



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

DFPS Rider 47 Report for Case Management System Transition

December 2024

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Executive Summary

In 2023, the 88th Texas Legislature included a provision in the General Appropriations Act, Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Rider 47, to engage in activities to transition the current Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) system to a new system that is efficient, secure, and interoperable. DFPS must submit a plan to the Legislature no later than December 1, 2024, addressing the timeline and funding required for the transition to a new case management system. A thorough assessment of the existing gaps in the current case management system revealed the need for a significant redesign of the system to improve service delivery and meet business needs. DFPS partnered with their program staff, providers to include the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) staff, individuals with lived experience, technology vendors, other states, and other Texas state agencies to determine the most effective solution for the Department.

To overcome the existing limitations and challenges presented by IMPACT, meet business needs, and support legislative direction, DFPS recommends that the State:

- Replace IMPACT with a new, configurable case management solution tailored to DFPS staff and stakeholders. The solution will streamline casework, expand data exchanges, improve mobile and offline capabilities, and assist individuals with accessing vital resources.
- Implement the system using a staggered approach, reviewing current processes for efficiencies and gradually releasing new features for early return on investment and smoother transitions. This method supports sustainable change management and continuous operation.
- Opt to build a system compliant with federal requirements and leverage match funding, enhance data quality, and provide timely access to critical tools, reducing the state's investment.

The implementation of a new case management system using modern technologies will allow caseworkers to engage more meaningfully with clients and can help improve job satisfaction and retention. With the addition of performance dashboards and customizable landing pages, supervisors and managers will be equipped with tools to prioritize tasks and assess staff performance more effectively. Standardizing data collection across the case management system will enable DFPS to integrate data from community partners, enhancing staff productivity and decision-making, which will lead to better outcomes. This will also allow the Department to ensure adequate security measures are in place to protect the sensitive information that the system stores. By leveraging advanced technologies, the system can be updated promptly to meet evolving business needs. Additionally, DFPS can utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help caseworkers streamline summarization of case histories and deliver timely notifications about available services for clients and families. This presents the Department the flexibility and opportunity to implement legislative mandates in a more timely manner, such as central registry improvements.

The projected General Revenue (GR) expenses for this project amounts to \$89,000,000 over a period of seven years. The total project cost to replace IMPACT will be \$215,020,726 during the same

timeframe, but DFPS can leverage federal matching dollars and anticipated future appropriations to offset costs. See Table 1 for details. The cost estimates assume the vendor will be procured through a Request for Offer (RFO). Other procurement approaches would not have a significant cost difference but would change the distribution of funding, staff, and contractors needed across each year.

A number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) and contractors will be needed throughout the course of the project. The majority of these resources will focus on ensuring the program’s business needs are met during development and design of the new case management system; and a majority of the resources will only be needed during the life of the project.

DFPS has traditionally requested funding for IMPACT on a biennial basis. For the purposes of this project, the agency can leverage this same model or request all funds with special provisions allowing DFPS to carryover funds each fiscal year until the project is complete. Also note that DFPS will repurpose existing IMPACT appropriations to offset the costs of this project.

Table 1: Costs for New Case Management System

	Total Project Costs	50% Federal Reimbursement	Reinvestment from Anticipated Appropriations	Project Funding Needed – General Revenue
FY 2026	\$ 4,594,061.00	\$ 2,297,030.50	\$ -	\$ 2,297,030.50
FY 2027	\$ 7,346,677.00	\$ 3,673,338.50	\$ -	\$ 3,673,338.50
FY 2028	\$ 47,334,462.00	\$ 23,667,231.00	\$ 1,200,000.00	\$ 22,467,231.00
FY 2029	\$ 37,760,994.00	\$ 18,880,497.00	\$ 2,400,000.00	\$ 16,480,497.00
FY 2030	\$ 41,657,639.00	\$ 20,828,819.50	\$ 3,600,000.00	\$ 17,228,819.50
FY 2031	\$ 37,489,899.00	\$ 18,744,949.50	\$ 4,800,000.00	\$ 13,944,949.50
FY 2032	\$ 38,836,994.00	\$ 19,418,497.00	\$ 6,000,000.00	\$ 13,418,497.00
TOTAL	\$ 215,020,726.00	\$ 107,510,363.00	\$ 18,000,000.00	\$ 89,510,363.00

In response to the regulations from federal partners for a new, advanced case management system model, a commercial off-the-shelf cloud-based solution can transform DFPS operations. This system will boast external access, improve mobile capabilities, and enhance offline functionality, promising a modern, secure, and scalable platform that integrates seamlessly with other cloud services and analytics tools. Using this newer technology, the rollout of the new system can be expedited, enhancing data collection and exchanges with partners.

Implementation of a case management system can transform casework practice ensuring DFPS remains at the forefront of child and adult welfare services. The emergence of new technology offers greater flexibility, and DFPS aims to stay relevant to adapt to the evolving practices of child and adult welfare services.

Introduction

The General Appropriations Act, 88th Texas Legislature, DFPS Rider 47, directs the Department to engage in activities to transition the current IMPACT system to a new system that is efficient, secure, and interoperable. The agency shall submit a plan to the legislature addressing the timeline and funding required to complete the new system no later than December 1, 2024.

At present, DFPS utilizes IMPACT as its case management system, which was designed to align with the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) regulations established by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Over the last ten years, Texas has made substantial investments in IMPACT, with the Legislature appropriating \$101 million from GR and \$140 million from all revenue sources for the modernization and essential maintenance of IMPACT. Throughout the past six biennia, DFPS has strategically utilized this funding using multiple strategies that required both vendor-led initiatives and internal oversight to improve IMPACT's backend architecture, implement legislative mandates, and make enhancements for caseworkers. These enhancements improved the reliability, accuracy, and timeliness of information needed to support families and protect children and vulnerable adults.

While enhancements have been made, significant challenges still remain for caseworkers. Some staff must still navigate three different system architectures to perform their job functions. The current technical and data limitations require workarounds and manual processes, leading to frustration for caseworkers and providers and detracting their attention from critical casework responsibilities. Integrating advanced tools such as AI and robotic process automation is challenging due to IMPACT's underlying architecture and customized coding. These tools have the potential to transform casework practice by reducing data entry, streamlining workflow processes, and enhancing consistency and quality in decision-making for caseworkers serving children, families, and clients.

