

# Department of Family Services

## Mission and philosophy

In partnership with all available resources, the Department of Family Services (DFS) will: Provide temporary assistance in the development of responsible, productive and self-sufficient individuals in Wyoming; help families assume more responsibility for raising their own children; and help communities assume more responsibility for the success of their families.

## General comments

In FY 05, the Wyoming Department of Family Services coordinated a statewide study on the needs of Wyoming children and families. The study, directed by House Bill 33, was named the Wyoming Children and Families Initiative. The steering committee of the study surveyed a wide range of data and received responses to in-depth surveys from approximately 3,500 parents, families and children.

From this information, the committee compiled the publication, "Wyoming Family Photo," which described five results statements. These statements in turn became a guide for the state's overall strategic planning process.

The vision established was as follows:

- Wyoming Families living in a stable, safe, supportive and nurturing environment;
- A diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality;
- Affordable and accessible health care and insurance;
- Children born healthy and achieving their highest potential in early development years; and
- Students successfully educated and prepared for life's opportunities.

Following publication of the initiative's results, the department held presentations in every county as a way to begin local dialogue that is hoped will bring communities to a level of readiness needed to address the challenges in achieving the vision. Strategies to achieve component parts of this vision will be considered as a whole by the Wyoming Legislature in the 2006 session.

The Department of Family Services' child welfare system, which serves Wyoming's children and youth populations, is currently divided into two divisions, the Division of Protective Services and the Division of Juvenile Services. In FY 05, management of juvenile probation field staff regionalized to achieve a more streamlined chain of command. The change also is expected to allow the Protective Services Division to focus more intently on family-centered practice for early risk indicators of abuse or neglect.

### General information

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### Agency contact

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### Other locations

There are 27 full-time offices and 3 part-time offices located in 8 districts and 2 juvenile institutions.

District 1: Cheyenne, Laramie

District 3: Pinedale, Rock Springs, Big Piney

District 5: Greybull, Thermopolis, Cody, Powell, Worland, Lovell

District 6: Gillette, Sundance, Newcastle, Buffalo, Sheridan

District 7: Casper, Rawlins

District 8: Douglas, Glenrock, Torrington, Lusk, Wheatland

District 9: Lander, Riverton

District 10: Kemmerer, Afton, Jackson, Evanston, Lyman

Wyoming Boys' School, Worland

Wyoming Girls' School, Sheridan

### Year established and reorganized

Established in 1989; last reorganized in 2005.

### Statutory references

W.S. 1-22-101 - 104, W.S. 1-22-109 - 117, W.S. 1-22-202 - 203, W.S. 7-13-303, W.S. 7-13-410 - 411, W.S. 9-2-2006, W.S. 9-2-2104, W.S. 9-2-2101 - 2106, W.S. 14-2-104 - 105, W.S. 14-2-310 - 313, W.S. 14-3-211 - 215, W.S. 14-4-101 - 111, W.S. 14-4-112 - 116, W.S. 14-5-101 - 108, W.S. 14-6-101, W.S. 14-6-211 - 209, W.S. 14-6-211 - 225, W.S. 14-6-226 - 228, W.S. 14-6-229 - 236, W.S. 14-6-237, W.S. 14-6-238 - 241, W.S. 14-6-242 - 243, W.S. 14-6-301 - 308, W.S. 14-8-101 - 104, W.S. 14-9-101 - 108, W.S. 20-4-160, W.S. 20-6-101 - 104, W.S. 20-6-201 - 222, W.S. 20-6-301 - 306, W.S. 20-6-401 - 402, W.S. 20-7-101, W.S. 21-13-315, W.S. 25-3-101 - 106, W.S. 25-4-101 - 103, W.S. 42-1-101 - 114, W.S. 42-2-201 - 203, W.S. 42-2-301 - 303, W.S. 42-2-402 - 404, W.S. 42-3-101 - 103, W.S. 42-4-101 - 113, W.S. 42-4-206 - 207

