stay, Philadelphia was below the most recently available national average of 4.48 moves per 1,000 days. ^(OBJ)

Re-entry to Care

Note: The data to respond to this question is received from the state and has not yet been received. Philadelphia DHS does not have internal data to respond to this question. The following is a calculation of re-entry into care without reference to age, gender, or race/ethnicity:

For youth who were re-unified in FY 24, 9.6% youth re-entered dependent placement within one year. This represents a decrease of 3.2 percentage points since 2019. The re-entry rate for FY 24 was lower than the PA state rate (13.6%) and the national median (7.4%).¹⁶

- b. Are there differences in family structure, family constellation or other family system variables (for example, level of family conflict, parental mental health & substance use)?

DHS presently does not have access to accurate, aggregate-level, administrative data to explore differences in permanency based on level of family conflict, parental mental health, and substance abuse. Behavioral health data is housed in the City's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disabilities (DBHIDS).

- c. Are there differences in the services and supports provided to the child/youth, family, foster family, or placement facility?

Compared to last year's submission, the distribution of children and youth by gender slightly varied between those receiving dependent in-home and placement services as of June 30, 2024. For dependent placement services, there were slightly more children who identified as female (52%) than male (48%). For in-home services, roughly half of the children identify as male and half as female. Additionally, older youth more frequently receive dependent placement services than in-home services. For in-home services, about a third (32%) of the children are aged five and under; a quarter (25%) are aged six-ten; 41% are aged 11-17; and only 1% are 18 or older. Comparatively, for children in dependent placement, a third (32%) are aged five and under; 23% are aged six-ten; about a third (33%) are aged 11-17, and 12% are aged 18 or older.

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The demographic composition of children and youth differ based on their receipt of dependent services and supports compared to delinquent services and supports. Point-in-time data from June 30, 2024, indicates that the proportion of male and female children receiving dependent services was similar (i.e., 51% female, 49% male), whereas 89% of youth receiving delinquent services were identified as male and only 10% were identified as female. In terms of age, the majority of children receiving dependent services were aged ten or younger (54%), whereas 76% receiving delinquent services were aged 16 or older. Regarding race and ethnicity, 83% of children receiving dependent services identified as either Black (66%) or Hispanic (17%), whereas 95% of youth receiving delinquent services identified as either Black (83%) or Hispanic (12%).^{12 13}

d. Are there differences in the removal reasons for entry into placement?

As reported in last year's submission, Philadelphia DHS has continued to work to improve the accuracy of data entry for removal reasons for entry into placement. The removal reason is often conflated with the reasons for placement changes. Once data accuracy is improved, analyses can be conducted to examine differences in removal reasons for entry into placement.

e. Are there differences in the initial placement type?

For dependent children accepted for service in Quarter 3 of the past fiscal year, slightly less than two-thirds received in-home services as their first service. 23% of children received family foster care or kinship care as their first service, and 6% of youth received residential placement as their first service (a portion of youth either received "other" service, such as SIL, day treatment, mother/baby or did not have a service identified in DHS's data system during the first 30 days after the child was accepted for service).

DHS's Entry Rate & Disproportionality Study examined data among 29,539 children with new reports to the DHS Hotline between January 1 and August 31, 2018. These study data have not been updated since the initial examination.

- **Race/Ethnicity:** Of the children included in this study and reported to DHS's Hotline during this period, 12% identified as White, 66% identified as Black, 17% identified as Hispanic, and 5% identified as Other. We confirmed ethno-racial disproportionality in hotline reporting based on the distribution of children by their racial-ethnic identity. During this period, 42% of all Philadelphia children were Black, but 66% of DHS-involved children were Black; and 35% of all Philadelphia children were White, but 12% of DHS-involved children were White.
- **Gender:** The proportion of children identified as female, and male was fairly evenly split among all children reported to DHS' Hotline and among children entering kinship care, foster care, and residential placement as a first service.
- **Age:** Among children who entered out-of-home placement, young children were more frequently placed in a family setting, whereas teenagers were more frequently placed in residential placement settings. Of the children included in this study and reported to DHS's Hotline during this period, roughly one-third (34%) were aged 0-5, nearly half (46%) were aged 6-13, and one-fifth (20%) were aged 14 or older. However, of the children who entered kinship care as a first placement, over half (52%) were aged 0-5, one-third (33%) were aged 6-13, and 15% were aged 14 or older. Of the children who entered foster care as a first placement, 58% were aged 0-5, 37% were aged 6-13, and only 5% were aged 14 or older. Of the youth who entered residential placement as a first placement, none were aged 0-5, 19% were aged 6-13, and 82% were aged 14 or older.

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- **Socio-Economic Status:** Of all reports to the Hotline nearly 4 in 5 were General Protective Services (GPS) reports and only 1 in 5 were Child Protective Services (CPS) reports, highlighting the prevalence of neglect-related concerns in our system. The majority of report allegations were related to neglect (70%), followed by physical abuse (29%), and then sexual abuse (11%). This data highlights the effects of poverty on DHS involvement.
- **Intergenerational Involvement:** 28% of mothers with children reported to the DHS' Hotline were involved with DHS as children. 33% of mothers whose children received non-placement services were involved with DHS as children. 40% of mothers whose children received placement services were involved with DHS as children. The proportion of mothers with prior DHS involvement as children increased along each step of the trajectory of system involvement.

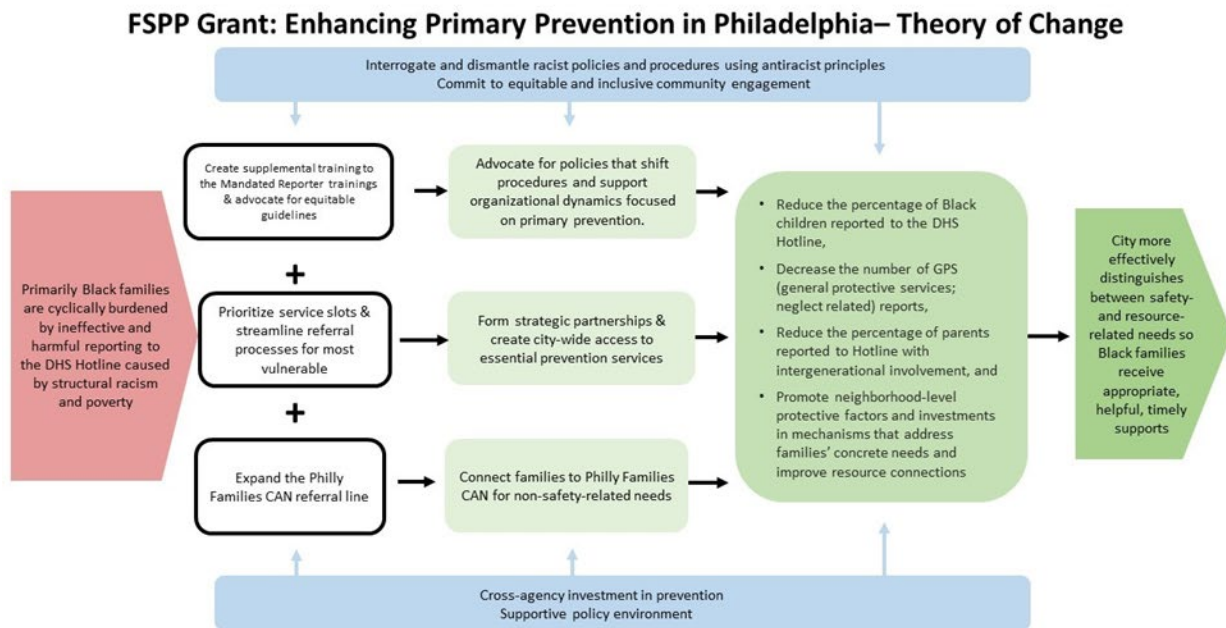
The results of the data analysis will lead the county in further root cause analysis in which root causes are identified.