As cybersecurity threats increase, the agency must secure a safe and reliable system to protect the information it stores. IMPACT is a system which requires customized coding, resulting in costly and time-consuming changes that span months or years and also requires substantial resources to ensure compliance. Aging technology systems such as IMPACT require additional resources to ensure adequate security measures are in place each time an update is required for the system. IMPACT will eventually become unsupported due to the advancement of technology, thereby resulting in an unintended risk for clients and families. The Department will experience a degradation in the ability to provide a comprehensive patchwork of security and services for the system which may result in security breaches and corruption of data. These incidents could have serious consequences such as an inability to accurately track and manage provision of services, understand and assess a comprehensive history of clients and families, and ensure timely payment of services.

Additionally, IMPACT faces increasing demands including, but not limited to, the

implementation of Community-Based Care (CBC), which requires system changes to best support the model. While DFPS has made strides in providing support for these models through policy and funding decisions, more work is needed to ensure caseworkers and stakeholders have access to an optimal system. The IMPACT system requires ongoing investment to ensure the agency is adhering to federal and state mandates, supporting casework policies and practices, and providing information to clients, caregivers, families, and providers.

Business Case – Statement of Needs

To inform our strategy and development of business needs, DFPS used a multi-method approach to learn from others which included local discovery sessions involving critical internal and external stakeholders. DFPS also consulted with 34 states to understand their experiences with the implementation of a new system. This dual perspective informed DFPS of gaps, trends, and lessons learned from the experiences of other states and stakeholders. As a result, DFPS developed a plan to navigate potential challenges and better understand availability of software options to inform the decision-making process.

DFPS is also engaging in a Business Process Redesign (BPR) exercise to optimize the capabilities of a new system and avoid integration of processes which may be inefficient. Funding from Rider 41 of the 88th(R) Legislative Session provides DFPS the opportunity to contract with a third-party entity to evaluate and recommend improvements for intake and child protective investigations processes. A BPR, which is currently underway for Statewide Intake and Residential Child Care Investigations, will help identify and document gaps in business requirements between DFPS's current practice model and its operational processes. This includes identifying gaps in process documentation, continuity plans, and staff training to ensure program needs inform the development of a new system. This same exercise will be incorporated into the case management system project timeline with the intent to evaluate other program functions to eliminate redundant or inefficient processes.

Stakeholder Engagement

Meaningful stakeholder engagement is vital for DFPS to successfully fulfill its mission to promote safe and healthy families while protecting children and vulnerable adults. This initiative aims to improve user satisfaction from stakeholders, including DFPS staff, SSCCs, and partner agencies, thereby enhancing trust and engagement. DFPS has connected with more than 500 stakeholders to inform the recommendations outlined in this report. This includes the following:

- DFPS caseworkers, supervisors, and other staff
- SSCC caseworkers, supervisors, and other staff
- Persons with lived experience – foster youth, foster parents, kinship caregivers, and

parents

- Other state agencies and community partner organizations

Enhanced Tools for Caseworkers and Other Agency Staff

Child Protective Services (CPS), Child Protective Investigations (CPI), and Adult Protective Services (APS) staff experience similar challenges and requested a new case management system that allows external access to child welfare contributing agencies (CWCAs), improves mobile features, and enhances offline capabilities for syncing work once internet connectivity is restored. This feature is a consistent challenge due to the state of mobile infrastructure within the state of Texas.

- To effectively monitor client and family service referrals, CPS, CPI, and APS require interoperability¹ between state agencies. DFPS must have the ability to send and track requests for services sent to outsourced providers.
- Seamless transfer of data between DFPS and external entities would eliminate the need to share duplicative data through different communication methods. Effective collaboration with other agencies and community organizations is key to quality service delivery to families and clients.
- Statewide Intake (SWI) staff highlighted the necessity to operate within one case management system instead of the three separate systems that they currently must navigate.
- SWI emphasized that having offline access is a critical need to maintain service continuity when the system is unavailable during any unplanned network outages or other emergencies. Offline access would allow SWI staff to bypass the need for entering intakes into paper forms before inputting them into the system, which would save time for the intake specialists.
- Staff are unable to access case information or conduct casework on their mobile devices. Field staff expressed that managing a large computer while remaining alert to their surroundings for safety is challenging. They highlighted the importance of a mobile application that provides access through Wi-Fi and cellular networks, allowing them to document and review case details and safety concerns directly to and from their mobile device. All stakeholders agreed on the need for updated mobile capabilities to address these challenges and improve the timeliness and efficiency of data entry.

¹ Interoperability: Promote data sharing with agencies and partners so that information can be shared bi-directionally, in real-time, when possible, to ensure caseworkers have the information they need when they need it.

- Staff require technology that can support their workload with enhanced reminders and alerts for critical case tasks, accessible through their computer and mobile device. The current alert system is limited, making it challenging for staff to keep track of all their deadlines. Implementing a dashboard or sending text reminders for upcoming tasks could reduce service delays that risk client disengagement and strengthen the trust between clients and staff. More than 70% of field staff expressed that such notifications would help them manage their caseloads more effectively, resulting in quicker service delivery and improved outcomes.
- The process of uploading photos and documents requires navigation through multiple systems. Staff must print family and child service plans to obtain parents' signatures before uploading these documents to email copies to relevant stakeholders. DFPS frequently receives complaints about the untimely delivery of these plans. Further expanding and improving upon electronic signatures could improve the efficiency of document delivery, reduce frustration from parents, and ensure timely delivery.
- Staff encounter delays in task completion due to the limited auto-population in forms, which causes an increased manual workload. Caseworkers often spend time entering information into offline forms that is already available in the system. The use of external forms can unintentionally expose information and increases the risk of forms being lost or misplaced. Integrating forms into a new system and pre-populating information in online forms would save caseworkers time while ensuring all required information is collected. Approximately 90% of staff requested enhancements to eliminate manual tasks and streamline processes for boosting efficiency and achieving better results.
- The current case management system's challenges have contributed to staff turnover, with many expressing concerns about the system's limitations compared to the more advanced technology used by other agencies. There is a desire among staff to work with modern coding languages, which would allow DFPS to develop new systems quickly and effectively.