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**Number of authorized personnel**

- Economic Assistance 223
- Juvenile and Protective Services 475
- Child Support Enforcement 33
- Early Childhood Development 28

**Organizational structure**

Director, Deputy Director, Child Support Division, Economic Assistance Division, Field Operations Division, Financial Services Division, Juvenile Services Division and Protective Services Division

**Clients served**

The Department of Family Services provides financial and social services to Wyoming residents who are in need or at risk. They include children in need of court-ordered foster care, placement in group homes, residential treatment centers, the Boys' or Girls' Schools or other specialized therapeutic care. They include juveniles on probation or in need of other court mandated services. They include seniors in need of adult protective services. Other clients include consumers of day care services and children in day care served through day care licensing.

**Budget information**

General funds .....	\$52,807,691
Federal funds .....	45,013,307
Trust and agency funds .....	1,271,074
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$99,092,072</b>

In order to achieve outcomes mandated by the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act in 2000, all states have undergone audits of their child protection and foster care systems, and all states have failed substantive portions of the audit, dubbed Children and Family Service Reviews. In response to Wyoming's Review in 2002, the Department of Family Services continued to collaborate with other state and local agencies to develop a comprehensive Program Improvement Plan in 2003. The plan was approved in January 2004 and is scheduled to be fully implemented by January 2006. The plan has a broad emphasis on "Family Centered Practice," which is supported by other systemic initiatives that try to improve family functionality.

Some of the consistent concerns identified in reviews around the country have been that child welfare workers tend to focus only on a single child in crisis, rather than addressing challenges within at-risk families that have a broader impact on siblings, neighborhoods and communities. Wyoming's report concluded that the department was more effective in addressing safety, permanency and well-being of children when caseworkers implemented a family-centered approach that included assessments of family functioning. A fuller description of the major initiatives of the state's improvement plan is included elsewhere in this report.

Adult Protective Services (APS) statutes were revised during the 2002 legislative session. Rules interpreting the statutes became final on November 3, 2004. Newly developed APS program policies are complete and staff was trained May 2004. The department has developed a vulnerable adult community awareness projects with the Department of Health's Aging Division and Mental Health.

In 2004, the number of Wyoming children served by licensed child care providers increased by 1,000 in FY 05. Customer surveys from child care providers to the department's licensing division continued to register over 90 percent positive responses.

In regard to economic supports for poor residents, the department's Child Support Enforcement and Economic Assistance Divisions continued to provide the steady excellence and accuracy in work that not only allowed the state to collect one federal bonus for food stamp accuracy, but also lended stability so that the department could focus on important changes in other programs. These divisions will become more prominent in 2005, however, with the rollout of the state's new public benefits eligibility system, IRIS, and performance contract changes in child support.

The Department of Family Services was the first state agency to create an office of faith-based initiatives and the effort paid off in FY 05. Faith Initiatives of Wyoming, Inc., a DFS partner, won a major capacity building grant and others were awarded for the purpose of mentoring children of incarcerated persons and to

support healthy marriages. The faith-based partnerships launched included, "One Church One Child" to recruit foster and adoptive parents from church congregations; the Marriage Initiative, a research-based program that has proven its ability to reduce and even eliminate divorce in some communities; and a program to provide community support for DFS caseworkers, "Adopt-A-Social Worker." Workshops, seminars and other meetings have taken place all across Wyoming as the faith community is being energized to focus its leadership on helping children and families.

Finally, in regard to its internal structures, the department consolidated its training efforts centrally in a DFS Training Academy in 2003. In 2004 the department completed its first year of supervised annual training plans for each division that works directly with the public. The training team is responsible for conducting core training for new social service and juvenile probation workers, as well as specialized training throughout the department for supervisors, day care licensers, public benefits specialists, supervisors, administrators and others. Three particular statewide training initiatives in FY 05 worth noting included Family Partnerships, the Casey Family/DFS training in Kinship Care and positive parenting "train the trainer" workshops. These last two were created as public-private partnerships. Training plans for internal core resource systems, such as HR, financial services, computer support and others will be implemented in 2006.