- a. What are the resulting root causes identified by the county analysis.

The understanding of root causes resulting from the county data analysis has been further enhanced by the findings of the Entry Rate and Disproportionality study and the evaluation of the Family Support Through Primary Prevention Grant which aims to address the disparities identified in the Entry Rate and Disproportionality Study. These findings shed light on significant factors contributing to the challenges faced by the child welfare system.

The study revealed that Black children and families were over-represented in Hotline reports and subsequent system involvement, indicating a racial disparity within the system. Additionally, predominantly Black neighborhoods experienced higher rates of social and structural risk factors and reports to the Hotline, highlighting the impact of neighborhood context on system involvement. Another key finding was that most reports for children were related to neglect rather than abuse, indicating a need for stabilizing supports for families. The study further highlighted that neighborhoods with the highest levels of poverty and resource deprivation also had the highest number of reports to the Hotline, emphasizing the intersection of poverty and child welfare involvement. Moreover, the study identified a cyclical pattern of intergenerational DHS involvement, indicating that families with historical disenfranchisement and systemic disadvantages continue to experience disproportionate involvement with the child welfare system. Taken together we can see that primarily Black families are cyclically burdened by ineffective and harmful reporting to DHS Hotline by mandated reporters caused by structural racism and poverty. This relationship and strategies to address it are detailed in the FSPP Theory of Change Below.

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Time Series Analyses: To evaluate our FSP work, we have been conducting our time series analysis for General Protective Services (GPS), which are neglect-related reports, and Child Protective Services (CPS), which are abuse-related reports for each quarter from FY18 to FY25. Our assumption is that as we continue towards full implementation continues toward completion, GPS calls to the DHS Hotline will decrease as calls to the PF-CAN referral line will increase. Overall, the baseline findings suggest that GPS and CPS reports have been stable over time. We are confident that this trend is stable enough for us to be able to identify the proposed impact of the implementation strategies.

On average, GPS reports are 89% of the Hotline reports we receive across each fiscal year while 11% are CPS reports. Both CPS and GPS reports have a range of 13 percentage points with a standard deviation of 3 percentage points across the seven-year period. The percentages remain relatively stable despite the fluctuation of the number of reports received during COVID. This indicates that the impacts of COVID-19 will have little to no impact on the change in reports as we move to full implementation. Additionally, it is also important to note that the last six quarters have seen the lowest percentages of GPS reports since quarter 1 in FY2018.

2. PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED:

Copy and complete the table below as needed to describe the strategies the county will implement to achieve each desired outcome related to the root causes identified above. Provide rationale for how each strategy will contribute to the achievement of each outcome. Several strategies may be identified for each outcome. Communication with staff and partners should be considered critical action steps, as should the analysis of county and provider capacities in implementing change.

Outcome #: **Keeping more children and youth in their own homes and communities.**

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Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	Ensure that only families in need of child welfare and juvenile justice involvement are accepted for investigation or entry into the juvenile justice system.
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Train new DHS Social Work Services Managers in Hotline Guided Decision Making when they are assigned to the Hotline <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Implement Transfer of Learning Activities for DHS Social Work Services Managers in Hotline Guided Decision Making to ensure fidelity to the model <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Continue using Field Screening units to safely divert families reported to the Hotline from being accepted for investigation <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Maintain a quality assurance process to ensure appropriate screening out of reports. <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Require Social Work Administrators to review any family that has had two previous screen-outs within the past year. <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Conduct monthly reviews of a sample of screen-outs by Social Work Administrators. <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ To protect children and youth and to preserve families, DHS is working with the Family Court to ensure that the Court has adequate resources to inform its safety decision regarding children and youth involved in custody matters through mandated parental custody evaluations. These parenting capacity evaluations will assist the Court in making a custody decision that 1) protects the safety of the child; 2) potentially preserves a child's ability to remain with parent or kin; 3) potentially reduces the number of children that would enter the formal child welfare system. ○ Provide training to DHS and CUA staff to demonstrate understanding of the Family First Prevention Services Act law and guidance. Staff will apply knowledge of Evidence-Based Services to identify the selection of services that match the specific needs of the family with an anticipated start date of July 2025. ○ Provide training in the Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) to all new hires and ongoing staff <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Reinforce protocols that require investigation staff, when appropriate, to refer families to Prevention Diversion Services where risk is identified but there are no active safety threats, to reduce the likelihood of families being accepted for Formal Child Welfare Services.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the capacity of prevention providers to engage and serve families during the investigation process. ○ Maintain and support the role of Family Empowerment Centers in serving families diverted from the Hotline and supporting families during the investigation process. <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Continue and expand research to develop evidence-based programs in the prevention arena designed to prevent placement and support reunification and reduction of residential placement. <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Increase the use of Evening Reporting Centers (ERC) to assist with diverting youth from entering placement. Populations to include youth on interim probation and youth returning from placement. <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Support youth in the juvenile justice system who are required to pay restitution to victims by offering paid community service options. ○ Expand the use of the Youth Aid Panel and associated services for youth arrested with the goal of avoiding the filing of a delinquency petition. ○ Develop and issue an RFP for a community-based programming that offers Cognitive Behavioral Training for JJS-involved youth.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainability of Hotline Guided Decision-Making training and transfer of learning activities integrated into DHS Hotline supervision and management. ○ Regular review of a sample of screened out reports to ensure quality decision-making and tracking of families, including re-reporting or acceptance for service. ○ Continued acceptance of referrals by Family Engagement Centers (FECs) and meeting performance standards. ○ Increased engagement of families in the CAPTA program, with successful completion and reduced re-entry into the system. ○ Demonstrate knowledge of establishing determination and redetermination decisions of candidacy during the life of the case <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Increased involvement of youths in Youth Aid Panels and decreased petition filing. ○ Increased diversion of youths from the system instead of arrest. ○ Reduction in the number of youths adjudicated delinquent and placed in residential placement. ○ Higher rate of satisfaction of restitution obligations. ○ Implementation of a community-based gun violence prevention program for JJS-involved youth. ○ At least 50% of youth show evidence of non-gang/social media involvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 50% of youth participate in the youth development component of the program. • At least 70% of youth score between 80%-100% in the Pre & Post Testing on navigating their environments/neighborhoods around gun violence.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of a community-based, programming offering Cognitive Behavior Training for JJS-involved youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of youth able to see a therapist within five (5) days of program enrollment. • 75% of youth participating in their individual weekly therapy sessions. • At least 85% of youth reporting improvement/reduction in stressors.
Evidence of Completion:	More children and youth maintained safely in their own homes and communities.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In support and on behalf of the Philadelphia Family Court, is requesting funding for legally mandated parenting capacity evaluations when parties to a custody matter, or their household members, are found to have a record of one of the enumerated offenses and the Court deems it necessary to assess whether a risk of harm to the child or youth may exist if access to the child or youth is granted. ○ Increase in funding for the Community Service and Restitution Fund, specifically raising the restitution rate from \$10 per hour to \$15 per hour, to address the substantial increase in restitution amounts due to automobile theft and vandalism. ○ Continued funding for Graduated Response incentives, which provide incentives and interventions for juvenile offenders based on their compliance with goals. ○ Continued funding to incorporate a gender-specific program into the services offered to juvenile offenders involved in violent crimes or gun violence. This program aims to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of female youth in the juvenile justice system, including those who have experienced trauma, poverty, sexual violence, and school suspension or expulsion. ○ Continued funding for gun violence prevention, including research planning-project manager, programming implementation-project manager, and the development and expansion of gun violence prevention programs throughout the city. ○ Funding for Juvenile Probation Community Relations Units in both to support community engagement efforts. ○ New funding to establish a trauma-informed and anti-racist system within the Juvenile Justice system. This includes partnering with Hall Mercer Behavioral Health to meet the behavioral health needs of youth at the PJJSC and adopting evidence-informed practices, reviewing policies, elevating the voices of youth and families, and facilitating cross-system collaboration. ○ Funding to acquire an additional 100 GPS devices as an alternative to secure detention for lower offending youth, creating room/space within the PJJSC.
Current Status:	Various- demonstration of need, implementation, increased utilization, or maintenance

