



DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW

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Agency Responsibilities

The Department of Children and Families is responsible for protecting vulnerable populations such as children and elders from abuse and neglect, providing economic assistance to qualifying individuals and families, and treating individuals and families affected by mental health or substance abuse problems. The department has outsourced many direct services for its clients through contracts with private, not-for-profit entities.

Agency Organization

The department plans, administers, and delivers most of its services through its central office, six regions, and 20 circuits. The central office oversees state level planning and policy development. The regional offices provide support services and contract management, and administer the department's programs at the local level. The circuits are responsible for field operations, such as protective investigations for children and adults and public assistance eligibility determination. The department has four major program groupings: Economic Self-Sufficiency, Family Safety, Mental Health/Institutional Facilities, and Substance Abuse.

Economic Self-Sufficiency assists low income individuals and their families to become and remain stable and self-sufficient. Economic Self-Sufficiency includes two programs.

- *ACCESS (Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency)* helps citizens by determining their eligibility for a variety of federally funded services, including Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and Medicaid health and long-term care services. Department employees in the regions and circuits administer the program and conduct eligibility determinations. The department re-engineered the eligibility process under ACCESS to improve efficiency, including allowing applicants to submit applications online. The program also has a network of over 2,800 community partners that serve as locations where clients can submit applications. The department also operates three ACCESS call centers to answer clients' questions about their applications, required documents, letters from the department, and their case status. The program also includes fraud prevention and recovery for benefits paid to persons who were not eligible and special assistance payments, such as services to individuals and families who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.
- *Refugees* assists refugees and entrants in becoming self-sufficient by obtaining employment, learning English, and overcoming legal or medical difficulties. The program is 100% federally funded, and the federal government defines which populations are eligible to receive services through this program. The program distributes federal grant funding to local providers around the state.

Family Safety comprises four programs.¹

- *Adult Services* conducts protective investigations to prevent harm to vulnerable adults who are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The program also provides in-home services to disabled adults to enable them to maintain their independence and quality of life.
- *Child Care Services* regulates licensed child care facilities, licensed family child care homes, licensed large family child care homes, and licensed facilities for the mildly ill. The program also registers family day care homes not required to be licensed. The program also administers training for child care personnel.
- *Child Protection and Permanency* provides services to care for and protect abused and neglected children. The department is responsible for conducting protective investigations and providing children's legal services.² Children's legal services attorneys provide legal advice to child welfare investigators, caseworkers, and administrators, and represent the department in court proceedings related to children.³ The department contracts with 19 community-based care lead agencies for the management and responsibilities of providing foster care and related services, including family preservation, emergency shelter, and adoption.⁴

- The *Florida Abuse Hotline* serves as the central intake and referral point for all reports of abuse, neglect, or abandonment of a child and reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. Hotline staff receive and screen calls, collect information about the allegation from the caller, and determine whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is a victim of abuse or neglect. Hotline staff refer cases that meet screening criteria to child or adult protective investigators assigned to the circuits to conduct investigations.

Mental Health/Institutional Facilities includes three programs.

- *Adult Mental Health Treatment Facilities* provides institutional services at six mental health treatment facilities, three of which are operated by the department and three of which are operated under contract with providers.
- *Mental Health Services* provides services to adults with mental illness who live in the community and children with serious emotional disturbances. The department's community-based mental health services are provided by private, non-profit mental health centers that contract with the department.
- The *Sexually Violent Predator Program* confines and treats persons in a civil commitment center operated under contract with a private provider.⁵

Substance Abuse serves adults and children at risk of or affected by substance abuse in order to reduce the occurrence, severity, and disabling effects of substance abuse problems. The program provides prevention, intervention, and treatment services throughout the state using local substance abuse providers.

For a chart that illustrates the structure of the department's programs, see Exhibit 1.

¹ Family Safety is also responsible for domestic violence services, which ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence and provide training to law enforcement, and court personnel on domestic violence issues.

² In seven counties sheriffs' offices currently perform child abuse investigations; these are Broward, Citrus, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Seminole counties.

