



# **Quarterly Report**

## **Office of Community-Based Care Transition Implementation Status**

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September 2023

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# Introduction

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As required by Texas Family Code, Subchapter B-1, Chapter 264, Section 264.172 (f), 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, the Office of Community-Based Care Transition (OCBCT) “shall report to the legislature at least once each calendar quarter regarding the implementation of Community-Based Care in the state.” Status reports shall be provided on September 30<sup>th</sup>, December 30<sup>th</sup>, March 31<sup>st</sup>, and June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year to the Texas Legislature.

## Background

Community-Based Care (CBC) changes the way the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) procures, contracts, and pays for foster care services. Under a performance-based grant agreement, a single contractor provides services to children and families within a designated community (also known as “catchments” or “community areas”). In Stage I, this Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) is responsible for ensuring the full continuum of paid foster care placements and other services for children in the state’s legal conservatorship. SSCCs also support adoption recruitment, matching, and home studies. In Stage II, the SSCC expands services to include unverified relative or “kinship” placements, services to parents, and the SSCC has sole responsibility for the legal case management function. In Stage III, the SSCC continues the provision of all Stage I and II services and is awarded with financial incentives and disincentives for permanency outcomes and additional performance measures for child safety and well-being. For information and data on the performance of SSCC contractors, see the [DFPS Rider 15 Report](#).

## Office of Community-Based Care Transition Organizational Structure

The 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, as part of Texas Family Code, Subchapter B-1, Chapter 264, Section 264.172, formally established the OCBCT in 2021. The OCBCT is a state agency independent of, but administratively attached to, DFPS. OCBCT and DFPS, along with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), work together to implement CBC. The CBC Director, George Cannata, has three directors who have key roles in moving CBC forward in Texas: Community Outreach and Legislative Relations Director, and two Directors of Implementation and Operations. Based on the current funding methodology, as CBC expands into new areas, OCBCT will receive one Community-Based Care Administrator (CBCA) per new community area, and one Program Specialist VI (PSVI) per four community areas to help assess and develop a plan for implementation. See Appendix A for the current OCBCT organizational structure. Below you will see an update for initiatives, accomplishments, and opportunities in each CBC area throughout the state.



# Update on Community-Based Care Expansion

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CBC continues to develop throughout the state. The March 2023 CBC Quarterly Report noted that there were three new SSCC partners that will be providing CBC in their communities- EMPOWER in Metroplex East, 4Kids4Families in Piney Woods, and Texas Family Care Network in Deep East. EMPOWER began Stage I readiness activities on March 1, 2023, was certified for readiness and went live in Stage I on September 1, 2023. On March 1, 2023, 4Kids4Families began Stage I readiness activities and is anticipated to go live in Stage I in Fall 2023. Texas Family Care Network began Stage I readiness activities on April 1, 2023 and is anticipated to go live in Stage I in Fall 2023.

Additionally, with funding received by the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, OCBCT and DFPS, in partnership with HHSC, are preparing to release four new Request for Applications (RFAs) to expand CBC in the Harris County (Region 6a), Bay Area/Montgomery (Region 6b), Bexar County (Region 8a), and El Paso (Region 10) communities. The anticipated timeframe to release the new RFAs is Fall 2023; the first SSCC to be awarded a contract could start as early as Fall 2024. OCBCT is working closely with DFPS on implementation of bills passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative session that impact CBC and the SSCCs, which includes supporting the implementation of the Texas Child-Centered Care (T3C), formerly foster care rate modernization. The CBC Director is also part of the Data Access and Standards Governance Council alongside the SSCCs and DFPS and supports the innovative projects this group is overseeing, including interoperability of systems.

## Community Outreach

OCBCT has placed a lot of focus on community outreach to provide information and awareness of CBC and what it means for the communities across Texas. OCBCT collaborates with community stakeholders and leaders to share information and answer questions regarding the implementation of CBC. OCBCT outreach staff participated in CBC readiness and education discussions in the Metroplex East, Piney Woods, Deep East, Capital Area, Bexar County, South Texas/Corpus Christi, and Rio Grande Valley communities during the last quarter. Additionally, in an effort to network, educate, and share information, the OCBCT has attended and participated in the following meetings/conferences to gather information and hear other innovative ideas and implementation processes:

- Dallas County Judges Meeting, hosted by Dallas CASA, May 11, 2023
- The Spring Foster Care Consortium, hosted by the Coalition for Empowering Children and Families, May 11, 2023