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Monitoring Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement a process to gather feedback from program stakeholders, such as clients, staff, and community partners, to assess their satisfaction and identify areas of improvement. ○ Conduct periodic quality assurance reviews of program operations, including documentation, procedures, and compliance with regulations and best practices. ○ Analyze data collected from various sources, including surveys, assessments, and program records, to identify trends, patterns, and areas requiring intervention or additional support. ○ Provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to program staff to enhance their skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in delivering services. ○ Utilize reports to provide regular updates on key program metrics, outcomes, and trends to stakeholders and decision-makers. ○ Conduct regular case reviews and audits to ensure adherence to program protocols, identify areas of non-compliance, and implement corrective actions as needed. ○ Foster collaboration and information sharing between different departments and agencies involved in delivering related services to ensure coordination, efficiency, and alignment of efforts. ○ Conduct program evaluations and research studies to assess the effectiveness of interventions, identify best practices, and inform program improvements and policy decisions. ○ Utilize a systematic approach for continuous improvement, including regular review of monitoring data, stakeholder feedback, and best practices, and implementation of evidence-based strategies to enhance program outcomes.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

Strategy 2:	Engage children, youth, and families in targeted prevention programs aimed at diverting them from entering the child welfare system and juvenile justice system.
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to improve recruitment and retention strategies for Out-of-School Time (OST) programs. OST will continue to integrate and monitor newly added supports and staff to increase access to OST and support families throughout their enrollment in OST. ○ Expand Out-of-School Time (OST) program through primary prevention efforts and additional 2000 year-round slots. ○ Deeper collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia to ensure programs remain distributed throughout the city to allow youth to connect to programs in their home communities.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand Philly Families CAN (PF-CAN) SupportLine services and resources to address concrete needs of children and families in Philadelphia. ○ Expand current youth workforce development activities through the school year via Career-Connected Learning PHL (C2L-PHL) by adding more slots and providers to address the demand for opportunities.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased family supports through truancy providers, resulting in a decrease in truancy referrals to Regional Truancy and Family Court. ○ Increased presence of out-of-school time programs in priority neighborhoods ○ Increased attendance in out-of-school time programs. ○ For the summer, OST programming, we will collect program quality information via surveys and program observations.
Evidence of Completion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elimination of barriers to regular school attendance is achieved. During the 2023-24 School Year, over 1,700 Early Intervention cases were successfully closed, meaning that barriers to attendance were addressed through case management services. Additionally, over 900 Regional Truancy Court cases were closed due to the student no longer being truant. ○ Families are diverted away from the court system and formal child welfare services for educational barriers. To date, of the 7,000 youth who had Early Intervention cases during the 2023-24 school year, only 650 students (9%) had a subsequent Regional Truancy Court case. This means that the vast majority of students (91%) did not escalate to truancy court.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased funding for Integrated Case Management in 20 Community Schools- The goal of this integrated case management model is to decrease the number of young people entering the child welfare system. Early data has shown that the early intervention model is reaching its intention which is to reduce the number of young people who enter the formal child welfare system. <i>OCF was able to leverage other City dollars to fully fund the program. No future request.</i> ○ Full-year funding for additional staff to support program evaluations for OCF's Truancy Intervention Prevention Services (TIPS) and General Case Management (GCM) Services (partial request granted last fiscal year) ○ Increase funding for Out of School Time ("OST") programming. <i>OCF is submitting a request for the additional slots.</i> ○ Increased funding for Philly Families Can Supportline to expand services to families with children up through age 17, develop and track prioritized service slots, and provide intensive case management through DHS Diversion services such as Family Empowerment Services and Family Empowerment Centers.

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Current Status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased family engagement through truancy providers, resulting in a decrease in truancy referrals to Regional Truancy and Family Court. In progress. During the 2023-24 school year, over 1,900 Early Intervention truancy cases were successfully closed, addressing barriers to attendance through case management services. ○ Over 900 Regional Truancy Court cases were closed as the student was no longer truant. ○ Increased presence of out-of-school time programs in priority neighborhoods. In FY22-23, OCF identified priority neighborhoods for the FY23-26 OST site RFP cycle based on community-level factors and the presence of existing free or low-cost OST programming. OCF prioritized placing programs in these priority neighborhoods to ensure more equitable access to programming. ○ Increased attendance in out-of-school time programs. As of March 31, 2025, afterschool programs served over 9,800 youth. ○ For the summer, OST programming will collect program quality information via surveys and program observations. In preparation for the summer, staff have received trainings on validated tools and identified schedules for program observation and survey distribution. ○ In progress
Monitoring Plan:	Continuously evaluate, monitor, and expand services, including out-of-school time and case management services, to effectively address the specific needs of the school community and provide targeted support.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

Outcome #2: Increase in Timely Reunifications and other Permanency (including CFSR indicators not met or exceeded by Phila DHS related to timeliness to permanency)

Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	Strengthen Family Engagement and Improved Practice for Timely Reunifications and Permanency
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Philadelphia DHS embraced the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Court's Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) to increase timely reunification and other permanency indicators. ○ Expand the Philadelphia Law Department's Redaction project to eliminate the backlog of client record requests and to adequately and timely handle the increased number of requests, allowing the attorneys assigned to courtrooms to continue to focus on timely permanency.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue expanding the provision of quality parent representation in dependency proceedings through the Enhanced Legal Representation efforts. This will ensure that parents have adequate support and advocacy throughout the legal process. ○ Expand the family voice portfolio to strengthen accountability and consistent engagement of biological families. ○ Collaborate with Family Finding & FGDM partners to align the scope of work with FEI, enhancing practice in keeping families engaged in the planning process and securing viable family supports for kinship. Streamline the submission of CRRFM & Family Finding reports through the Law Department to the court, facilitating the provision of necessary services for children involved in the dependency system. ○ Monitor the newly incorporated Kinship Navigator Program developed to identify appropriate kinship care options for youth in residential placement settings, reduce the rate of placement disruptions for children and youth, increase the number of children and youth placed in kinship care settings, enhance family engagement, and leverage community resources. ○ Continuously streamline procedures and practices to minimize the time between termination of parental rights and finalization, ensuring a prompt and efficient process.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the number of youths who are reunified. ○ Increase the number of youths reunified within 12 months of placement. ○ Decrease reentry into care after reunification. ○ Decrease placement moves so that reunification/permanency can happen in a timelier manner. ○ Increase the number of youths adopted or awarded permanent legal custody within 24 months. ○ Shorten time between termination of parental rights and finalization. ○ Increase the family engagement scores in the CUA scorecard. ○ Increase use of kin. ○ Increase in the number of timely and focused transition plans for older youth. ○ Increase the number of resource parents who can care for youth with complex behavioral and physical health concerns. ○ Decrease the number of youth re-entering care after reunification. ○ Reduce the average caseload for each attorney by 20%.
Evidence of Completion:	More children and youth achieving timely reunification or other permanency.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase allocation to expand quality representation in dependency proceedings through Enhanced Legal Representation (component of FEI) efforts. An additional four (4) attorneys are needed, resulting in a total of six members on each team.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase funding for the Law Department's Redaction project contracted services. ○ Maintenance funding for Family Unification Program (FUP)/Rapid Re-housing for Reunification. ○ Maintenance funding for Kinship Navigator Program Model ○ Increase utilization of the Rapid Rehousing for Reunification Program to meet the needs of families in housing programs, allowing for timely reunification. ○ Increase funding for Community Legal Services' Multidisciplinary Parent Representation to expand legal services and support to families in dependency proceedings, ensuring that children remain in their homes, increasing the use of kinship, and reducing unnecessary system involvement.
Current Status:	Various- demonstration of need, implementation and in progress.
Monitoring Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Streamlined Reporting-Implement a standardized reporting process to ensure consistent and timely reporting of benchmark results. Strengthen the reconciliation process between PMT and CUAs to address any issues or missing information in a timely manner. Regular communication and collaboration should be established to resolve discrepancies and ensure accurate data for monitoring. ○ Conduct an annual reconciliation of the final benchmark list with CUAs before calculating the reinvestment. This step ensures that the reinvestment calculation is based on accurate and verified data, promoting transparency and accountability. ○ Improve communication channels between PMT and each CUA to share the benchmark results effectively. This can include providing comprehensive reports that highlight the achievements and areas for improvement, along with actionable recommendations. ○ Adjust the provider evaluation frequency to a biannual basis for providers with a high number of service concerns. This more frequent evaluation ensures that ongoing issues are addressed promptly, and providers receive the necessary support and monitoring. ○ Conduct regular reviews of case files to ensure the consistent utilization of Family Finding and Accurint. These reviews should be performed systematically and provide feedback to CUAs on areas for improvement and best practices. ○ Foster a culture of continuous improvement by soliciting feedback from CUAs and providers regarding the monitoring process. Regularly assess the effectiveness of the monitoring system, identify bottlenecks, and implement necessary enhancements to streamline operations.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	
Strategy 2	Utilize practices and resources/programs to assist older youth and families in successfully exiting the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

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Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued utilization of the Fostering Youth Independence (FYI) program that includes clear indicators, data collection methods, and reporting mechanisms. Monitoring activities to assess the program's effectiveness in providing housing vouchers and support to young adults aged 18-23 who have aged out of foster care. Continue collaboration among stakeholders involved in supporting older youth through various programs such as Older Youth Transition meetings, Resumption, NYTD/Credit Check, mentoring programs, Independent Living Services, and Community Based Older Youth Contracts. Facilitate regular communication, joint planning sessions, and sharing of best practices to ensure a seamless and integrated approach to supporting young adults in their transition to independence. Continue utilization of Life Set to reach youth who are not engaged in Achieving Independence Center independent living activities. This program will ensure that older youth aging out of care can establish supportive connections and gain the necessary skills for independent living, including education, employment, housing, and basic life skills. Maintain support for the Achieving Independence Center. These resources are crucial for improving outcomes for older youth transitioning out of the child welfare system. Continued support and utilization of diversionary programs through PDAO and partners. Facilitating diversionary efforts through programming such as the Urban Youth Alliance (Philly Connect), Glitz and Glamour, E4E, CAPP, and Collective Climb.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased engagement of the county's children and youth in educational systems. Increased number of youth aging out with successful permanency and/or housing stability in the community.
Evidence of Completion:	More children and youth achieving timely reunification or other permanency.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New funding to expand the Empowering Older Youth Project. This project is designed to provide specialized legal representation and social service advocacy to older youth in the child welfare system. The goal is to assist older youth in accessing necessary services, stabilizing in family or independent residences, participating in education and vocational programs, and transitioning into independent adulthood successfully. Hire Certified Peer/Youth Specialists to provide specialized support and advocacy for parents and youth involved in the child welfare system by consulting with older youth and former biological parents with lived experience in the Philadelphia

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	<p>child welfare and/or juvenile justice system to inform programs and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased funding to support the continuation of the Defender Association Child Advocate Unit (CAU) Peer Advocate ensures that youth receiving services through the CAU representation, support, and authentic engagement that promotes positive outcomes, stability, and permanency. ○ Expansion of the Support Center's Empowering Older Youth Project to support an additional peer mentor to their team that provides specialized services to prepare aging-out youth and young adults. ○ Maintain funding for older youth housing up to age 24 to assist youth who age out of the system with sustained housing support into adulthood.
Current Status:	<p>In progress</p> <p>Hired two Certified Peer/Youth Specialists as civil service/city employees; plans to hire two additional Certified Peer/Youth Specialists.</p>
Monitoring Plan:	<p>Collect feedback to assess participant satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and gather success stories. Use this feedback to inform program enhancements, identify gaps in service delivery, and make necessary adjustments to ensure the program effectively meets the needs of young adults aging out of foster care.</p>
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

Outcome #3: Reduction in the Use of Residential placement (including CFSR indicators not met or exceeded by Phila DHS related to timeliness to permanency)

Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	Enhanced Assessment, Monitoring, and Timely Discharge to Reduce the Use of Residential placement
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuing the use of the Commissioner's Approval Process, which ensures that key decisions are made at a higher level to maintain accountability and consistency. ○ Increase the number of referrals for Family Finding for youth placed in Residential placement. This proactive approach will help identify and engage extended family members or other significant connections for these youth, promoting placement stability and long-term support. ○ Utilization of Accurant searches as part of the process to identify relatives for family-based placement. This search tool will aid in locating potential kinship caregivers and facilitate the placement of children in familiar and supportive environments.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor the effectiveness of the newly incorporated Kinship Navigator Program, which aims to identify suitable kinship care options for youth in residential placement. Regular evaluation should focus on reducing placement disruptions, increasing kinship placements, enhancing family engagement, and leveraging community resources. ○ Maintain regular residential placement reviews to identify opportunities for timely discharge planning. This proactive approach will facilitate the transition of youth from residential placement to family-based settings or other appropriate placements. ○ Strengthen collaboration with the behavioral health system to ensure that necessary services are provided to stabilize family-based placements. This partnership will enhance the well-being and success of children and youth in these placements. ○ Ensure that each dependent youth receives a coping kit at the time of initial removal or subsequent placement moves as part of the CALM services. These kits will provide essential resources and tools to help youth cope with the challenges and stress of being in out-of-home care. ○ Continue the full implementation of CALM services to reach every youth entering placement or moving to a new kinship or foster care placement. This comprehensive approach will provide the necessary support and services to promote stability and well-being for these youth. ○ Implement trauma-informed specialized settings as a priority for Residential placement providers. The Department will update scopes to align with enhanced services outlined in the specialized residential setting guidance, specifically tailored to youth who are, or at risk of becoming, victims of sex trafficking. ○ Strengthen resource parent recruitment efforts to identify homes specifically for youth with specialized behavioral health needs, LGBTQ+ or gender non-conforming youth, and those with physical health needs. This targeted approach will ensure that these youth are placed in supportive and understanding environments. ○ Increase recruitment efforts for resource parents who are willing to have only one child or youth in their home at any given time to comply with court orders. This will address the specific needs of youth requiring individualized attention and support. ○ Identify foster care providers who are capable of recruiting and retaining professional resource parents willing to care for children and youth with sexually reactive behaviors resulting from sexual abuse or other complex behavioral health needs. This specialized recruitment strategy will ensure appropriate support and care for these vulnerable populations.
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<p>Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduced placement disruptions: Decrease the frequency of placement disruptions or changes experienced by dependent youth. ○ Enhance the process of placing children and youth with suitable and compatible kin, or non-related caregivers considering their unique needs and preferences. ○ Provide comprehensive support services to children, youth, and kin/caregivers, including access to resources, training, and assistance, to maintain stable placements. ○ Foster effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in the placement process, including individuals, caregivers, caseworkers, and relevant professionals. ○ Promote consistent and enduring relationships between children/youth and their kin/caregivers, facilitating trust, attachment, and continuity of care. ○ Continue efforts to incorporate youth voices into quality improvement strategies and practice development by pursuing survey opportunities. This ongoing engagement will provide valuable insights and perspectives to inform decision-making and enhance services. ○ Continue utilizing assessment instruments such as the Youth Level of Service and the Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument to inform Juvenile Probation Officers' recommendations to the court regarding the level of supervision, program selection, and length of stay for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. ○ Increase the availability of community-based delinquent placement settings as an outcome of priority. This expansion will provide more appropriate and effective alternatives to secure detention, promoting rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community. ○ Ensure the availability of emergency resource homes for children and youth in need of placement to prevent overnight stays in the DHS Child Care Room.
<p>Evidence of Completion:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More children and youth achieving timely reunification or other permanency. ○ A reduction in the use of residential placement.
<p>Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintenance funding for Crisis Access Link Model (CALM), Kinship Navigator Program Model ○ Increased funding for Professional Resource Parent Model- to provide comprehensive care for youth with multi-complex behavioral health needs. ○ New funding to contract with a consulting firm with expertise in engaging individuals impacted by the child welfare system to elevate the voice of youth and families more intentionally and strategically throughout the life cycle of data and reporting, including the co-design of data collection systems and processes, the co-creation of data projects and reports, the co-