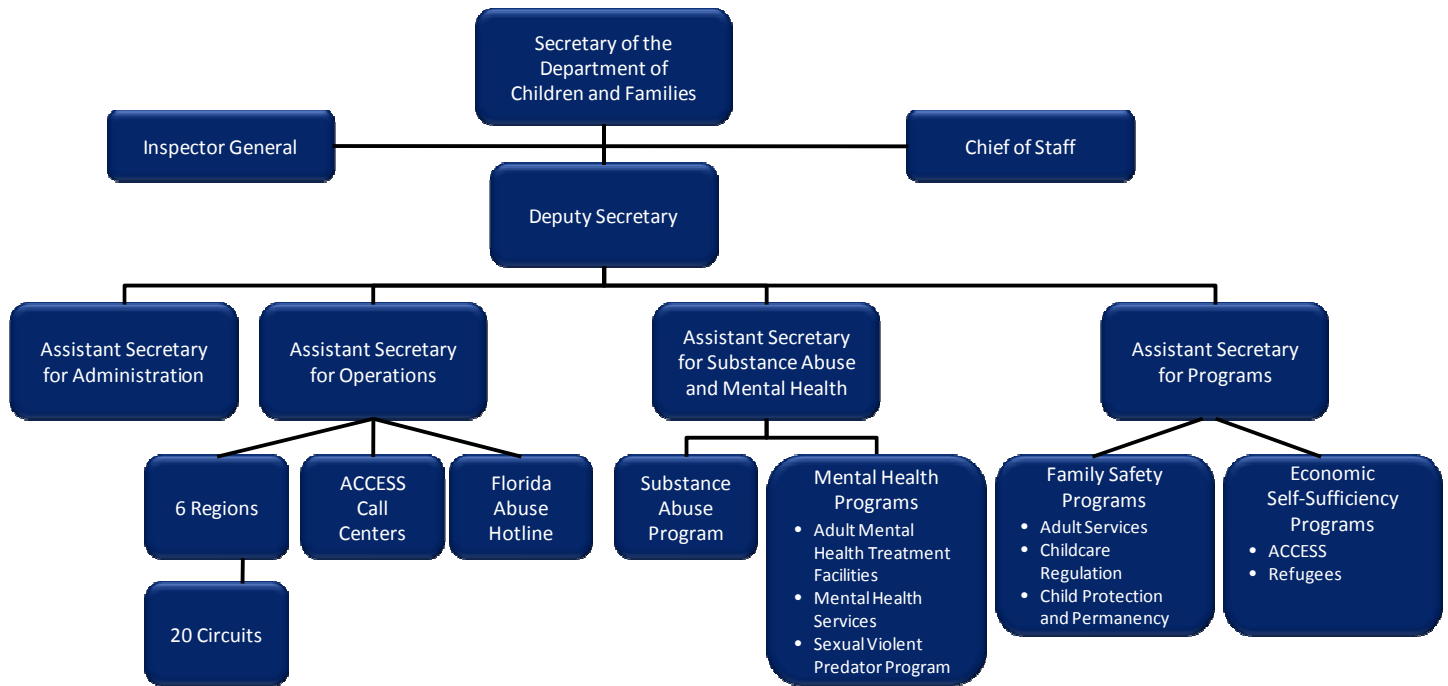
³ The department contracts with the state attorney for Pinellas and Pasco counties to provide child welfare legal services for the 6th Judicial Circuit. It also contracts with the Office of the Attorney General to provide these services in Hillsborough, Manatee, and Broward counties (the 12th, 13th, and 17th judicial circuits).

⁴ Lead agencies are private, community-based agencies or county governments responsible for planning, administering, and delivering client services; ensuring that services are delivered in accordance with state and federal laws; and coordinating

with other local public or private agencies that offer services for clients.

⁵ Sexually violent predators are persons who have been convicted of a sexually violent offense and have a mental abnormality or personality disorder that makes them likely to engage in future acts of sexual violence if not confined in a secure facility for long-term control, care, and treatment.

Exhibit 1
The Department of Children and Families Organization of Programs



Source: Florida Department of Children and Families.

Agency Resources

As shown in Exhibit 2, the Legislature appropriated \$2.9 billion and 13,255 positions to the department for Fiscal Year 2008-09. This represented a 3.4% decrease in funding and a

2.1% decrease in full-time positions compared to the previous year.