- Bexar County Judiciary Meeting, hosted by SJRC Texas | Belong, May 30, 2023
- Region 5 Community Townhall, hosted by Texas Family Care Network (TFCN), May 16, 2023 and June 26, 2023
- Region 5 Provider Townhall, hosted by TFCN, May 17, 2023 and June 28, 2023
- Hunt County Judges Meeting, hosted by the 196<sup>th</sup> District Court, May 23, 2023
- Region 9 Consortium, hosted by The Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) and West Texas Together, May 31, 2023 and June 1, 2023
- CBC 7 Community Meeting, hosted by TACFS, June 13, 2023
- Region 10 Preparing for Community-Based Care, hosted by TACFS, June 19, 2023
- The Bexar County Community and Systems Partner Workgroup, hosted by TACFS, June 19, 2023
- Dallas County Child Welfare Board Meeting, June 21, 2023
- Region 5 Judiciary Meeting, hosted by TFCN, June 27, 2023
- Fannin County Stakeholder Meeting, hosted by the Fannin County Child Advocacy Center and CASA, June 29, 2023
- Bexar County Foster Care Collaborative Steering Committee Meeting, hosted by TACFS, July 26, 2023
- Region 8a Community-Based Care Informational Session for Faith-Based Partners, hosted by TACFS and SJRC Texas | Belong, July 27, 2023
- Region 8a Community-Based Care Informational Session for Partners and Providers, hosted by TACFS and SJRC Texas | Belong, August 3, 2023
- Bexar County Capacity and Foster Care Services Workgroup, hosted by TACFS, August 15, 2023
- Grayson County Judges Meeting, hosted by the Grayson County Child Welfare Board, August 15, 2023
- CASA Townhall, hosted by Morris, Titus, and Camp Counties CASA, August 16, 2023

OCBCT continues to provide information and keep DFPS staff informed on CBC implementation updates. OCBCT staff are assigned to each area not currently in CBC to provide outreach, educate, and support community providers to be prepared to move to CBC. The OCBCT Outreach Team is committed to educating and supporting community stakeholders as they move through the readiness process of CBC, and continues to share a [CBC Outreach Request](#) form for stakeholders,

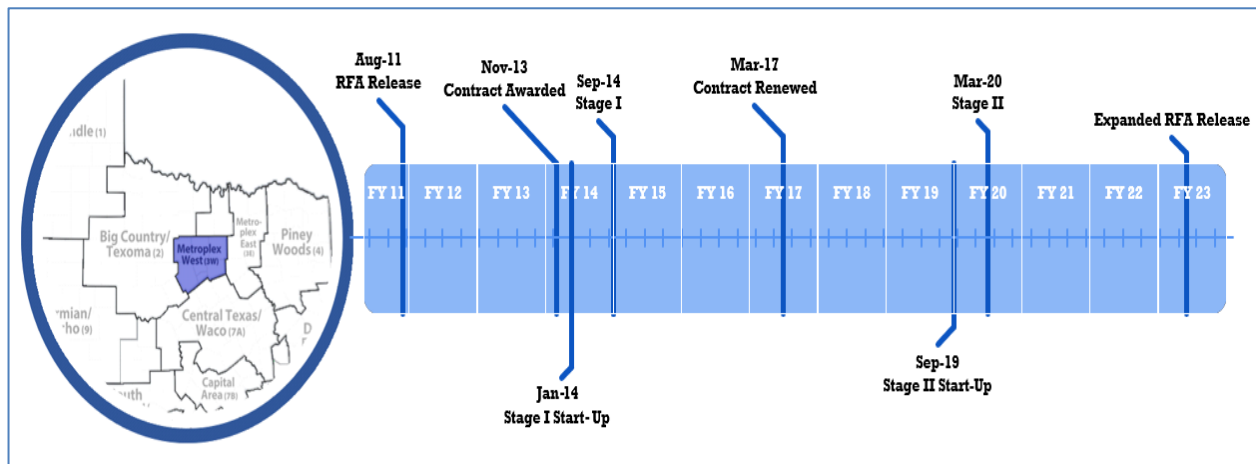


community members, staff, or any interested party to be able to request information and presentations on CBC. This form can be found on the external CBC website.

OCBCT has been working diligently to ensure all communities in areas under current procurement are aware of the concept of CBC and what to expect during the implementation process. Newsletters are being sent quarterly to provide CBC implementation updates to external stakeholders. Many presentations have been given to the community in each region to external partners and internal DFPS employees with the most up-to-date information on the procurement process and next steps.

## Update for Metroplex West - Our Community Our Kids (OCOK)

The Metroplex West community, previously known as Region 3b, is comprised of Palo Pinto, Parker, Tarrant, Erath, Hood, Somervell, and Johnson counties near Fort Worth. The visual below depicts the timeline of this community’s CBC progress.



### Texas Family First Pilot

The Texas Family First Pilot continues to grow in Metroplex West. Currently, there are 16 active cases. To date, there have been five case closures, and of those five, four were successful discharges leaving families with tools to better navigate their challenges.