Once implemented, the new case management system will:

- Provide caseworkers the opportunity to dedicate more quality time with clients, reduce overtime hours, and potentially improve employee recruitment, job satisfaction, and retention, leading to better outcomes for the clients served.
- Include dashboards of performance, timelines, and work products with due dates. It will allow customization of the user's landing page to simplify and improve the user's experience to increase efficiency and productivity. These features will provide supervisors and managers with the case management tools needed to prioritize tasks, address overdue and pending items, and monitor and evaluate performance. In addition, this will enable caseworkers to prioritize their cases and tasks and track their daily progress.

- Greatly reduce administrative burdens and increase efficiency significantly through improved automation. This change will empower caseworkers with modern technologies, eliminate text screens and cumbersome navigation processes, and provide a more intuitive user interface for data entry and navigation.
- Enhance the case management system's usability, allowing users to accomplish tasks and casework with minimal effort. A user-friendly system has intuitive design, streamlined workflows, easier navigation, and straightforward functions and features allowing a reduction in training efforts.

Better Access to Vital Information for Parents, Caregivers, and Foster Youth

More than 50 current and former foster youth were interviewed, and all participants reported the need for an online portal that would provide easy access to their case details, benefit applications, and resource connections to improve their outcomes.

- Youth who have experienced foster care require access to documents such as birth certificates and Social Security cards to obtain services and available resources that will help prepare them for adulthood.
- A new system could provide efficient 'self-service' solutions that would allow families, caregivers, foster parents, and other providers the ability to interact with these populations electronically to find instructions, access information about their cases, and improve outcomes.
- Participants highlighted issues such as missed funds, barriers to higher education, difficulties in accessing appropriate resources, and a general lack of control in their lives.
- Former foster youth recounted turning to student loans because of missed deadlines or lack of awareness of available tuition benefits. Research indicates that 40% of eligible students in higher education were not utilizing the tuition and fee waiver program, yet those who did are 3.5 times more likely to graduate than their peers who did not use it (Watt & Faulkner, 2020).
- Enhancing support for youth can be achieved by implementing additional features such as a portal that sends digital notifications for upcoming deadlines and streamlines access to benefit information.
- Additional functionalities could increase participation in the tuition and fee waiver program and other services, leading to improved outcomes for youth transitioning out of care.

DFPS also lacks a centralized portal for parents and caregivers, and both stakeholder groups reported this creates significant obstacles in accessing vital information.

- By incorporating additional features, an accessible portal can be created to address these challenges while also effectively bridging the medical information gaps for youth, caregivers, and healthcare providers.
- A dedicated portal is necessary to help parents and caregivers locate resources, access case information and updates, and streamline service referrals.
- Providing timely access to critical data helps stakeholders gain a clearer understanding of the needs of children and youth, leading to more informed decision-making.

Stakeholders, to include foster youth, foster parents, and parents, advocated for a user-friendly system that would make resources, services, and case information easily accessible to those who need it.

Enhancements that Support the Community-Based Care Model

The community areas managed by the SSCCs are each different and their community needs are ever-changing. Stakeholders reported that IMPACT does not fully support the CBC model.

Many external providers, including the SSCCs, face considerable challenges with interoperability. Having access to all information about the children served by an SSCC enables informed decision-making for both the children and their families.

- SSCC providers are also often burdened with manual data entry requirements, experience delays in data accessibility, and must enter data in multiple systems. The current practice requires data entries for casework activity in both IMPACT and the SSCCs' case management system, which has led to data inconsistencies and payment delays.
- The manual tracking and entry of case information is time-consuming and increases the chance for errors. Manual tracking examples include tasks such as monitoring due dates for required medical exams, family and child service plan reviews, and upcoming court hearings.

Other challenges include reconciliation of data between IMPACT and the SSCCs systems, as discrepancies occur due to the lack of synchronization between these systems.

- A new case management system should provide each SSCC with the flexibility to use the system as their primary system and should be configured to the business processes or functions that most effectively meet the needs of their communities, supporting the overall child welfare goals of safety, well-being, and permanency.
- With well-defined data validation and master data management specifications, DFPS will be able to design methods for collecting, distributing, and consuming critical information more efficiently as business needs dictate.

To maximize the impact on the communities the SSCCs serve, it is essential to implement innovative and flexible solutions that enable swift responses to evolving business and technological environments. DFPS must be able to utilize solutions that meet their unique requirements and avoid one-size-fits-all systems that suppress local innovation and create barriers to operational efficiency.

Improved Reporting and Data Capabilities

Regional areas can have multiple practices and partners working together to improve the lives of clients. To address practice challenges and the pace of technological changes, the federal regulations remove the requirement for a single comprehensive system and shift the focus to the quality of essential core data elements. DFPS will leverage added flexibility to build an interoperable system to provide the SSCCs and external providers with important data to use in day-to-day casework practice.

- Agency partners have their own established enterprise systems, business needs, and reporting requirements and forms. Although these may have the same basic data elements, there are often differing requirements for dissemination, consumption, and formatting throughout the state, and sometimes even throughout the CBC's community areas.
- External providers, such as the SSCCs and other state agencies, are increasingly seeking access to near to real-time data to make timely critical case decisions, identify successful initiatives, and implement swift and effective changes.
- The ability to mine narrative data using natural language processing techniques would improve this process.
- Staff shared that having dashboards or reports that allows filtering for specific information, such as the number of children that have not been seen or upcoming family plan due dates, could help address this issue as well.
- It has been difficult to adequately support these entities with IMPACT, which was developed to meet previous federal regulations which did not support data sharing.

The new solution will be designed to ensure data meets rigorous federal, state, and tribal standards for completeness, timeliness, and accuracy.