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	<p>interpretation of analyses, and the co-construction of deliverables and dissemination processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased funding for Child Victims of Human Trafficking/Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CVHT/CSEC) Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care (PROMISE CVHT STFC) service is designed to meet the complex needs of child/youth survivors of sexual exploitation.
Current Status:	We have reissued RFPs to increase the continuum of placements to include Community Based Detention Shelter (CBDS), Secure Detention Services, and institutional placements. The goal is to select providers in the winter of 2024.
Monitoring Plan:	Increase monitoring of residential placement providers that have a high number of serious incidents or service concerns on a bi-annual basis. This intensified oversight will address any issues promptly and ensure the safety and well-being of the youth in their care.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

Outcome #4: Improved child and family functioning and well-being (including CFSR indicators not met or exceeded by Phila DHS related to timeliness to permanency)

Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	<p>Enhancing Child and Family Well-being and Support by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting parents, children, and youth through the traumatic experience of child removals from home. ○ Supporting educational needs of children in care.
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB.
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue support for Healthy Families America, which provides in-home services for families with young children. Enroll DHS-involved families with children up to one year old to promote positive parenting practices, healthy child growth, and strong parent-child relationships. ○ Expand mental health first aid training to include biological and resource parents, foster care providers, and residential placement providers. This training will equip caregivers with the necessary skills to recognize and respond to mental health challenges in children and youth. ○ Increase the number of trainers for youth and adult mental health first aid to expand the reach of this critical training program and ensure broader access to mental health support and resources. ○ Identify programming to be provided at the PJJSC for youth charged with crimes as adults, with longer lengths of stay and higher-end needs. Issue an RFP to procure the necessary programming that will address their needs.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a comprehensive Fatherhood Parenting program for young fathers who are currently detained in secure detention at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC). Establish a Substance Abuse Intervention program for youth who are currently detained in secure detention at the PJJSC. Develop and fund a multi-year system enhancement focused on a trauma-informed child welfare system that enhances a trauma-informed service delivery model for all DHS providers. This includes evaluating current trauma-informed trainings, practices, and programs implemented by DHS frontline staff and provider agencies and making recommendations for appropriate policies, processes, and trauma-informed curricula or trainings. OCF Prevention's Education Support Center (ESC) supports DHS, CUA, family finding and kinship care with its Best Interest Determination (BID) processes and interagency Teamings. ESC assesses supports at the time of child placement and ensures educational stability is supporting. ESC and School District of Philadelphia (SDP) continue to look at trends and evaluate how technology can support youth when their placement is disrupted and avoid when possible changing schools. Continued integration of DHS Nursing program to support a more robust on call system to meet the immediate needs of children and youth brought to the DHS Child Care Room for placement, such as monitoring and administering children's medication on schedule.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of school Best Interest Determinations. Percentage of DHS frontline staff and provider agencies trained in trauma-informed practices. Identification and implementation of programming at the PJJSC for youth charged as adults.
Evidence of Completion:	Improved child, youth, and family functioning.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund and develop community home model placements for female and female-identifying youth who have experience or high-risk indicators for involvement in commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. Provide specialized therapeutic resource home care for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. New funding to establish a comprehensive Fatherhood Parenting program for young fathers who are currently detained in secure detention at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC). New funding to establish a Substance Abuse Intervention program for youth who are currently detained in secure detention at the PJJSC.
Current Status:	<p>In progress</p> <p>Completion of school Best Interest Determination conferences.</p> <p>Of the 552 youth who had Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Best Interest Determination (BID) conferences in</p>

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	FY25 as of March 31, 56% remained in their school of origin despite being placed outside of their home of origin, a slight decrease from the 60% reported during the same period in FY24.
Monitoring Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCF monitors the number of Best Interest Determination conferences quarterly and has improved its system for sharing Best Interest Determination forms with the School District of Philadelphia.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

Outcome #5 Create and maintain sufficient infrastructure needed to achieve Outcomes 1-4

Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure sufficient quality staffing through improved screening process and retention efforts, training, simulation space, and IT supports to manage the child welfare and juvenile justice system efficiently through the following approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve candidate selection at both the Civil Service exam and during the interview process. Continue our incentive pay program to attract and retain staff. Solicit feedback at all levels to determine areas that require improvement. Provide tools and services to support work, wellness, and employee recognition. Ensure sufficient infrastructure to support innovative system-level programmatic growth and development.
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategies identified in prior year NBPB
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased marketing, collaboration with the City of Philadelphia's Central Office of Human Resources for job postings and updates and building relationships with universities and colleges to create employment pipelines. These ongoing efforts will help attract and retain talented professionals. Continue to pay for necessary clearances for new hires to eliminate a barrier to hiring. Continue conducting stay interviews of high-performing staff and their supervisors who have been with the Department for at least 5 years. These interviews provide valuable insights into employee satisfaction and help identify areas for improvement. Solicit feedback from new hires and their chain of command to inform the onboarding process. Ongoing feedback collection will enable continuous improvement of the onboarding