### Kinship Care

Kinship care continues to be a heightened area of focus and currently 31% of youth served by OCOK are placed with family. OCOK has made a commitment to family finding and has created a unit dedicated to that commitment.



## Community Resources

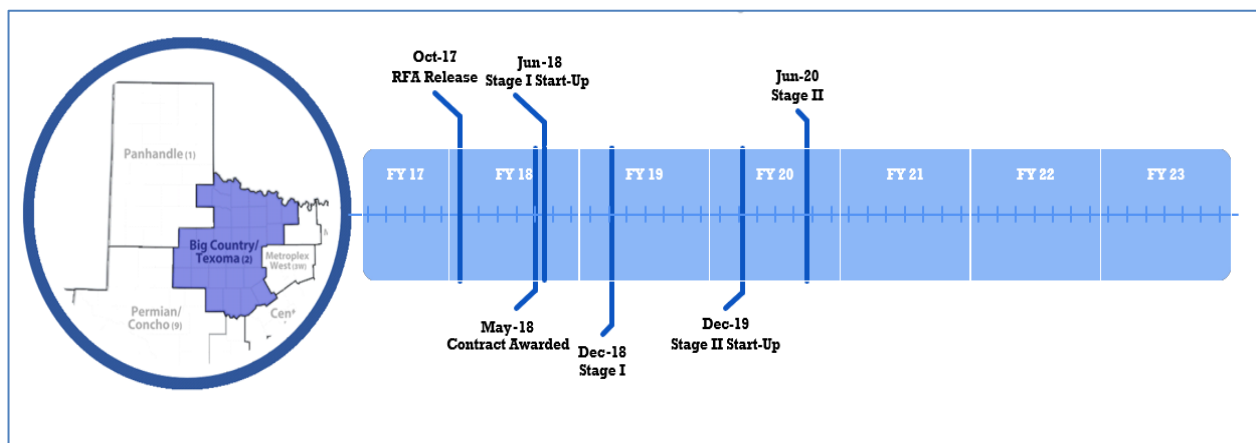
At the end of July and early August, OCOK held resource fairs to benefit their permanency staff in the six counties they serve. Local community resources met with permanency staff to enhance their understanding of the community partners that exist to best serve their children and families.

## Intensive Permanency Services

OCOK Connection Specialists have begun engaging with selected youth and are reporting positive interactions. As this intensive work has just begun, Connection Specialists are working to establish trust with the youth as the first stage in the process. The ultimate goal of the program is to help youth move to a space where permanency can be achieved, a process that takes around two years.

## Update for Big Country & Texoma- 2INGage

The Big Country & Texoma community, previously known as Region 2, is comprised of [30 counties](#) in northwest Texas around Abilene and Wichita Falls. The visual below depicts the timeline of this community's CBC progress.



## Fatherhood Forum

On June 8, 2023 and June 14, 2023, 2INGage hosted a Fatherhood Forum in Wichita Falls and Abilene. DFPS Fatherhood Specialist, Kenneth Thompson, spoke about the importance of engaging fathers in the reunification process and emphasized the importance of fathers not being lost or forgotten in the process. Alongside Mr. Thompson was a panel of fathers who each took on a different role in a child's life. The panel included biological fathers who had reunified with their children, foster fathers, fathers who advocate for children in their role as a CASA volunteer, and fathers who are 2INGage permanency case managers.

## Supervisor Credentialing



THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY-BASED CARE TRANSITION



2INGage worked with the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) to have their permanency supervisors attend a Child Welfare Supervisor training. 2INGage had 27 permanency supervisors who took the Child Welfare Credentialing exam and all 27 passed. The permanency supervisors now hold an additional certification of Certified Child Welfare Supervisor through the National Certification Board for Child Welfare Professionals.

## **Preparation for Adult Living**

The 2INGage Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program hosted an Aging Out Seminar for all 17-year-olds on May 31, 2023. Youth were invited to hear from community partners on a wide range of topics such as relationships, nutrition, aging out benefits and case management services, Medicaid, and financial literacy. The Youth Leadership Council also hosted a graduation celebration for all youth receiving their GED or High School Diploma. 2INGage had 33 youth who graduated.

## **Collaborative Family Engagement**

2INGage collaborated with Big Country Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to coordinate a Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) Training completed in early August 2023.

Approximately 120 2INGage staff and CASA volunteers attended the training. Participants learned about CFE tools which can be implemented into their daily work.

## **Qualified Residential Treatment Program**

2INGage began to pilot a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) in June 2023. They have been able to successfully place 13 youth into the New Horizons QRTP Audrey Grace House and The Ranch programs. The QRTP will provide a trauma-informed treatment model, 24/7 nursing/clinical staff, and collaborative family outreach and engagement services. 2INGage, New Horizons, and DFPS will work together to provide services for children with complex emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs with the goal to move youth through treatment and ultimately transition to less restrictive settings.