- Data collection will be consistent and uniform across the case management system and, if applicable, CWCA systems. It is essential that data exchange and maintenance comply with confidentiality requirements set forth by federal, state, and tribal laws, thereby supporting child welfare policies, goals, and practices.
- DFPS could combine data from community partners with different data sources to gain a better understanding of their clients and improve communication, decision making, and outcomes for clients. These features will improve the ability to generate and share

state and federal reports, including Title IV-B and Title IV-E data, promptly with limited manual interventions.

- It will provide easy access to historical and ad hoc reporting, featuring point-in-time and cumulative data elements.
- This will support DFPS in meeting federal reporting requirements, determining Title IV-E eligibility, service authorizations, tracking related expenditures, and ensuring compliance with federal child welfare laws and regulations.
- It will also provide necessary data for audits, reviews, and other monitoring activities, while addressing federal, state, or tribal child welfare requirements, including National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) reporting.
- To maintain high data quality, DFPS must implement and maintain automated functions in the new system to continuously assess data integrity. The system should notify staff of data collection, updates, corrections, and entries, while also sending electronic requests to CWCA systems for up-to-date data.
- Additionally, it should reduce the need for redundant data entry and generate reports identifying ongoing or unresolved data quality issues.

Modern and Efficient Technology Tools and Enhanced Security Features

Ongoing advancements in technology can offer agencies better tools to interconnect and rapidly share data with partners.

- **Integrated Solution:** The convenience of an integrated solution will eliminate the need for and the maintenance of additional external systems, eliminate redundancy, streamline entry of data relevant to client demographics and needs, and reduce manual workarounds. It will improve data accuracy and quality, optimize data storage and retrieval, and accelerate processing times, resulting in improved staff efficiency and decision-making capacity. An integrated-system solution will also result in a single-authentication process for users needing access to automated resources.
- **Flexible Design:** The new system will align with current industry standards and promote a flexible and modular design, thereby enabling DFPS to more quickly address and implement needed updates to meet changing business needs and ongoing changes in child and adult welfare services practice. An integrated modern design will also provide an enhanced end-user interface, thereby achieving easy access and navigation based on assigned access.
- **Enhanced Maintenance Support and Financial Benefit:** The replacement of the legacy platform with current technology will allow more timely system enhancements to reflect the evolving practices of child and adult welfare services, simplify and lower the risks associated with system maintenance, and reduce operations and maintenance

costs. Authorized users will have more flexibility to make updates and modifications to some elements of the system in a more timely and efficient manner, without being dependent on a vendor's availability or schedule.

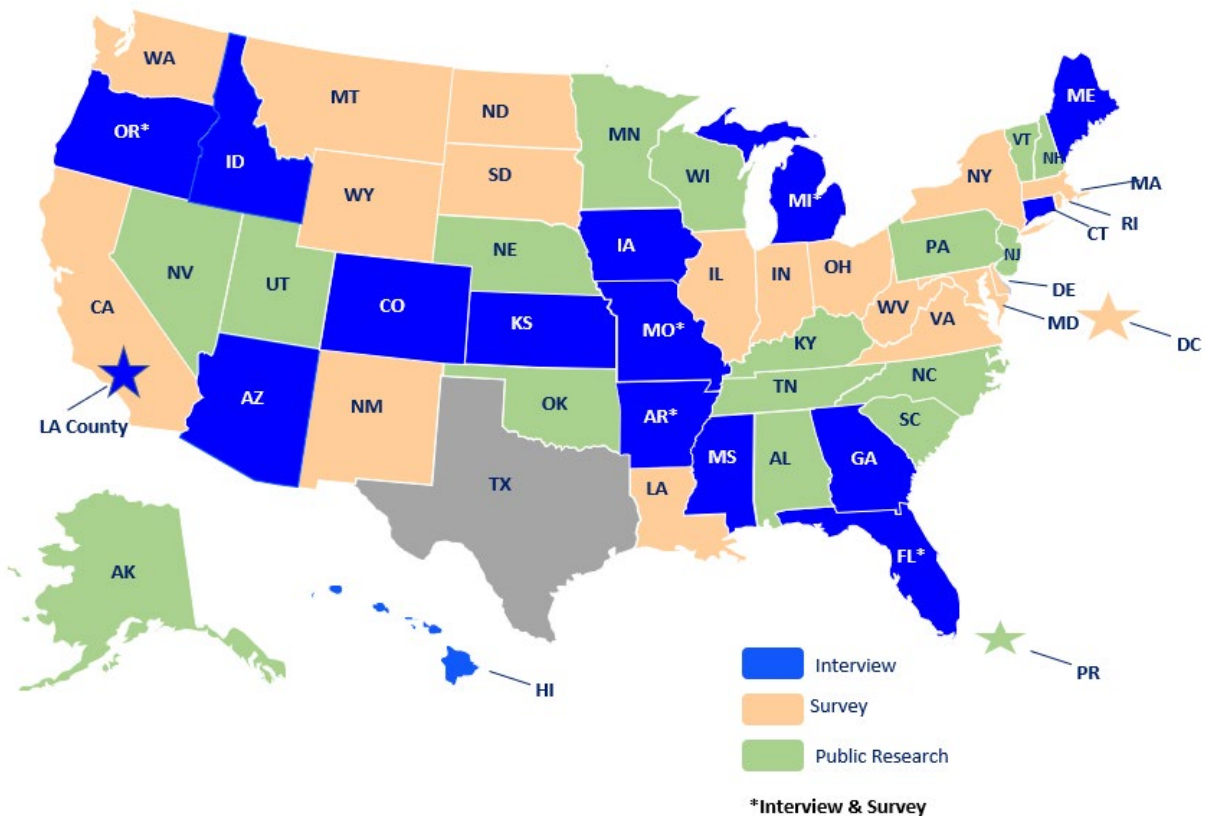
- **Security:** Modern architecture will address security concerns presented by an aging system/architecture. The new system will focus on encryption, data security protocols, compliance with Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) standards, and a clear division of responsibilities between DFPS and cloud service providers. DFPS will regularly review and update exception handling mechanisms to adapt to emerging issues, improve error handling strategies, and align with evolving security and reliability standards.
- **AI Capabilities:** Technology capabilities continue to evolve in the realm of AI. While many organizations, including those in government and private sectors, are cautiously approaching the implementation of AI, DFPS can leverage these technologies for a number of valuable use-cases including, but not limited to, assisting caseworkers in summarizing a family's or client's history and provide real-time reminders about available services to offer to clients and families. DFPS will follow any required AI or other applicable policies of the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) or legislative statute.
- **Mobile Application:** This feature will enable a more efficient and effective use of caseworkers' time by allowing access to a mobile application on their phone regardless of the time of day and location. As a result, significant benefits can be realized, including flexible staffing, improved timeliness of data entry, increased productivity, and the ability to address emergent issues with children/adult situations more effectively and efficiently.
- **E-Signature:** Using modern technology to enhance this feature will further support the mobility of DFPS staff. The new system will seamlessly integrate e-signature for staff to have full capabilities to sign forms, notes, and in some instances, allow clients to sign the required documents directly from the caseworker's device. The benefits of this feature will result in paper and mail reductions and reduce potential audit findings. Today, DFPS has a limited set of forms that are supported by this feature.
- **Forms Integration:** This feature will provide for seamless forms integration of paper forms into the case management system. This will also improve the accessibility and delivery of critical information.