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	<p>experience and better support the integration of new staff members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain frequent training sessions for new DHS Social Work Services Managers and CUA case managers. These sessions will ensure that new managers receive the necessary training and support to excel in their roles. ○ Build an additional simulation room to train new DHS and CUA staff, allowing for increased capacity from 24 to 48 staff members trained at one time. ○ Purchase modern and usable open furniture to replace outdated cubicles in large open spaces. This will create a more modern and collaborative work environment that better meets the needs of the staff. <i>(ongoing)</i> ○ Continue enhancing network infrastructure and implementing network assessment recommendations to enhance security features. Ongoing efforts will help maintain a secure and efficient network infrastructure. ○ Completed the migration of ECMS (Electronic Case Management System) into a new platform and developed the system to meet CWIS (Child Welfare Information System) requirements. This ensures compliance with regulatory standards and enhances case management capabilities. ○ Continue building and modernizing the DHS case management system to improve efficiency and effectiveness in managing cases and supporting client services. ○ Continue to hire paraprofessional Social Work Aide staff, who continue to provide administrative assistance to DHS Social Work Services Managers in completing investigations, allowing managers to focus more on critical case work. <i>(implementation)</i>. ○ Allocate funding to establish a Hotline Monitoring unit consisting of program analysts and a supervisor. This unit will monitor Hotline calls, providing valuable call-related data to assist managers in their decision-making and improve overall efficiency. <i>(implementation)</i>. ○ Continue recruitment and retention efforts across the agency and all divisions. ○ Hire two additional Certified Peer/Youth Specialists to provide specialized support and advocacy for parents and youth involved in the child welfare system. <i>(implementation)</i>. ○ Expand Employee Recognition efforts to include monthly morale events, promoting a positive work environment and acknowledging the contributions of the staff. ○ Develop an implementation science framework and position descriptions in preparation for hiring Implementation Science Teams. These teams will support data-driven programming, new initiative implementation, and monitoring to ensure evidence-based practices <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ Continued integration of CQI associates to build greater capacity within DHS to more effectively use data to inform
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	management, system improvements, and strategic planning <i>(implementation)</i> .
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase in diverse qualified applicants and staff retention to actively promote diversity and create an inclusive work environment that attracts and retains a diverse range of talented individuals. ○ Improvement in recruitment and onboarding process to streamline the recruitment and onboarding process, resulting in higher employee satisfaction, better performance, and reduced turnover. ○ Enhancements in training infrastructure and quality to provide ample training resources, improve the quality of trainings, and ensure staff members have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively. ○ Enhanced work environment and IT system to provide a conducive work environment and efficient IT infrastructure that enhances staff performance and data utilization. ○ Average Salary Growth Rate to ensure competitive compensation and reward staff members for their dedication and contribution to the organization.
Evidence of Completion:	A Stable and Skilled Workforce.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New funding to pay for necessary clearances for new hires to reduce/eliminate a barrier to hiring. ○ Hire additional staff, such as Clerks, Supervisors, and Program Analysts, to support the training needs of new CUA case managers and DHS Social Work Service Managers. These additional resources will ensure comprehensive support during the training process (ongoing). ○ Hire additional HR staff to support hiring efforts, ensuring a smooth and efficient recruitment process to meet staffing needs <i>(ongoing)</i>. ○ DHS is requesting increase CUA wages and benefits as well as an increase to the Foster Care Administrative rate which will increase provider salaries. ○ Continued funding for the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) and Summit. ○ Maintained funding for Training Consultants.
Current Status:	In progress
Monitoring Plan:	The Executive Cabinet will oversee the monitoring of these items and provide regular updates during their meetings.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

Outcome #6: Eliminate the Disproportionate Out-of-Home placement of African American children and youth (in response to our root cause analysis, and the findings of the 2019 Entry Rate and Disproportionality study)

Related performance measures, if applicable:

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Strategy:	To design interventions focused on eliminating the disproportionate out-of-home placements and child welfare contact specifically for African American children and youth.
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the expansion of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's existing Philly Families CAN referral line to become a resource for families and mandated reporters for non-safety concerns. Ensuring family connections to prioritized service slots and streamlined resources through referrals to organizations that address the most common needs. Modifying and supplementing the statewide mandated reporter training to encourage a culture of support rather than surveillance. Continued system work on a multi-phased approach to address the inequities within our child welfare system. Central to our commitment to equity for children and families of color is the adoption of an anti-racist perspective throughout our actions. This transformative process involves reviewing, assessing, and revising our policies and procedures, as well as integrating anti-racist principles into our day-to-day practice.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	<p>Decrease in the proportion of Black children reported to the DHS Hotline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of GPS (General Protective Services; neglect-related) reports. Decrease in the proportion of parents reported to the DHS Hotline with intergenerational involvement. Increase in the implementation of neighborhood-level factors and investments to address families' concrete needs and enhance resource connections.
Evidence of Completion:	Equity for children and families of color is the adoption of an anti-racist perspective throughout our actions.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<p>To advance DHS's strategic goal of becoming an anti-racist organization, the continued partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) will provide targeted technical assistance and support. This collaboration will focus on integrating an equity lens into departmental policies and training practices, particularly within PDSE's Policy Planning and DHSU. We will leverage CSSP's expertise and policy tools to create a holistic framework for equity-informed policy development and implementation, resulting in a system that embodies respect, transparency, accountability, equity, and wellness for all children, families, and staff.</p> <p>This work aligns with a clear logic model: CSSP's input and activities will produce outputs of revised policies and training, leading to outcomes of improved cultural competence, trust, equitable services, and trauma-informed practices. Ultimately, this</p>

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	<p>will result in a sustainable, equitable, and trauma-informed child welfare system.</p> <p>To strategically align our departmental practices with principles of equity, DHS is maintaining its partnership with CSSP. This collaboration will support the revision of our mission, vision, and values, ensuring an equity lens is integrated throughout. The goal is to operationalize these values, transforming them into actionable policies and service delivery models that promote long-term, equitable outcomes for children and families.</p>
Current Status:	<p>Midpoint</p> <p>Currently 1,407 staff members have completed the WWR training in 2025.</p> <p>Currently, 1022 CWO staff completed all 3 modules of the Anti-Racist System Training.</p>
Monitoring Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilize time series analysis to assess the impact of interventions and determine evidence of completion. ○ Assess major outcomes, trend lines over the past ten years for key outcomes, including: ○ Proportion of children reported to the Hotline by ethno-racial identity: Monitor changes in the percentage of African American children reported to the Hotline. ○ Percentage of neglect-related reports: Track the percentage of GPS (General Protective Services) reports related to neglect. ○ Percentage of parents with inter-generational reports: Monitor changes in the proportion of parents reported to the Hotline with intergenerational involvement. ○ Assess the city-wide impacts of interventions on DHS contact and cyclical surveillance among African American families for non-safety concerns. ○ Ensure that the employed metrics are relatively stable for accurate time series analysis. ○ Continuously monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions to inform decision-making and improvements. ○ Establish a process for continuous quality improvement and strategic process evaluation. Additionally, DHS will receive support from top experts in the field of child welfare analysis and equity research to provide technical assistance.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

For Program Improvement Areas that were identified in the FY 2025-26 NBPB Submissions, please review them and incorporate the ones that fit with one or more of the outcomes identified above. This approach encourages development of a single plan which encompasses all your improvement efforts.

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Section 3: Administration

3-1a. Employee Benefit Detail

- ☐ Submit a detailed description of the county's employee benefit package for FY 2024-25. Include a description of each benefit included in the package and the methodology for calculating benefit costs.