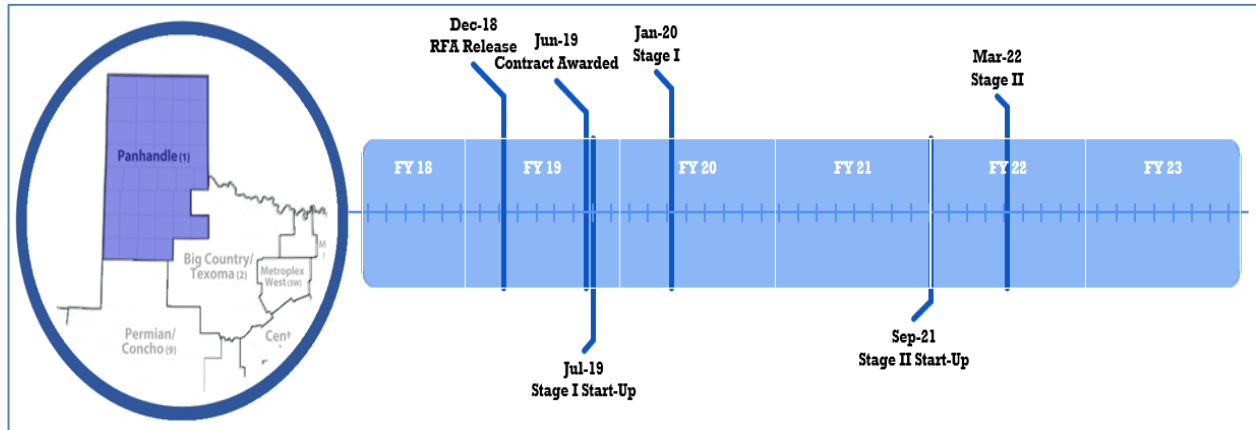
## **Texas Family First Pilot**

2INGage continues to utilize Motivational Interviewing, Parent Child Interaction Therapy, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trust-Based Relational Intervention and Functional Family Therapy for its evidence-based services. Currently the platform has successfully graduated eight families and is actively providing care to an additional 32 families. Their program goals remain steadfast in ensuring the opportunity for children to stay safely in their homes while receiving care.



# Update for Panhandle- Saint Francis Community Services, Inc (SFCS)

The Panhandle community, previously known as Region 1, is comprised of [41 counties](#) in the Texas Panhandle around Lubbock and Amarillo. The visual below depicts the timeline of this community’s CBC progress.



## Capacity Building

A key initiative Saint Francis continues to focus on is supporting the region’s Treatment Foster Care (TFC) contracts. Saint Francis is in the process of working a collaboration with the Texas Girls and Boys Ranch and One Voice Home to develop a TFC model that focuses on survivors of human trafficking.

## Community Engagement

Saint Francis partnered with the DFPS Faith-Based and Community Engagement (FBCE) team in Amarillo to host an All-Staff Resource Fair at Paramount Baptist Church. They hosted over 40 outside community partners to share resources with all DFPS and Saint Francis staff in the Texas Panhandle. A Parent Support Group (PSG) was implemented in Lubbock with Peer Facilitator Paula Bibbs-Samuels, LPC, and the first meeting was hosted in mid-August 2023. Saint Francis also added three new community partners, Calvary Baptist Church in Pampa, Abundant Life Assembly of God in Canadian, and Oasis Baptist Church in Amarillo, for supervised visitations and PAL life skills training classes.

## Texas Family First Pilot

The Texas Family Centered Treatment (FCT) team continues to meet weekly and the FCT consultant spent two days working with the team for their FCT accreditation. Saint Francis meets weekly with DFPS regional leadership and state leadership to provide progress updates. As of