The opportunity to employ and engage the use of modern technologies and new functionalities will be extremely beneficial to both staff and recipients of the services provided. Improved interoperability will assist agencies and partners involved in child abuse and neglect cases to more efficiently find placements for children, make informed decisions, and maintain data needed to create performance measures associated with achieving timely permanency.

State by State Analysis

DFPS has assessed solutions implemented in other states including off-the-shelf commercial systems that support bi-directional data exchanges and system integration. DFPS also inquired about the use of other services to support a major system integration, such as strategic planning and project management services, organizational change management, business process redesign and independent verification and validation. Other topics examined with other states included the approach, cost, and timeline associated with building a new system.

Figure 1: State Participation in DFPS Market Research



DFPS and the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System

In 2016, ACF adopted new rules for a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) model. This model replaced the regulations for SACWIS. While DFPS achieved SACWIS compliance in 2008 and continues to receive federal funding, states can leverage and increase a match in federal funding dollars by meeting requirements of a CCWIS model. This initiative was designed to encourage the integration of modern technologies and innovative practices within child welfare systems by providing a reimbursement of up to 50% through Title IV-E Federal Financial Participation (FFP). These changes present an opportunity for Texas to secure additional financial resources to transition to a new case management system.

While many states declared an intent to implement CCWIS requirements, Texas elected not to transition its SACWIS system to a CCWIS model. DFPS understood that the federal match reimbursement was contingent upon meeting all requirements, and there were concerns regarding the capacity to successfully accommodate all requirements based on the interpretation of the initial rules. DFPS was also in progress of the IMPACT Modernization project and intended to incorporate some requirements of a CCWIS system at the time.

DFPS is currently designated as a non-CCWIS system but can still take advantage of federal funding for a CCWIS system. Although a few states have implemented an operational system designed to comply with CCWIS requirements, ACF has not yet classified any state as CCWIS compliant. However, in recent years, ACF has modified rules and guidance allowing a more flexible approach for meeting CCWIS requirements. This increased flexibility, along with the potential to receive a reimbursement rate of up to 50%, has led DFPS to determine that adopting a CCWIS model would benefit Texas as it aligns with current business needs, to include those of service providers and partner agencies.

The previous regulatory approach, known as SACWIS, is prescriptive, emphasizes adhering to comprehensive federal guidelines, and includes a point-in-time evaluation of compliance with both functional and technical specifications. The comparison between non-CCWIS (SACWIS) and CCWIS systems highlights the differences in their design and functionality. Non-CCWIS systems are typically older, require extensive customization, and offer limited opportunities for innovation. Data quality is assessed solely for federal reporting purposes, with all data entered directly into the primary child welfare application.

In contrast, CCWIS is a more modern and flexible system that can adapt to evolving technologies designed to support state-specific needs and provide greater interoperability with external agencies and systems. The CCWIS regulatory approach is adaptable, allowing for flexibility in designing alternative systems. CCWIS also emphasizes data quality, integration, and improved outcomes for children and families. Continuous reviews, evaluations, and audits are conducted throughout the design and implementation phases to ensure compliance with outcome requirements.

CCWIS Trends

A recent analysis conducted by DFPS involving all states, territories, and counties found that most are either planning or have started the implementation of a new case management solution. The costs for these projects vary widely, ranging from \$21 million to \$1.7 billion. Of the available data on costs, the average cost was approximately \$110 million, which was influenced by the population size of each region. The two states with the highest projected costs intend to create a state-owned data infrastructure.

Implementation strategies vary by region. The timelines for implementation range from two to 10 years, with six regions aiming for a four-year completion, and most expecting to finish

within three to seven years. Approximately 58% opted for a staggered approach, while 27% chose a single, all-in-one² release, and 15% used a hybrid approach that starts with staggered before shifting to a single, all-in-one release. There is a notable inclination towards using products that are premade to accommodate child welfare practices, also referred to as a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) product that can be configured and customized to meet the needs of DFPS. Additionally, regions are leveraging real-time Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to support necessary federal data exchanges.

Lessons Learned

Many regions plan to integrate independent verification and validation (IV&V), organizational change management (OCM), and project management office (PMO) practices into their implementation strategies. Other insights gained from regions developing a new case management solution revealed the importance of adopting a more comprehensive OCM approach, incorporating OCM earlier in the project, and initiating data cleanup activities sooner.

By integrating OCM earlier in the project, regions could better prepare staff for the transition. Feedback indicated that late OCM integration left employees unprepared, leading to missed opportunities for enhancing efficiency and achieving project goals. This lack of preparation resulted in low satisfaction among staff, which caused inefficiencies in their work and stalled adoption of their new system. The absence of OCM initiatives also contributed to increased stress, confusion, resistance, decreased productivity, and disengagement of staff. Early OCM efforts, supported by a detailed plan, could improve staff morale and facilitate a smoother transition, benefiting those they serve.

Additionally, regions reported that data cleanup challenges proved to be significant and more costly than anticipated. They encountered difficulties with the volume of data requiring migration from the existing system to a new system, storing archived data, and developing a friendly way to access archived data if needed. Developing a comprehensive data cleanup plan early on in the process could help reduce issues with inaccurate and disorganized data.

