

20.19 Department of Children and Families.—There is created a Department of Children and Families.

(1) MISSION AND PURPOSE.—

(a) The mission of the Department of Children and Families is to work in partnership with local communities to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency.

(b) The department shall develop a strategic plan for fulfilling its mission and establish a set of measurable goals, objectives, performance standards, and quality assurance requirements to ensure that the department is accountable to the people of Florida.

(c) To the extent allowed by law and within specific appropriations, the department shall deliver services by contract through private providers.

(2) SECRETARY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES; DEPUTY SECRETARY.—

(a) The head of the department is the Secretary of Children and Families. The secretary is appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate.

The secretary serves at the pleasure of the Governor.

(b) The secretary shall appoint a deputy secretary who shall act in the absence of the secretary. The deputy secretary is directly responsible to the secretary, performs such duties as are assigned by the secretary, and serves at the pleasure of the secretary.

(c)1. The secretary shall appoint an Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse and Mental Health. The assistant secretary shall serve at the pleasure of the secretary and must have expertise in both areas of responsibility.

2. The secretary shall appoint a Director for Substance Abuse and Mental Health who has the requisite expertise and experience to head the state's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office.

(3) SERVICES PROVIDED.—

(a) The department, through offices, shall provide services relating to:

1. Adult protection.
2. Child care regulation.
3. Child welfare.
4. Domestic violence.
5. Economic self-sufficiency.
6. Homelessness.
7. Mental health.
8. Refugees.
9. Substance abuse.

(b) Offices of the department may be consolidated, restructured, or rearranged by the secretary, in consultation with the Executive Office of the Governor,

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provided any such consolidation, restructuring, or rearranging is capable of meeting functions and activities and achieving outcomes as delineated in state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. The secretary may appoint additional managers and administrators as he or she determines are necessary for the effective management of the department.

(c) Each fiscal year the secretary shall, in consultation with the relevant employee representatives, develop projections of the number of child abuse and neglect cases and shall include in the department's legislative budget request a specific appropriation for funds and positions for the next fiscal year in order to provide an adequate number of full-time equivalent:

1. Child protection investigation workers so that caseloads do not exceed the Child Welfare League Standards by more than two cases; and
2. Child protection case workers so that caseloads do not exceed the Child Welfare League Standards by more than two cases.

(4) COMMUNITY ALLIANCES.—

(a) The department shall, in consultation with local communities, establish a community alliance or similar group of the stakeholders, community leaders, client representatives and funders of human services in each county to provide a focal point for community participation and governance of community-based services. An alliance may cover more than one county when such arrangement is determined to provide for more effective representation. The community alliance shall represent the diversity of the community.

(b) The duties of the community alliance include, but are not limited to:

1. Joint planning for resource utilization in the community, including resources appropriated to the department and any funds that local funding sources choose to provide.
2. Needs assessment and establishment of community priorities for service delivery.
3. Determining community outcome goals to supplement state-required outcomes.
4. Serving as a catalyst for community resource development.
5. Providing for community education and advocacy on issues related to delivery of services.
6. Promoting prevention and early intervention services.

(c) The department shall ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that the formation of each community alliance builds on the strengths of the existing community human services infrastructure.

(d) The initial membership of the community alliance in a county shall be composed of the following:

1. A representative from the department.
2. A representative from county government.
3. A representative from the school district.
4. A representative from the county United Way.
5. A representative from the county sheriff's office.
6. A representative from the circuit court corresponding to the county.
7. A representative from the county children's board, if one exists.

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(e) At any time after the initial meeting of the community alliance, the community alliance shall adopt bylaws and may increase the membership of the alliance to include the state attorney for the judicial circuit in which the community alliance is located, or his or her designee, the public defender for the judicial circuit in which the community alliance is located, or his or her designee, and other individuals and organizations who represent funding organizations, are community leaders, have knowledge of community-based service issues, or otherwise represent perspectives that will enable them to accomplish the duties listed in paragraph (b), if, in the judgment of the alliance, such change is necessary to adequately represent the diversity of the population within the community alliance service circuits.