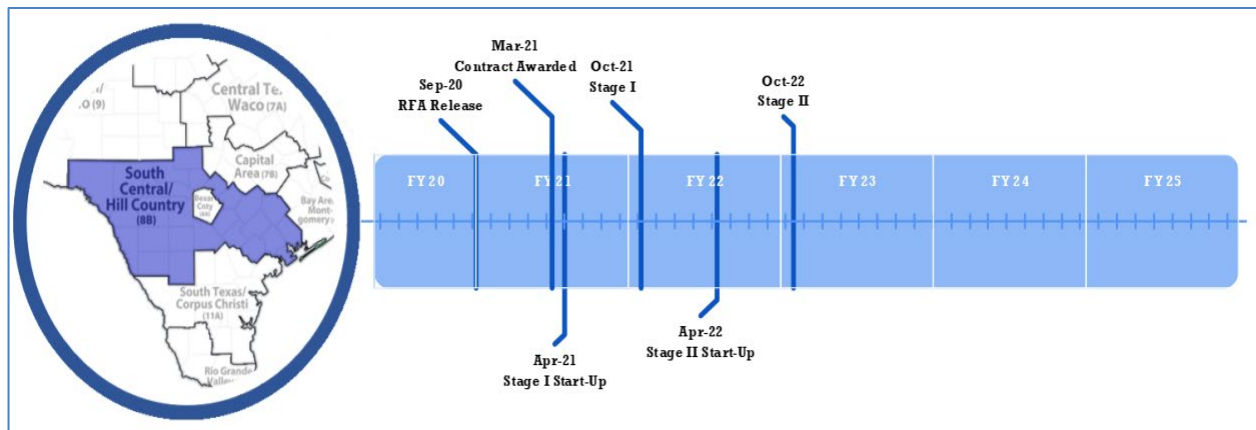
August 21, 2023, Saint Francis is working with 27 families and has nine pending cases to be assigned to FCT.

## Permanency Supports

Connection Specialists continue to partner with the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) program coordinators at CASA. The focus has been to work on building connections for those youth who are 15 and older in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) to enhance their ability to succeed. During this quarter, there were 56 family and kinship connections made. To prevent placement in residential treatment facilities, the Saint Francis Clinical Utilization team works with all treatment foster care providers in their community area to ensure appropriate youth are referred and placed into these homes. The clinical team remains involved after placement to check on a youth’s progress and begin discharge planning from the program.

## Update for South Central & Hill Country- SJRC Texas and their Division, Belong

The South Central & Hill Country community, previously known as Region 8b, is comprised of [27 counties](#), excluding Bexar County. The visual below depicts the timeline of this community’s CBC progress.



## Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety will focus on child safety by assisting the family in creating a safety net utilizing friends and family they can rely on to ensure safety for their child(ren). SJRC Texas | Belong will spend the next 12 to 18 months implementing the Signs of Safety model with Belong program staff. They will continue to fund this project into year two, beginning in January 2024.

## SSCC Joint Capacity Building Projects



THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY-BASED CARE TRANSITION

SJRC Texas | Belong is partnering with the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies, the Ladd Law Firm PLLC, and the other SSCCs to offer a training they are calling, “A Deeper Dive into Oversight.” The training will consist of two components: a virtual training that providers can reference to gain foundational knowledge, and an in-person opportunity to interact with attorney Norman Ladd and TACFS to find ways to improve operations across the state.

### **Texas Family First Pilot**

Belong, in partnership with DePelchin’s Children’s Center, continues to provide in-home family preservation services utilizing two evidence-based models, Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) and Parents as Teachers (PAT). To date, six families have successfully worked services and had their DFPS case successfully dismissed. As of September 1, 2023, Belong and DePelchin moved into their second year of the pilot and continue providing services to court-ordered families in 17 of their counties.

### **Family Support Services**

In an effort to preserve families and prevent children from entering foster care, SJRC Texas continues to focus on growing internal family support programs and services. SJRC Texas hosts caregiver support groups and numerous family engagement events throughout the year. In addition, SJRC Texas leads a community-wide Fatherhood Initiative whose goal is to provide opportunities for engagement and education to male caregivers and their children.

### **Permanency Round Tables**

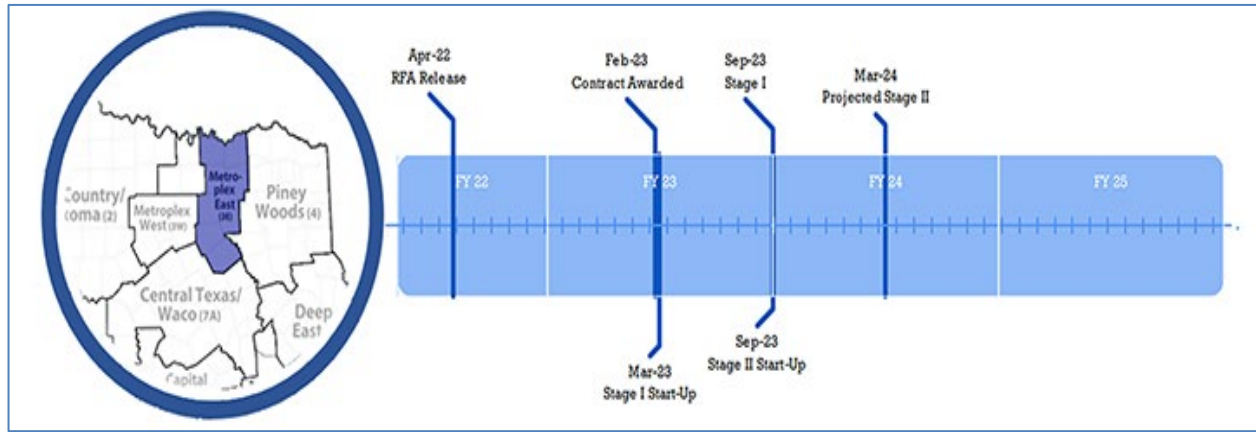
In partnership with Casey Family Services, Belong has implemented Permanency Round Tables for children in PMC in their counties contiguous to Bexar County. All staff completed the Permanency Round Table Training in August 2023.