Moreover, regions encountered challenges with technical coordination and collaboration with external agencies for data exchanges. They reported difficulties in finding the most suitable vendor or solution that would work best for their region. To ensure flexibility, some regions wrote their requirements in broad terms, which provided room for interpretation and allowed them to revisit their requirements to better clarify their requests and vendor commitments. Additionally, they recognized that refining the Design, Development, and Implementation (DDI) requirements could have improved their change control processes. Lastly, regions shared they would have implemented stricter metrics throughout all project phases to ensure better oversight and accountability.

² A single, all-in-one release involves implementing all components at once.

DFPS also met with states of comparable size and function to gain insights into their strategies and lessons learned. Many states included former field staff in their project teams to leverage their knowledge of current business processes and case management systems, which proved to be beneficial for the project's overall success. The inclusion of subject matter experts (SMEs) with practical experience throughout the project lifecycle is vital, as their knowledge can help bridge the gap between functional and technical elements. Challenges related to staff turnover were noted, which reinforced the importance of involving several SMEs from the beginning to help mitigate this issue. Several states agreed that when assembling a project team, it is important to purposefully include individuals with expertise in child and adult welfare, as technical skills can be developed later. Feedback from state interviews highlighted the importance of dedicating time to understand the unique needs of the state, which aids in the development of a system that prioritizes the needs of both staff and stakeholders. Actively involving stakeholders through focus groups and interviews is essential for identifying the challenges and business needs within the state. These discussions emphasized the importance of involving community providers to cultivate a sense of ownership in the new case management system.

States also stressed the importance of involving individuals with lived experience throughout the project lifecycle to ensure the final solution improves outcomes for children, families, and adults. ACF supports this approach and expressed their own commitment to addressing structural barriers and promoting equity by engaging individuals with lived experience. Collaborating with these individuals can lead to strong partnerships that provide a better understanding of the needs, challenges, and systemic barriers they experience. ACF recommends including individuals with lived experience in the development and implementation of technology solutions. In an earlier presentation, ACF discussed the opportunity for states to collaborate with young adults who have aged out of care and are struggling to understand their eligibility for pandemic relief. These individuals could help co-design a web platform and marketing strategy aimed at helping other youth in accessing available resources. This collaborative effort ensures that the solutions developed are informed by real-world experiences, improving the outcomes for those they serve.

Based on the research with other states and an analysis of their experiences, the key takeaways on lessons learned include the following:

- Include individuals with expertise in child and adult welfare, former field staff, and individuals with lived experience as dedicated resources on the project team.
- Engage stakeholders and community providers through focus groups and interviews to cultivate a sense of ownership in the new case management system.
- Adopt and integrate a more comprehensive OCM approach earlier in the project.
- Develop and initiate a comprehensive data cleanup plan early in the process.
- Write requirements in terms that capture both the unique needs of the state and facilitate

effective change control.

- Establish strict metrics for oversight and accountability throughout the project.

Vendor and Product Research

DFPS engaged with numerous vendors to explore the different options available for a child and adult welfare case management system. A series of meetings were held with vendors to showcase and demonstrate features and functions of their products. The DFPS team, comprised of technology, data, and program staff, asked key questions regarding the vendors' solution, focusing on aspects of viability, scalability, user experience, security, integration capabilities, and cost of ownership to include implementation, licensing, and maintenance costs. This collaborative approach ensured all perspectives were considered.

To explore all viable options, a Request for Information (RFI) was developed and released to gather additional information. Released in the Summer of 2024, this RFI requested vendors to detail their solutions, focusing on key elements such as technical and system architecture, release strategies, data migration methods, data synchronization for modular releases, and the associated risks. The RFI explicitly stated DFPS's intent for the new case management system to have data sharing capabilities, including bi-directional exchanges with both internal and external systems, and other state agencies.

DFPS shared high level requirements to allow vendors to demonstrate how well their solutions aligned with DFPS's needs. Responses from 30 vendors were received. Many of the products offered streamlined processes to support the workforce, newer offline capabilities, AI integration, and updated mobility options. This included products and systems which could support a CBC model. Other products examined with vendors included solutions that complement case management systems such as data analytics and robotic process automation.

Planning Framework

DFPS is dedicated to developing a new case management system that leverages previous state investments and aligns with existing enterprise architecture standards. This new system will be designed to meet the vision and needs of their child and adult welfare programs. The Planning Project developed a comprehensive plan in accordance with Rider 47, which includes strategic planning, research and analysis, assessing business processes, the development of solicitations, and evaluating readiness assessments for a new case management system. Several components are in place to support DFPS's plan to demonstrate readiness to transition to a new case management system, with a number of these activities already completed and others underway at the submission of this report.

DFPS established the Technology Transformation Office (TTO) to proactively lead, plan, and manage the Case Management Transformation Planning Project (CMTTP). The TTO is tasked with evaluating the transition to a solution that aligns with DFPS's goals, including an

evaluation of a model that would support data quality and facilitate data exchanges to meet federal requirements. There are significant opportunities to improve casework practices, optimize data collection, and increase operational efficiency. The planning of this new system aimed to achieve several key objectives that included:

- Determining how to accelerate service delivery of a new case management system, thereby improving outcomes for the children and families of Texas. This approach also aims to conduct an analysis and generate data that will enhance program evaluation.
- Engaging subject matter experts throughout the entire lifecycle of this project to ensure the integration of both functional and technical elements. Their involvement provides invaluable insights and guidance, facilitating a smooth collaboration between various aspects of the project and enhancing overall effectiveness.
- Documenting all requirements for a new case management system to ensure the transition reduces any disruption to DFPS' service delivery.
- Assessing readiness of the agency to engage in implementation of a new case management system to include evaluation of needed resources, training, and solicitation development.
- Analyzing the financial implications and cost of ownership of a new case management system.
- Leveraging lessons learned from previous projects with IMPACT and other DFPS projects in developing an approach for implementation of a new system.
- Identifying potential risks and issues for the agency.