In FY 05 the director's office adopted new reporting requirements for all departmental divisions and the state's two juvenile institutions. The reports detail four primary areas of state (as opposed to field worker) accountability. These include policy and rulemaking, training, quality assurance and resource areas. The director's office also conducted initiatives in customer service, receiving hundreds of customer response cards placed in field offices. The department also conducted an employee satisfaction poll and worked on other initiatives to value and reward staff for their dedication and commitment.

## Goal:

**Promote self-sufficiency, through the effective delivery of Preventive, Protective, Educational and Treatment Services, resulting in a reduction of government intervention.**

## Economic Assistance

**Objective A: Guide clients toward self-sufficiency while providing temporary benefits, support and opportunity for skill development.**

**Outcome Measure I:** Number of families receiving POWER payments.

The average number of households for calendar year 1996 (prior to TANF) was 4,971. The average number of households for 2005 was 322.

Wyoming received a high performance bonus of \$1,089,072 for 2002 and \$877,767 for 2003. The 2004 bonuses (October 1, 2003 - September 30, 2004) will be announced later.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participation rate has been met each quarter. In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2003, an 83.0 percent rate was achieved for all families and the two-parent participation rate was 91.5 percent. The participation rate for FFY 2004 was 77.8 percent for all eligible families and 90.0 percent for eligible two-parent families. Through July 2005 the participation rate is 87.1 percent for all families and 92.9 percent for two-parent families.

**Outcome Measure II:** Number of households receiving Food Stamp Benefits.

The food stamp program served a total of 125,553 households in FY 05 with an average of 10,463 households per month. The food stamp accuracy rate for the delivery of benefits was 95.77 percent in federal fiscal year 2003 and 96.02 percent in 2004. The federal fiscal year 2004 food stamp error rate was 4.69 percent. The federal fiscal year 2004 negative error rate was .79 percent which qualified Wyoming for enhanced funding. The error rate has not been computed for 2005 as the federal fiscal year has not ended.

**Outcome Measure III:** Number of families receiving medicaid assistance.

Medicaid provided medical related services to a total of 423,892 families for FY 05. An average of 35,324 families were served each month.

**Objective D: Assist the development of safe and healthy environments for children and families.**

**Outcome Measure III:** Number of households receiving energy assistance.

Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) served 9,551 families and processed 10,370 applications in FY 05. Crisis cases in FY 05 numbered 799.

**Outcome Measure IV:** Number of homes weatherized.

In FY 04 500 homes were weatherized and in FY 05 we have contracted to have 477 units weatherized.

DFS continues to work with the Unintended Pregnancy Task Force to review opportunities for addressing out-of-wedlock pregnancy and fatherhood issues. Projects are addressed, as money becomes available.

Reauthorization for the TANF program has not yet passed Congress. When reauthorization occurs there will be changes to the TANF program that include new outcome measures. Once reauthorization is passed, DFS will review the new legislation to determine changes necessary for the state TANF program.

The LIEAP computer system is operating as a stand alone system. The website needs to be reformatted to reflect the current client application and the system continues to process electronic files from fuel suppliers in a "batch" process.

The Northern Arapaho Tribal LIEAP program will begin their fourth year of operation in FY 06 and will have \$210,000 in funding from the federal government to provide energy assistance, crisis and weatherization assistance.

## Protective Services

**Objective B: Provide preventive, supportive and protective services to abused, neglected, abandoned, and exploited individuals and families to ensure safety, permanency and well-being.**

**Outcome Measure I:** Reduce occurrence of repeat child maltreatment.

The national standard is 6.1 percent reoccurrence of child maltreatment within a six month period of time or less. The Child and Family Services Review established Wyoming's baseline of 6.8 percent in FY 00. The reoccurrence of child maltreatment in FY 03 was 5.6 percent. The reoccurrence of child maltreatment in FY 04 was 6.6 percent. The state mini-CFSR results for the FY 05 review measured repeat maltreatment at 4.2 percent. Wyoming meets the national standard.