(f) A member of the community alliance, other than a member specified in paragraph (d), may not receive payment for contractual services from the department or a community-based care lead agency.

(g) Members of the community alliances shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to receive reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses, as provided in s. 112.061. Payment may also be authorized for preapproved child care expenses or lost wages for members who are consumers of the department's services and for preapproved child care expenses for other members who demonstrate hardship.

(h) Members of a community alliance are subject to the provisions of part III of chapter 112, the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees.

(i) Actions taken by a community alliance must be consistent with department policy and state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

(j) Alliance members shall annually submit a disclosure statement of services interests to the department's inspector general. Any member who has an interest in a matter under consideration by the alliance must abstain from voting on that matter.

(k) All alliance meetings are open to the public pursuant to s. 286.011 and the public records provision of s. 119.07(1).

(5) CONSULTATION WITH COUNTIES ON MANDATED PROGRAMS.—It is the intent of the Legislature that when county governments are required by law to participate in the funding of programs, the department shall consult with designated representatives of county governments in developing policies and service delivery plans for those programs.

History.—s. 19, ch. 69-106; ss. 1, 2, ch. 70-441; ss. 1, 4, ch. 71-213; s. 1, ch. 73-99; s. 1, ch. 73-114; s. 1, ch. 74-107; ss. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 29, 31, 32, 34, ch. 75-48; ss. 1, 2, ch. 76-115; s. 1, ch. 77-174; ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 77-212; s. 4, ch. 78-323; s. 2, ch. 79-10; s. 1, ch. 79-26; s. 63, ch. 79-190; s. 1, ch. 79-265; ss. 1, 2, 5, ch. 79-287; s. 8, ch. 80-187; s. 1, ch. 80-202; s. 8, ch. 80-374; ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 81-83; ss. 7, 8, 9, ch. 81-184; ss. 1, 4, 5, ch. 81-237; s. 12, ch. 81-259; s. 1, ch. 81-290; ss. 1, 4, ch. 82-46; ss. 1, 2, ch. 82-100; s. 5, ch. 82-213; s. 1, ch. 83-89; ss. 1, 11, ch. 83-177; s. 1, ch. 83-181; s. 2, ch. 83-215; s. 3, ch. 83-216; s. 2, ch. 83-230; ss. 2, 3, ch. 83-265; ss. 13, 17, ch. 84-226; s. 3, ch. 85-80; s. 1, ch. 85-270; s. 1, ch. 86-66; s. 1, ch. 86-220; ss. 1, 2, ch. 87-140; s. 2, ch. 88-235; s.

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9, ch. 88-337; s. 15, ch. 88-398; ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 89-1; ss. 1, 2, 3, ch. 89-92; s. 4, ch. 89-215; s. 2, ch. 89-296; s. 2, ch. 90-247; s. 1, ch. 90-339; s. 1, ch. 91-14; s. 1, ch. 91-158; s. 5, ch. 91-429; ss. 9, 110, ch. 92-33; s. 3, ch. 92-58; s. 1, ch. 92-174; s. 1, ch. 93-200; s. 3, ch. 94-124; s. 7, ch. 94-209; s. 1317, ch. 95-147; s. 9, ch. 95-153; s. 50, ch. 96-175; s. 5, ch. 96-403; s. 6, ch. 97-237; s. 28, ch. 97-286; s. 1, ch. 98-25; s. 1, ch. 98-137; s. 1, ch. 98-280; s. 120, ch. 98-403; s. 5, ch. 99-2; s. 1, ch. 99-7; s. 2, ch. 2000-135; s. 2, ch. 2000-139; s. 4, ch. 2000-158; s. 1, ch. 2001-68; s. 1, ch. 2002-63; ss. 3, 5, ch. 2003-279; s. 29, ch. 2003-399; s. 69, ch. 2004-267; s. 12, ch. 2004-269; s. 1, ch. 2004-356; s. 1, ch. 2005-3; s. 2, ch. 2005-152; s. 3, ch. 2006-50; s. 8, ch. 2006-171; s. 2, ch. 2012-84.

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