For more details on the department’s resources for Fiscal Year 2008-09, see Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 2
Legislative Appropriations and Staffing for the Department of Children and Families

	FY 2006-07	FY 2007-08	FY 2008-09
General Revenue	\$1,511,713,489	\$1,551,544,507	\$1,455,261,121
Trust Funds	1,447,140,643	1,417,309,939	1,412,304,747
TOTAL	\$2,958,854,132	\$2,968,854,446	\$2,867,565,868
FTE	13,528	13,533	13,255
OPS ¹	557	741	860

¹ The Department of Children and Families was only able to provide OPS staffing information as of specific points in time. For Fiscal Year 2006-07, the number of OPS positions is as of April 11, 2007. For Fiscal Year 2007-08, the number of OPS positions is as of June 3, 2008. For Fiscal Year 2008-09, the number of OPS positions is as of November 4, 2008.

Source: Legislative Appropriations System/Planning and Budgeting Subsystem (LAS/PBS), October 2008, and Florida Department of Children and Families.

Exhibit 3

Department of Children and Families Resources by Program for Fiscal Year 2008-09

Program	Federal Funds	State Trust Funds	General Revenue	TOTAL	FTE Positions	OPS Positions
Administration Support Services/Executive Direction						
Assistant Secretary for Administration	\$24,019,500	\$10,857,003	\$43,606,285	\$78,482,788	270	21
District Administration (regions and circuits)	25,957,355	314,618	18,920,663	45,192,636	552.5	0
Executive Direction/Support Services	1,134,654	266,200	7,957,664	9,358,518	107	7
Information Technology		64,872,344		64,872,344	259	9
Subtotal	\$51,111,509	\$76,310,165	\$70,484,612	\$197,906,286	1,188.5	37
Economic Self-Sufficiency						
ACCESS ¹	\$176,864,888	\$7,228,227	\$294,621,561	\$478,714,676	4,509.5	389
Refugee Services	75,206,205			75,206,205	40	11
Subtotal	\$252,071,093	\$7,228,227	\$294,621,561	\$553,920,881	4,549.5	400
Family Safety						
Adult Services ²	\$38,044,349	\$13,675,804	\$34,831,011	\$86,551,164	637.5	0
Child Care Regulation	14,388,034	541,496	2,586,111	17,515,641	127.5	50
Child Protection and Permanency ³	485,245,079	139,620,041	370,785,106	995,650,226	2,341.5	101
Florida Abuse Hotline	11,532,251		3,992,999	15,525,250	233	65
Subtotal	\$549,209,713	\$153,837,341	\$412,195,227	\$1,115,242,281	3,339.5	216
Mental Health/Institutional Facilities						
Adult Mental Health Treatment Facilities	\$64,245,549	\$7,964,290	\$265,426,939	\$337,636,778	3,998.5	49 ⁴
Mental Health Services ⁵	92,629,623	25,735,684	308,249,857	426,615,164	102	80
Sexual Violent Predator Program			25,742,054	25,742,054	11	9
Subtotal	\$156,875,172	\$33,699,974	\$599,418,850	\$789,993,996	4,111.5	138
Substance Abuse⁶						
Subtotal	\$115,688,144	\$16,273,409	\$78,540,871	\$210,502,424	66	69
TOTAL	\$1,124,955,631	\$287,349,116	\$1,455,261,121	\$2,867,565,868	13,255	860

¹ The ACCESS totals include program management and compliance, fraud prevention and recovery, special assistance payments, and the Office of Homelessness.

² The Adult Services totals include domestic violence services.

³ The Child Protection and Permanency totals include program management and compliance for the Child Protection and Permanency Program, Adult Services Program, Child Care Regulation Program, and the Florida Abuse Hotline.

⁴ The OPS positions for the Mental Health Treatment Facilities do not include 281 clients the department employs to help prepare them for life outside of an institution.

⁵ The Mental Health Services totals include program management and compliance and mental health services for adults and children.

⁶ The Substance Abuse totals include program management and compliance, and adult and child treatment and prevention services.

Source: Legislative Appropriations System/Planning and Budgeting Subsystem (LAS/PBS), October 2008, and Department of Children and Families.