Readiness Projects

The project planning phase includes several readiness projects aimed at ensuring DFPS is prepared for the implementation vendor to begin the transition to a new case management system. These projects include business redesign activities, reviewing forms and reports for accuracy and completeness, analyzing defects and data fixes to determine where the most common system issues occur, and identifying those smaller systems within the DFPS ecosystem that could be integrated into a new case management system.

Timeline

The timeline presented in Appendix A illustrates the different deliverables and tasks that have been completed and are still ongoing in preparation for the future development of a new case management system. Major milestones include the development of cost estimates, the strategy and roadmap for the Legislative Report, and several readiness projects to ensure DFPS is prepared to collaborate effectively with the systems integrator when system development begins.

Project Governance

If DFPS receives appropriations to implement a new case management system, a project structure or governance will be used to support its implementation. It will include partner organizations such as the SSCCs, state agencies, and other organizations. A version of this governance was used in the planning process for the FY24-FY25 biennium and will be carried forward to make and support decisions that best serve DFPS and its stakeholders. Additionally, DFPS will align its efforts with the DIR Project Delivery Framework to ensure thorough reporting and accountability throughout this process.

Governance - Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Steering Committee (ESC)

The ESC is the governing authority for the CMTTP. The ESC provides strategic guidance and decision making and approves major deliverables produced by the project team.

Program Advisory Committee (PAC)

The PAC consists of leadership representatives from all DFPS divisions. The PAC provides recommendations and approvals on major program related deliverables and activities.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC consists of the technology leadership within DFPS. The TAC provides recommendations and approvals on major project deliverables that impact technology. They also advise on enterprise technology, technical and data solution architectures, security, data governance, and accessibility aspects to be considered when developing a new case management system.

Executive Sponsor

The Executive Sponsor provides executive oversight and decision authority for the project, deliverables, and resources in conjunction with the DFPS Transformation Governance Committee.

Points of Contact (POC)

The POC committee identifies DFPS program owners and SMEs for business processes, system functions, and deliverables. They serve as the liaison between the TTO team and SMEs.

DFPS Partner Technology Council (PTC)

The PTC is comprised of SSCCs and legacy providers with whom DFPS contracts to provide services for children in DFPS conservatorship. They provide feedback and recommendations on the technology strategy and planning for DFPS to include the vision for a new case management system as it relates to their business needs (e.g., data interfaces).

Partner Agencies and Partner Organizations

Partner Agencies include Health and Human Service agencies that DFPS collaborates with currently, in addition to others such as the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), Texas Education Agency (TEA), Office of Court Administration (OCA) and others. Partner Organizations refers to community partners such as the Children’s Advocacy Centers (CAC) of Texas, local CACs, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and others. Partner Agencies and Partner Organizations provide recommendations on the transformative vision related to their organization’s data exchange needs for a new case management system.

Project Costs

DFPS has estimated the project costs over a seven-year period. The first two years (FY26-FY27) will include some readiness projects to prepare stakeholders and systems. The subsequent five years are dedicated to development and implementation, followed by two years of maintenance and operations. This timeline may increase or decrease dependent upon the approach and timeline proposed by the vendor. DFPS engaged a third-party vendor to review and validate cost estimates. The vendor provided recommendations for consideration as DFPS was finalizing estimated costs.

DFPS’ exceptional item contains other costs associated with implementation of a new system. These costs are tied to other services which include:

- Independent Verification and Validation
- Project Management
- Organizational Change Management
- Business Process Redesign
- Staffing Resources

DFPS has traditionally requested funding for IMPACT on a biennial basis. For the purposes of this project, the agency can leverage this same model or request all funds with special provisions allowing DFPS to carryover funds each fiscal year until the project is complete. Also note that DFPS will repurpose existing IMPACT appropriations to offset the costs of this project.

DFPS anticipates needing approximately 50 unique full-time resources for this project. The peak number of resources during the project will be approximately 25 resources. These resources will be a combination of FTEs, contractors, and temporary staff, distributed across the duration of the project. A majority of these resources will be allocated to the various programs within DFPS – CPS, CPI, APS, Statewide Intake, and CBC Operations. DFPS is leveraging lessons learned during the Department’s previous IMPACT Modernization project. In the previous project, DFPS programs were not adequately staffed to work within the project structure to ensure all

needs and requirements were adequately addressed. Their role will be to work with the vendor to ensure that DFPS's outlined requirements are implemented as the vendor plans and implements the new system. DFPS may also use contracted or temporary services for any functions that will not be required after the project's completion.

Project Proposed Budget

A proposed project budget for a new case management solution through a RFO solicitation has been outlined. This estimate includes costs for enhanced interfacing, reports, forms, data cleanup and migration, and support services such as OCM and training. Development costs are substantially impacted as the contract with the cloud vendor will include software and infrastructure licenses, along with support, maintenance, and upgrades. While exact costs remain unknown until detailed information is received through the solicitation process, many items can be estimated based on the experiences of other states and the DFPS technology staff's knowledge of market prices.

DFPS will utilize existing FTEs and will require some new staff and contractors to support the staff's transition from the old system and onto the new system. Some of these resources will be temporary staffing, used only during the course of the project. A significant number of these resources will be in place to support the programs as DFPS is developing and designing the new system. DFPS intends to seek participation and feedback from caseworkers and other system users. DFPS is using the same staffing and resource approach for the project as used by other states implementing new case management systems.

Assumptions:

- Current IMPACT related costs will decrease as the new case management system modules are released. DFPS estimates a 10% decrease in current IMPACT costs each year, which will be reinvested into new development.
- The cost estimate assumes the new system will meet CCWIS requirements and qualify for a 50% federal reimbursement.
- The cost estimate assumes software licensing costs for all SSCCs, existing and new, to utilize the new system for case management purposes. This may reduce system costs for the SSCCs.
- The cost estimate assumes the vendor will be procured through the RFO. Other procurement approaches would not have a significant cost difference but would change the distribution of funding, staff, and contractors needed across each year.
- Initiation and planning costs are incurred in years 1 and 2 during FY 2026-2027.
- Project implementation begins in FY 2028 and will conclude in FY 2032.
- Ongoing maintenance and operations costs will be incurred in FY 2033-2034.