<u>Non-Uniformed Employees</u>					
The following fringe benefit costs for non-uniformed employees are effective as of July 1, 2022, and should be added to all FY2023 costs which are chargeable to other city agencies, other governmental agencies and outside organizations:					
Municipal Pensions (Percentage of Employee's Pension Wages)					
<u>Plan</u>	<u>Employee Classification</u>	<u>Normal Cost</u>	<u>Unfunded Liability</u>	<u>Pension Obligation Bond</u>	<u>Total</u>
M	Exempt & Non-Rep employees and D.C. 47 Local 2186 members hired on or after 1/8/1987 and before 10/2/1992	5.002%	32.425%	7.668%	45.095%
Y	All non-uniformed employees hired after 10/1/1992	5.002%	32.425%	7.668%	45.095%
J	All D.C. 33 members & D.C. 47 Local 2187 members hired before 10/2/1992; and all other non-uniformed employees hired before 1/8/1987	5.002%	32.425%	7.668%	45.095%
10	D.C. 47 members hired after 3/5/2014; Civil service non-rep employees hired after 5/14/2014; D.C 33 members; Exempt,	5.002%	32.425%	7.668%	45.095%
16	Stacked Hybrid Plan D.C 33 and Correctional Officers hired after 8/20/2016 D.C 47/Exempts /Non-Reps hired after 12/31/2018. Compensation used in	5.002%	32.425%	7.668%	45.095%

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	calculating benefits is capped at \$65,000				
<u>Employee Disability</u>		<u>Cost per Employee Per Month</u>			
Worker's Compensation		\$ 198.66			
Regulation 32 Disability		\$ 0.65			
<u>Social Security / Medicare</u>					
	Calendar Year Earnings Covered	Effective Period		Percentage	
Social Security	Gross Earnings not to exceed \$147,000	07/01/23 - 12/31/23		6.20%	
	Gross Earnings not to exceed \$160,200	01/01/24 - 06/30/24		6.20%	
Medicare	Unlimited Gross Earnings	07/01/23 - 12/31/23		1.45%	
	Unlimited Gross Earnings	01/01/24 - 06/30/24		1.45%	
<u>Group Life Insurance</u>					
All full time employees except those hired as emergency, seasonal or temporary help					
Employee Classification		Coverage		Per Month	
D.C. 33 (except Local 159 B)		\$25,000		\$ 3.92	
D.C. 33 Correctional Officer Classes of Local 159B		25,000		3.92	
D.C. 47		25,000		3.92	
Exempt & Non-Rep		20,000		3.13	
<u>Employee Health Plans</u>					
These plans are available to all non-uniformed employees except emergency, seasonal, temporary and part time employees					
Employee Classification		Cost Per Employee Per Month			
D.C. 33		\$ 1,500.00			
D.C. 47		\$ 1,100.00			
Exempt & Non-Rep Personnel in City Administered Plans:	Single	Single + One		Family	
Keystone HMO 2	\$ 640.11	\$1195.50		\$1881.45	

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Personal Choice PPO 2	582.99	1090.51	1715.50
Dental PPO 3	39.32	72.75	114.03
Dental HMO 3	16.90	33.37	60.70
Optical 3	3.40	6.11	8.66
2 Based on self-insured conventional rates for calendar year 2021.			
3 Based on fully insured premium rates for calendar year 2021			
<u>Unemployment Compensation</u>			
<u>Employee Classification</u>		<u>Cost Per Employee Per Month</u>	
All non-uniformed employees		\$5.51	
<u>Group Legal Services</u>			
<u>Employee Classification</u>		<u>Cost Per Employee Per Month</u>	
D.C. 33		\$15.00	
D.C. 33 Correctional Officers		12.00	
D.C. 47		15.00	

3-1b. Organizational Changes

- ☐ Note any changes to the county's organizational chart.

There have been no changes to the county's organizational chart.

3-1c. Complement

- ☐ Describe what steps the agency is taking to promote the hiring of staff regardless of whether staff are hired to fill vacancies or for newly created positions.

DHS has implemented various steps to promote the hiring of staff, whether to fill vacancies or for newly created positions. DHS Human Resources collaborates with internal divisions twice a year to plan for hiring, classification, and examination needs. These plans are submitted to the City of Philadelphia Office of Human Resources to establish eligible candidate lists. Regular monthly meetings are held with each division to review staffing needs and provide updates.

To address the many vacancies in Social Work Services Managers and Youth Detention Counselor positions, an aggressive onboarding plan is being implemented. Although the Onboarding Taskforce concluded in FY 24, DHS continues to apply the successful strategies it developed. These include special pay incentives, revised job specifications and examinations, group block scheduling for background clearances, partnerships with local universities to broaden the candidate pool, new hire mentoring programs, behavioral-based interviews questions, and simulated training. **DHS is seeking increased funding** for FY 25-26 to cover the costs of clearances for both new hires and renewals of existing staff every five years, aiming to remove this barrier to hiring and retention. Compliance with the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) mandates that all employees with direct contact must obtain all three clearances. Additionally, all new hires must undergo a Sterling background check to validate their employment and education history before being employed.

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PaDHS has continued to grant a waiver for Juvenile Detention Counselors, allowing two years of relevant experience working with children in juvenile offender programs to substitute for completing 60 credit hours at a college or university. DHS continues to leverage the hiring and retention bonus for New Juvenile Detention Counselors. To improve staffing at the PJJSC, DHS also assists applicants in navigating civil service regulations. This approach has yielded positive outcomes, as staffing, while still challenging, has shown signs of stabilization through improved recruitment and retention efforts.

☐ Describe the agency's strategies to address recruitment and retention concerns.

- **Updating Job Specifications and Examinations:** DHS collaborates with the City's Office of Human Resources to regularly review Civil Service job specifications and exams. This ensures that the recruitment process accurately identifies candidates with the necessary skills for key positions such as Social Work Service Manager and Juvenile Detention Counselor. Additionally, DHS conducts frequent reviews of job specifications to reflect changes in duties and minimum requirements, aiming to attract a broader range of applicants. Exams are regularly reviewed to ensure exams are testing for the requisite skills and in some cases eliminating exams.
- **Ongoing Recruitment Efforts:** DHS maintains an aggressive recruitment effort, including ads on job platforms, social media, SEPTA bus backs, digital signage, and bus shelters, aimed at directing potential candidates to job application links and raising awareness about job opportunities in the agency.
- **Educational Waivers:** Applicants for Juvenile Detention Counselors can qualify with high school diploma with experience in lieu of the 60 college credit hours.
- **Job Information and Fairs:** Continued efforts in providing job information pamphlets to prospective applicants with information about jobs, career ladders, benefits, and training information. Candidates receive a real job preview prior to and during the interview process. HR representatives participate in job fairs at area colleges and universities.
- **Streamline the Onboarding Process:** Candidates receive a link to provide personal information to expedite the hiring hurdles. All clearances are processed by the HR team and the department covers the cost of all clearances.
- **Full Implementation of New Hire Bridge Units:** To support newly hired Social Work staff receive continual training and close supervision until their final unit assignment, ensuring adequate support designed to aid in the transition and increase retention. By bridging on-the-job training, the unit is designed to strengthen preparedness, ease the transition into permanent roles, and ultimately improve retention.
- **Social Service Aide recruitment:** Continued recruitment of staff to assist with the administrative duties and take on some of the responsibilities from direct work staff, reliving burnout, and addressing retention concerns.
- **Coaching:** DHS is committed to professional development and actively ensures staff has the opportunity for growth. After receiving professional development, completing Child Welfare Leadership Academy training, staff will also be offered the opportunity for coaching as a support on their professional growth as they continue to work within the system.
- **Philadelphia Child Welfare Leadership Academy (CWLA):** DHS has expanded the Leadership Academy across all levels within the organization, including emerging leaders. This initiative aims to develop leadership skills and competencies throughout DHS's entire

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workforce. DHS also offers an Alumni Coaching program to staff who attend the Child Welfare Leadership Academy within the Frontline cohort.