### **Supervisor Credentialing Program**

During this reporting period, 20 supervisors completed the training component. The next phase will include observations and an examination. The goal is to increase supervisor proficiency and develop leadership skills to increase staff retention within their units.

### **Update for Metroplex East- EMPOWER**

The Metroplex East community, previously known as Region 3E, is comprised of the following 9 counties in and around Dallas: Collin, Dallas, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Hunt, Kaufman, Navarro, and Rockwall. The visual below depicts the timeline of this community’s CBC progress.



## Readiness Activities

EMPOWER continued to prepare for implementation of CBC which included securing offices in all nine counties, ordering office supplies, signing leases for cars and vans, working closely with the DFPS Information Technology department to ensure their systems were compatible, testing the accounting and finance capabilities, coordinating with other SSCC’s, and high-level meetings with DFPS leadership to prepare for the transition.

## Hiring Activities

EMPOWER interviewed over 200 DFPS employees who expressed interest in transitioning to EMPOWER in either Stage I or Stage II for various departments, including Intake and Placement, Finance, Data Management, Care Coordination and Utilization Review, and the Foster Care Program. Training plans have been developed and implemented for all new staff. The staff received the required training to begin work on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

## Community Engagement

Community Engagement activities include scheduled meetings with judges in the community area, and these informational meetings are designed to ensure that the courts are fully informed of the mission of CBC and EMPOWER. There have been meetings with CASA’s, District Attorney’s, Child Welfare Boards, and other pertinent court officials in all nine counties.

EMPOWER has held provider meetings to ensure the providers in the network have the necessary information and support needed for the transition. Since April 2023, EMPOWER has had individual meetings with several providers to develop plans to address several issues affecting Metroplex East.

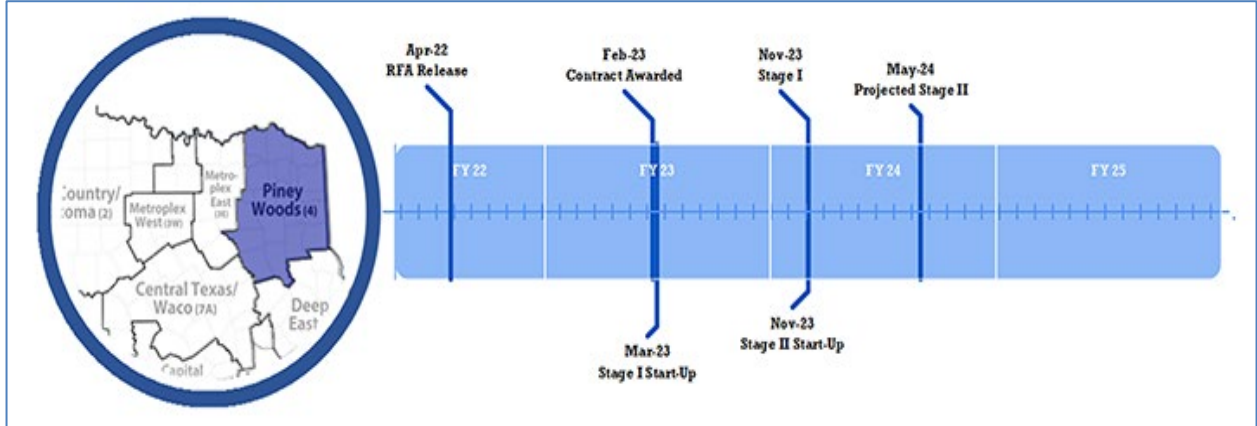
EMPOWER has worked closely with DFPS to meet the needs of the Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) families as they identify new Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) for a smooth transition. A vendor fair was held at Buckner Family Services with informational booths to answer



any questions FAD families had and to assist them with the transition to a new agency. EMPOWER has held a CBC 101 for families to explain CBC and their role of continuing to provide foster home services to children.

## Update for Piney Woods- 4Kids4Families

The Piney Woods community, previously known as Region 4, is comprised of [23 counties](#). The visual below depicts the timeline of this community’s CBC progress.