**Outcome Measure II:** Reduce incidences of child maltreatment in out-of-home facilities.

The national standard for the percentage of children in foster care who were the subject of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff is .57 percent or less. Wyoming's baseline in FY 00 was .43 percent. In FY 03 the number of children who experienced maltreatment

while in out-of-home placement was .43 percent. The occurrence of child maltreatment in foster care in FY 04 was .15 percent. Wyoming meets the national standard. FY 05 data shows no incidents of child maltreatment in out-of-home facilities.

**Outcome Measure III:** Reduce the number of out-of-home placement re-entries.

The national standard of children re-entering foster care within 12 months of a prior placement is 8.6 percent or less. Wyoming's baseline in FY 00 was 8.0 percent. In FY 03 the percentage of children who re-entered care was 3.8 percent. Re-entries of children into out-of-home placement in FY 04 were 6.1 percent. Wyoming meets the national standard.

**Outcome Measure IV:** Reduce the number of foster home placements per child.

The national standard for stability of children in foster care, less than 12 months with no more than two placement settings, is 86.7 percent or higher. Wyoming's baseline in FY 00 was 87.4 percent. In FY 03 the percentage of children with no more than two placement changes was 64.6 percent. Stability of foster care placements in FY 04 was 86.3 percent. Wyoming does not meet the national standard. The state mini-CFSR results for the FY 05 review measured the stability of foster care placement at 84.6 percent.

**Outcome Measure V:** Reduce the length of time to achieve permanency goal of reunification.

The national standard for children who are reunified with their families within 12 months is 76.2 percent or higher. Wyoming's baseline in FY 2000 was 81.6 percent. The percentage was 78.7 for FY 03. The percentage of children reunified with their families within 12 months of removal in FY 04 was 76.5 percent. Wyoming meets the national standard. The state mini-CFSR results for the FY 05 review measured reunification within 12 months at 40 percent.

**Outcome Measure VI:** Reduce the length of time to achieve permanency goal of adoption.

The national standard is 32 percent of children to achieve adoption in less than 24 months from the date of removal from their home. Wyoming's baseline was 40.6 percent in FY 00. The percentage of children meeting the standard in FY 03 was 38.6 percent. The percentage of children who achieved adoption within 24 months of placement in FY 04 was 44 percent. Wyoming meets the national standard. The state mini-CFSR results for the FY 05 review measured adoption within 24 months of placement at 50 percent.

**Outcome Measure VII:** Reduce the occurrence of repeat abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.

During the six-month period measured within FY 03 there were no reoccurrence of maltreatment for adults. In FY 04 there were 2 reoccurrences of substantiated abuse. In FY 05 there were no reoccurrences of substantiated abuse.

#### **General comments, Protective Services Division**

As noted in the department's overall general comments' section, the federal Child and Family Services Review of 2002 resulted in the department's mandated Program Improvement Plan in 2004. The plan addresses child welfare policy and practice in the primary areas of safety, permanency, and well-being, with respect to seven systemic factors.

With the Child and Family Services Review process focusing on specific outcomes, the Protective Services Division has revised its portion of the Department of Family Services' strategic plan to incorporate the seven outcome measurements that the federal government has adopted. In addition, the division incorporated the seven federal outcomes within its Annual Progress and Services Review and Comprehensive Plan, Wyoming Citizen Review Panel, and individual program goals and objectives.

The Program Improvement Plan is due to be fully implemented by January 2006. The plan has a focus on "Family Centered Practice." The following is a brief summary and status report of the major initiatives that are being implemented in collaboration with public and private agencies.

#### **Program Improvement Plan: Summary of Major Initiatives**

**Family-Centered Practice:** The department established a leadership team that worked with the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice to revise current policies, tools, training, and quality assurance for consistency with family-centered services. A practice model of "Family Partnering" has been developed and is being implemented in all districts.