- **Employee Professional Development:** DHS continues to utilize the professional development opportunities provided via the continued funding for the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) and the Summit for Policy Development and System Enhancement (PDSE) staff. The purpose is to update knowledge and skills of PDSE staff needed to enhance all staff abilities to implement the goals of Improving Outcomes for Children (IOC).
- **Supervising for Excellence Training:** DHS continues to be committed to enhancing practice and addressing professional development needs. We have continued to prioritize the Supervising for Excellence training program is offered to supervisors, administrators, and directors, which equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their roles and contribute to the overall success of DHS.
- **Partnership with Child Welfare Educational Leadership Program (CWEL) and Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB):** DHS continues to partner with CWEL, which supports retention efforts and promotes career advancement by providing staff with opportunities to pursue advanced degrees and qualify for supervisory roles. Philadelphia County also utilizes the Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) students who are BSW students who complete an internship with DHS and are then hired within 60 days of graduation. program to provide educational opportunities for undergraduate social work majors preparing for employment in the county's Child Welfare.

Section 4: Required & Additional Language

4-1a. Assurances

The following pages include assurance forms to be completed by counties. These forms are:

- Assurance of Compliance/Participation
- Documentation of Participation by the Judiciary
- Assurance of Financial Commitment and Participation

**The following forms must be signed and submitted electronically via the
Send Secure Submissions folders on DocuShare.**

**ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE/PARTICIPATION FORM
DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUVENILE COURT**

The Assurance of Compliance/Review Form provided in this bulletin must be signed by the County Executive or a majority of the County Commissioners, the Juvenile Court Judge(s) or his/her designee, the County Human Services Director, the County Children and Youth Administrator, and the County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and submitted with the FY 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan and Budget submission.

The Assurance of Compliance/Review Form has two signatory pages. The first page is for the County Human Services Director, the County Children and Youth Administrator, the County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and the Juvenile Court Judge(s) or his/her designee. This page must be submitted at the time of the county's implementation plan and needs based plan submissions. The second page is for the signatures of the County Executive or a majority of the County Commissioners. It must be submitted at the time of the county's financial budget submission and must contain the financial commitment of the county.

COUNTY: _____

These assurances are applicable as indicated below.

_____ Fiscal Year 2026-27 Children and Youth Needs-Based Plan and Budget Estimate; and

_____ Fiscal Year 2025-26 Children and Youth Implementation Plan

Note: A separate, signed Assurance of Compliance/Participation form must accompany the Children and Youth Implementation Plan and the Needs-Based Plan and Budget when they are submitted separately. This Assurance of Compliance/Participation form cannot be modified or altered in any manner, or the Children and Youth Implementation Plan and the Needs-Based Plan and Budget will not be accepted.

COMMON ASSURANCES

I/We hereby expressly, and as a condition precedent to the receipt of state and federal funds, assure that in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955 as amended, and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (Contract Compliance Regulations):

1. I/We do not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability:
 - a. In providing services or employment, or in our relationship with other providers;
 - b. In providing access to services and employment for handicapped individuals.
2. I/We will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination.

I/We assure that these documents shall constitute the agreement required by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. § 672 (a)(2) for foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payments.

I/We assure:

- The County Children and Youth Agency and Juvenile Probation Office have the responsibility for placement and care of the children for whom Title IV-E foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payments are claimed.
- The County Children and Youth Agency/Juvenile Probation Office will provide each child all the statutory and regulatory protections required under the Title IV-E agency, including permanency hearings, case plans etc.;
- The agreement between the Office of Children, Youth and Families and the County Children and Youth Agency/Juvenile Probation Office shall be binding on both parties; and
- The state Title IV-E agency shall have access to case records, reports, or other informational materials that may be needed to monitor Title IV-E compliance.

I/We understand that any Administration for Children and Families disallowance incurred as a result of county noncompliance with Title IV-E prevention, foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, subsidized permanent legal custodianship, or Title IV-E administrative claim requirements will be the responsibility of the county.

I/We assure that all information herein is true to the best of my/our knowledge and belief based on my/our thorough review of the information submitted.

EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES

In addition to the Common Assurances,

I/We assure that I/we have participated in the development of the Plan, agree with the Plan as submitted and that all mandated services if funded by the Plan will be delivered.

I/We assure that these Plans comply with the "Planning and Financial Reimbursement Requirements for County Children and Youth Social Services Programs" as found in 55 PA Code Chapter 3140.

I/We assure that, when approved by the Department of Human Services, the attached Children and Youth Implementation Plan and Needs-Based Plan and Budget, including any new initiatives, additional staff and/or increased services and special grants that are approved, shall be the basis for administration of public child welfare services for all children in need under Article VII of the Public Welfare Code, 62 P.S. § 701 et seq., as amended.

I/We assure that, where possible, the county will cooperate with state efforts to maximize the use of federal funds for the services in this Plan.

I/We assure that all contracts for the provision of services addressed herein will require the providers to comply with Chapter 49 provisions (contract compliance regulations).

I/We assure that expenditure of funds shall be in accordance with these Plans and estimates, and Department of Human Service regulations.

I/We assure that services required by 55 PA Code 3130.34 through 3130.38 will be made available as required by 55 PA Code 3140.17 (b)(2).

I/We assure that the capacity of both the county and the providers has been assessed and it is my/our judgment that it will be adequate to implement the Plan as presented.

I/We assure all Title IV-E foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payment eligibility requirements are met for the specified children, not merely addressed by the agreement.

I/We assure that the County Children and Youth Advisory Committee has participated in the development of this Plan and has reviewed the Plan as submitted.

I/We assure that representatives of the community, providers, and consumers have been given the opportunity to participate in the development of this Plan.

I/We assure that the county programs that affect children (e.g., Mental Health, Intellectual Disabilities, and Drug and Alcohol) have participated in the development and review of this Plan.

I/We understand that the accompanying budget projections are based on estimates and that the amounts may change when the state budget is adopted and final allocations are made.

I/We understand that substantial changes to the Plans subsequent to Departmental approval must be submitted to the Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families for approval.

I/We assures the Plan was made available for public comment prior to submission and that any comments were considered before the Plan was submitted. I/We assure that all new Guardians Ad Litem (GAL) have/will complete the pre-service training prior to being appointed to represent a child. If the GAL has not completed the pre-service training, costs incurred for representation of children by this GAL will not be claimed.

I/We assure that the County Children and Youth Agency is in compliance with all credit reporting agency requirements regarding the secure transmission and use of confidential credit information of children in foster care through electronic access for operation by counties where no agreement exists between the county and credit history agency. This also includes limiting online access to users approved by the Office of Children, Youth and Families for the explicit use of obtaining credit history reports for children in agency foster care.

**COUNTY ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE AND PARTICIPATION
DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUVENILE COURT**

**THE SIGNATURES OF THESE COUNTY OFFICIALS REPRESENTS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY
COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE COMMON AND EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN THE
PRECEEDING PARAGRAPHS**

County Human Services Director

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

County Children and Youth Administrator

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUDICIARY

In addition to the Common Assurances:

I/We assure that I/we had the opportunity to review, comment, and/or participate to the level desired in the development of the Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

I/We assure that the plan accurately reflects the needs of children and youth served by the juvenile court.

I/We assure that the Juvenile Probation Office has actively participated in the development of the Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

Judicial Comments:

Juvenile Court Judge(s)/ Designee

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

COUNTY ASSURANCE OF FINANCIAL COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

THE SIGNATURES OF THESE COUNTY OFFICIALS REPRESENTS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE COMMON AND EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN THE PRECEEDING PARAGRAPHS AS WELL AS COUNTY COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE THE LOCAL FUNDS SPECIFIED IN THE PLAN AS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN THE MATCHING STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS BASED ON THE COUNTY’S PROPOSAL. THE LOCAL FUND COMMITMENT AS PROVIDED IN THE COUNTY’S PROPOSAL TOTAL \$_____.

Signature(s)

County Executive/Mayor

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

County Commissioners

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date