- A total of 50 unique full-time resources will be distributed throughout the life of the project. The peak number of resources during the project will be approximately 25 resources. These resources are a combination of FTEs and contractors. The number of resources will increase as the project progresses; however, some resources will then decrease as the project is completed.

Table 2: Finance Costs for New Solution (via Request for Offer Solicitation)

	GR	All Funds	FTE
FY 2026	\$ 2,297,031	\$ 4,594,061	1.0
FY 2027	\$ 3,673,339	\$ 7,346,677	8.0
FY 2028	\$ 23,667,231	\$ 47,334,462	24.5
FY 2029	\$ 18,880,497	\$ 37,760,994	21.5
FY 2030	\$ 20,828,820	\$ 41,657,639	23.5
FY 2031	\$ 18,744,950	\$ 37,489,899	16.0
FY 2032	\$ 19,418,497	\$ 38,836,994	11.0
TOTAL	\$ 107,510,365	\$ 215,020,726	

Case Management Transition Strategy

The case management transition strategy is comprised of three phases: the Readiness Phase (FY26-27); the Implementation Phase (FY28-32); and the Maintenance and Operations Phase (FY33-34). The timelines for each phase are illustrated in the figures below.

Figure 2: Case Management Transition Roadmap



Readiness Phase

In the project readiness phase in FY26 and FY27, efforts will be focused on acquiring vendor services and onboarding vendors for IV&V, OCM, data management for data cleanup and migration, PMO, and Strategic Planning Services. Internal teams will ensure OCM and organizational readiness assessments continue throughout this phase and into the system implementation phase.

Figure 3: FY 2026-2027 Readiness Phase

	FY 2026				FY 2027			
	Q1 FY 2026	Q2 FY 2026	Q3 FY 2026	Q4 FY 2026	Q1 FY 2027	Q2 FY 2027	Q3 FY 2027	Q4 FY 2027
Req Prep	Requirements and Other Activities							
	Solicitations →							
Solicitations for Support/Readiness Projects								IV&V Activities →
								Data Cleanup and Migration Activities →
								PMO/Strategic Planning Activities →
								OCM Activities →
								PPM Activities →

Implementation Phase

During the project implementation phase in FY28 through FY32, development of a new case management system will begin and continue until every module of IMPACT has been replaced and sunsetted. The process includes configuring and customizing the base system module by module to effectively meet business and stakeholder needs. The timeline for this phase is depicted in Figure 4 and Figure 5. Note that this timeline is subject to change based upon the plan proposed by the vendor completing the project.

Figure 4: FY 2028-2032 Implementation Phase

	FY 28				FY 29				FY 30				FY 31				FY 32					
	Q1 FY28	Q2 FY28	Q3 FY28	Q4 FY28	Q1 FY29	Q2 FY29	Q3 FY29	Q4 FY29	Q1 FY30	Q2 FY30	Q3 FY30	Q4 FY30	Q1 FY31	Q2 FY31	Q3 FY31	Q4 FY31	Q1 FY32	Q2 FY32	Q3 FY32	Q4 FY32		
Implementation Support	Data Cleanup and Migration Activities																				★	
	IV&V Activities																				★	
	OCM Activities																				★	
	PMO/Strategic Planning Activities																				★	
System Implementation Modules	Module 1 - Intake				★																	★ Go Live
	Module 2 - Investigations, Case Management, Foster Care, Adoption, Kinship, Eligibility										★											
									Module 3 - APS								★					
													Module 4 - Finance and Grants				★					
																	Module 5 - Courts, Providers				★	
Interfaces, Reports, Forms																				★		

Maintenance and Operations Phase

The maintenance and operations phase will occur as each new module is released. DFPS plans to be in full operational status by FY33. After initial implementation, the vendor will oversee a

“hyper care” or warranty period, addressing any defects or user issues that arise. The vendor will also be required to conduct a knowledge transfer of information. DFPS will have the option to take over some maintenance activities of the new system or use the same or different vendor to perform those activities.

As the new system will operate on a vendor-managed cloud platform, the vendor can handle most routine maintenance tasks, including updates, upgrades, and security for both hardware and software. DFPS system administrators will manage any changes that do not require vendor intervention and maintain DFPS data and configuration changes for the case management application. The maintenance of data will require DFPS to monitor data quality and implement data cleanup processes and procedures to ensure DFPS’ data retains its integrity. Configuration changes can include adding new values to existing fields, such as a new safety category defined by policy or a new form to the form repository.

Closing Summary

To ensure the new system meets the needs of DFPS and its stakeholders, a collaborative network will be established, including both agency and external resources to improve business practices. DFPS is committed to this collaboration throughout this initiative to create a new case management system that is outcome-centric and strategically aligned with identified needs. The ultimate goal is to effectively drive an integrated and collaborative system of care that provides the right data to the right people at the right time to support informed decision-making for the clients served.

The Department recognizes that this is an exciting opportunity to remove barriers and support casework practice in a meaningful way as well as expand data sharing with our partners to improve outcomes for clients, children, and families. The Department is ready to work with the Legislature to achieve these goals in the upcoming 89th(R) Legislative Session.

Appendix A: Planning Project Timeline and Activities

	FY 2024				FY 2025			
	Q1 FY 2024	Q2 FY 2024	Q3 FY 2024	Q4 FY 2024	Q1 FY 2025	Q2 FY 2025	Q3 FY 2025	Q4 FY 2025
STRATEGIC PLANNING	Project Planning Activities (Advance Planning Document, Quality Assurance Team and Business Case/Workbook)							
RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS	Includes BPR, Stakeholder Engagement, Current Functionality Analysis, Federal Requirements Analysis, Gap Analysis, Technical Options Analysis, Market/Vendor/State Research							
LEGISLATIVE REPORT				Cost Estimates				
		Legislative Report				Submit 12/1/2024		
SOLICITATION DEVELOPMENT					Solicitation Strategy Plan			
						Solicitations		
READINESS ASSESSMENTS					Readiness Projects (Requirements, Data, Reports, Forms Prep)			
	Organizational Change Management and Organizational Readiness Assessment							