**Training:** Curriculum has been developed and training scheduled to ensure that staff will receive adequate training in providing assistance and interventions that are family-centered and community-based. The training unit has modified the child protection curriculum to reflect family center practice. New staff has been trained using this curriculum. New worker orientation training curriculum has been developed and implemented consistent with family centered practice values.

**Quality Assurance:** In FY 05, the division implemented supervisor reviews of social service case files and child outcome data. Quality improvement activity has been enhanced through a management by data strategy. Data reports developed from the supervisor reviews and the department's children's services data base are used to analyze program effectiveness and learn from offices exhibiting strengths as well as focus on areas needing improve-

ment. The department is developing an outside review team that will assist in case reviews to ensure accuracy of the supervisor reviews and the proper identification of strengths and areas needing improvement. In FY 05 the department also initiated mini-CFSRs, a QA process which models the federal Child and Family Services Reviews. The data from these reviews is used to provide federal partners with quarterly progress reports on the implementation of the Program Improvement Plan.

**Staffing Model:** The department developed a staffing model that provides for caseloads consistent with the delivery of family-centered practice and community-based services. High caseloads have hindered staff in providing for the needs of families and children. The Wyoming Legislature approved the staffing model and the Department of Family Services was authorized to hire 20 new social services staff over a two year period beginning July 1, 2004.

**Resource Partnering:** The department has improved coordination of local, county, state and federal funding, programs and services as well as non-governmental and faith-based resources to supplement agency resources. The department has made available Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars to fund Positive Parenting Programs across the state. The department has entered into a partnership with Taco Johns to promote healthy families. The department has partnered with Casey Family Program to enhance kinship care, independent living services and management by data. Faith-based partnerships have been developed to recruit foster homes. The faith based initiative is also working to develop a program promoting healthy marriages.

**Legal System Specialization & Training:** The department has led a Family Treatment Court initiative for the Protective and Juvenile Services Divisions to provide more intensive treatment and services to families. The department will also continue to support a variety of initiatives designed to improve the legal process for children and families, including the Children and Family Initiative, the Court Improvement Project and the specialized "Child Permanency Unit" within the Attorney General's Office.

## **Juvenile Services**

**Objective C: Provide troubled and delinquent youth with evaluation, treatment, supervision and placement in approved facilities.**

**Outcome Measure I:** Expand programs and services to help reduce the rate of reoffense.

DFS is working with the Wyoming Department of Health to create a continuum of care for youth with mental health needs. The regional assessment efforts did

not materialize, so the division will be using the Family Assessment tools placed in the WYCAPS data system to assess for specific problems in both the child and their family. The division plans to enhance services to mental health youth by appropriately identifying the needs of these youths' treatment, aftercare and supervision requirements. Efforts are also underway to upgrade counselor positions at the institutions to therapists qualified to treat the problems the juveniles present.

DFS is moving into performance based contracting with private providers with incentives to move children back with their families within 12 months. We have established a "program monitoring" position to determine the quality, quantity and appropriateness of the published services at each placement facility accepting children. The department will insure that services to youth re-entering society help them avoid any re-offense which might cause re-arrest, reconviction or re-incarceration through contract workers placed in each of the four regions.

The department continues to emphasize restoration and reparation services for youth following the Restorative Justice model and the Balanced Approach. The following fees were collected from the Wyoming Girls' School (WGS) and the Wyoming Boys' School (WBS):

Wyoming Girls' School

- Total community service hours – 1,290.
- Restitution - \$6,162

Wyoming Boys' School

- Total community service hours – 1,572.
- Restitution - \$13,898

During this period the Wyoming Family Partnerships Project was implemented with child welfare workers, probation officers and other community members. The service delivery model requires workers to become increasingly family centered in their practice, looking for the strengths of the family members and their family system versus the deficiencies. The Intensive Supervision Program has changed protocol to keep the child in the program even when they are in out-of-home placement. This will maintain the developing relationship formed between child and worker because there are fewer changes in their milieu. With the intent to get faster turn-around in our placements (12 months or less in placement) more youth will be served in their community, which negates transferring cases when the worker cannot monitor the child while at home. To meet the requirements of the department's Program Improvement Plan (PIP) officers are face-to-face with their juveniles at least monthly even when they are in placement.