## Community Engagement

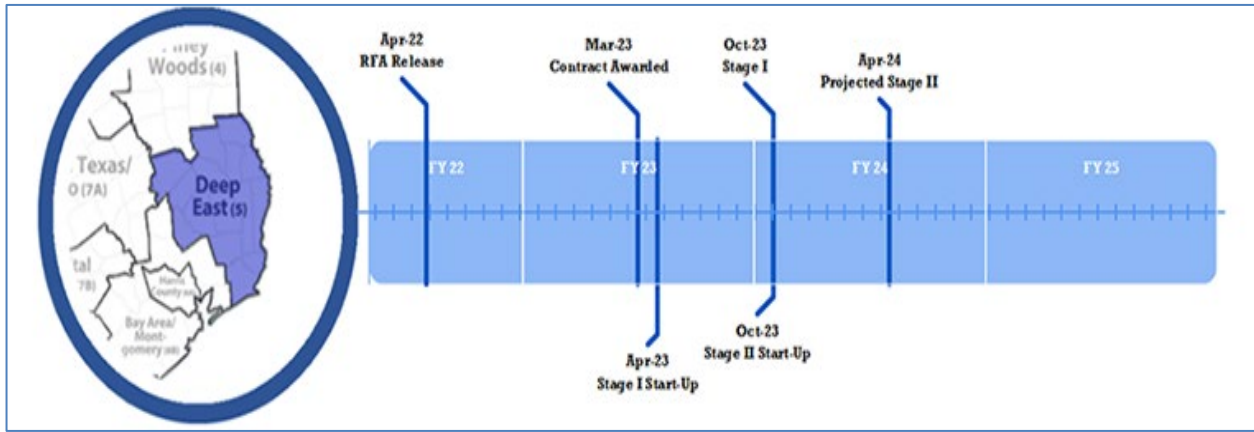
4Kids4Families (‘4Kids’) held various DFPS staff engagement activities, including Coffee and Conversations, CASA Café, and other community events. The goal for Coffee and Conversations is to give DFPS staff an opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns to 4Kids staff. 4Kids attended two CASA events to speak about their goals in the region. They continue to collaborate with DFPS faith-based representatives, churches, business leaders, and other community stakeholders.

## Hiring of 4Kids4Families Team

4Kids hired 12 new staff members, which included several former DFPS employees. 4Kids has recently posted several new positions, completed multiple interviews, and held a virtual hiring fair that hosted 60 applicants. [4Kids4Families.org](http://4Kids4Families.org) will list available job positions and the most up-to-date news to serve as a resource for information.

## Update for Deep East- Texas Family Care Network

The Deep East community, previously known as Region 5, is comprised of [15 counties](#). The visual below depicts the timeline of this community’s CBC progress.



## Readiness and Stage I Start Up

Texas Family Care Network (TFCN), a division of Pressley Ridge Texas, began their SSCC contract on April 1, 2023. TFCN continues to work with DFPS staff on the development of necessary written plans, policies, and procedures as part of the readiness requirements. Judiciary and additional provider and community town halls to inform and engage the community about CBC have continued almost monthly. The TFCN leadership team also hosted smaller group discussions at DFPS offices with staff being impacted by CBC to answer questions they may have regarding benefits, pay, and the hiring process for TFCN. Additional information and job opportunities continue to be updated regularly on their [website](#).

## Capacity Building

TFCN has partnered with Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) to help find permanency for the harder to place children in the Texas foster care system. Through their partnership, WWK will be funding three full-time recruiter positions. Each recruiter will have 12-15 active children on their caseload serving an average of 17 children on any given day. Working in partnership, the program will grow so that all the children will have access to child-focused recruitment, dramatically increasing their chances of obtaining legal permanency. Together, they will set performance goals for each year of the five-year agreement. Early goals will include hiring and training recruiters and building caseloads with permanency outcome goals being set beginning in year two.

TFCN has been meeting with providers throughout Deep East and will soon start the subcontracting process. Using feedback from a Capacity Survey developed internally, TFCN will focus capacity building to develop the right capacity to meet the needs of the children and youth within their designated community area.



# CBC Model, Process Evaluation, and Continuous Quality Improvement

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The process evaluation is a tool used by the OCBCT and DFPS to assess implementation of CBC to identify the key successes and barriers to implementation, and correct course as needed. The CBC process evaluation was completed in November 2020 and can be found on the [CBC website](#).

The OCBCT and DFPS continue to work with the Center for Child Welfare Data, affiliated with Chapin Hall of the University of Chicago, to support the outcome evaluation. Chapin Hall provides independent data analysis of each SSCC's performance on placements within 50 miles and paid foster care days, the basis for the fiscal model, and incentive payments in Stage III. DFPS, OCBCT, and Chapin Hall, with the input of the SSCCs, are working to finalize Stage III and to implement Stage III for those SSCCs that qualify. OCBCT, in tandem with DFPS, continues to work to ensure that the criteria for financial incentives and remedies for Stage III are sound and accurate.

## Conclusion

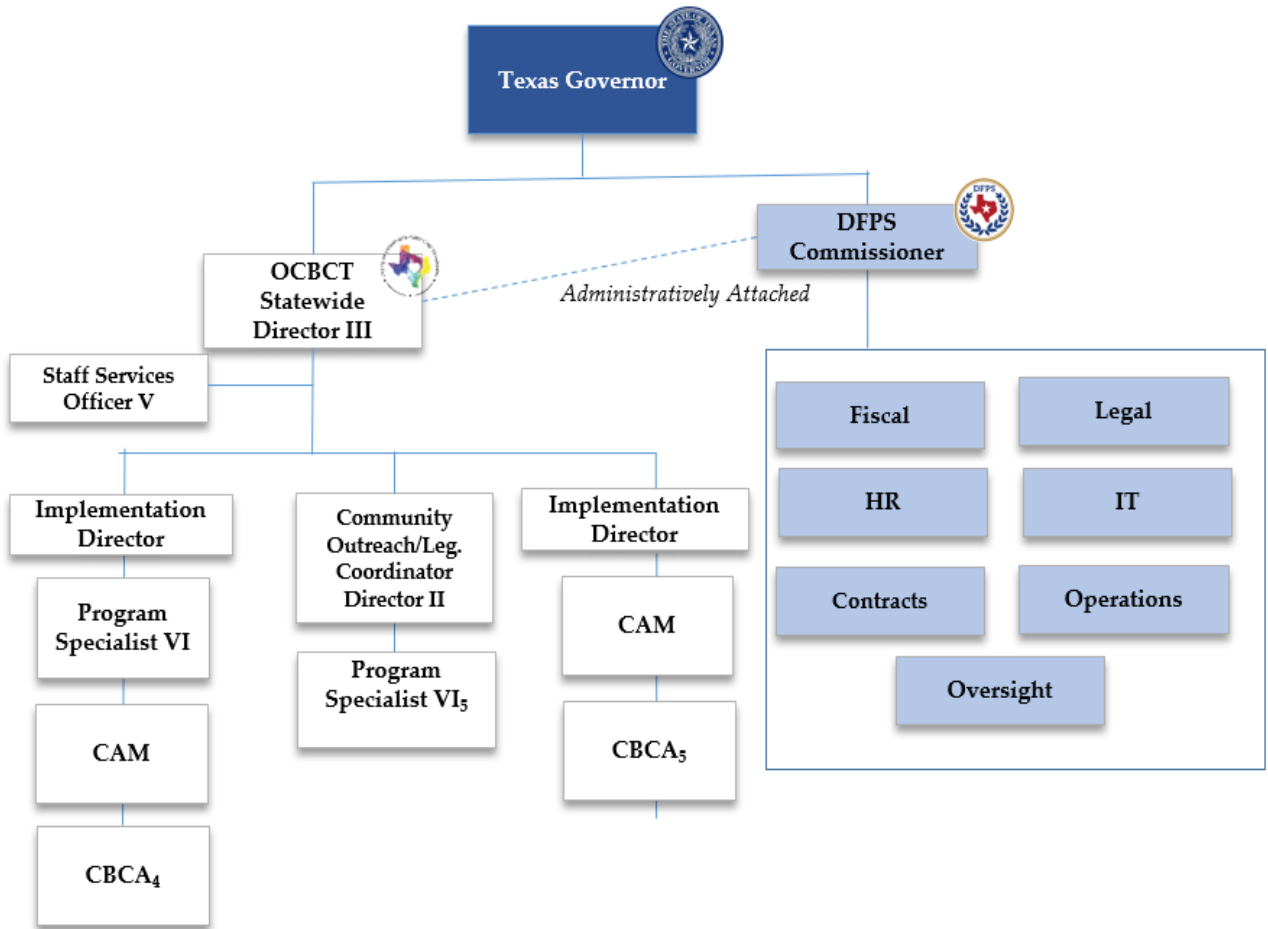
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OCBCT, DFPS, and stakeholder partners are committed to successfully implementing and sustaining CBC in the seven current communities: Panhandle, Big Country & Texoma, Metroplex West, South Central & Hill Country, Metroplex East, Piney Woods, and Deep East. The potential award of unsolicited proposals lays the foundation for an expedited rollout statewide. Of the children in paid foster care, 26.4 percent are in SSCC catchments (Fiscal Year 23 year-to-date). By the end of Fiscal Year 25, 47 percent of the children in paid foster care are projected to be in SSCC catchments. View the latest [CBC Implementation Plan](#) for additional details; which is updated annually and will include new requirements passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature.





# Appendix A: Organizational Structure for the Office of Community-Based Care Transition



# Appendix B: Current Community-Based Care Communities