**Outcome Measure II:** Habilitate and treat delinquent boys placed at the Wyoming Boys' School to help reduce rate of re-offense.

A new superintendent has been formally appointed at the WBS. No major shifts in programming are anticipated at this time though efforts are being made to better address substance abuse and mental health needs of the residents.

Plans and communication continue to be explored between DFS and the Department of Health to identify youth at WBS with special needs (DD clients) and mental health needs. Progress is being made to better serve the needs of these youth in alternative placements and in their home communities. When secure services are required these new intake and evaluation services will help in designing programs that are effective with these youth. Collaborations between state departments have also opened up dialog between departments regarding mutual responsibilities and funding of services.

WBS is located in a remote area of the state, making recruitment of professional staff difficult. An open staff position for a Masters level staff to provide therapeutic substance abuse services has remained open for over a year. A marketing program that addresses the unique needs of remote areas, such as salary scales that enable WBS to attract the staff they require, needs to be developed. The ability to attract and maintain qualified clinical staff will allow the WBS to provide more intensive programming and specification of services.

The treatment programs and living environments at WBS continue to be appropriately challenging and provide for the safety of youth and staff. Educational services meet all professional standards and certifications, but continue to be challenged by the demands of "no child left behind", funding and coordinated transition and after-care efforts. There has been communication and discussions between administration and the superintendents regarding ACA accreditation and efforts to standardize practices between the schools such as data collections, policies and procedures.

**Outcome Measure III:** Habilitate and treat delinquent girls placed at the Wyoming Girls' School to help reduce rate of reoffense.

The WGS has a new superintendent appointed June 1, 2005. This is the third superintendent appointed in 18 months, and it will bring a significantly new outlook to the programs offered to the residents. More emphasis will be given to addressing substance abuse and mental health needs of the residents.

The WGS put into operation a strategic plan to improve the quality of services provided under a best practice model that is prescriptive and gender responsive to the needs of the type of residents served at the WGS.

A stabilization program was developed to provide orientation, assessment, and intensive clinical services for the first 30 days of a new resident's arrival. Assessments and counseling services are utilized to create a comprehensive case plan which encompasses identifiable goals

and outcome measures that will guide the treatment process during their commitment at the WGS.

The treatment program design was restructured to emphasize an individualized focus on substance abuse education, awareness, treatment, and recovery. To facilitate and provide specialized services, the WGS has two full-time substance abuse therapists and one full-time licensed therapist on staff. Additionally, the WGS recently hired a clinical director, who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience as it pertains to treatment services. Youth-to-staff ratio has been decreased to 1:8 to ensure safety of clients and staff and to increase the ability of staff to provide an intense treatment environment in every dormitory.

The WGS also has an independent living program that focuses on providing skills, knowledge, and resources for girls who are ready to transition into independent living and/or re-entry into their respective communities.

The current strategic plan is focused on increasing the substance abuse and mental health services needed to best meet the needs of our residents and the state, and to increase the current population at the WGS. The program improvements build on the tradition and foundation of the WGS: that being the nurturing and healing environment, and the importance of safety, ensuring that all residents receive the best possible care while in our custody. It is important to underscore that the support and advocacy of the judicial system, juvenile services, and field offices are vital to the sustainability and success of the WGS program and the services provided.

The WGS, like many state agencies, is experiencing an increased turnover in personnel with a staff turnover rate this past year of 25 percent. A competitive job market and rising cost of living contributes to the complexity of recruiting and retaining highly qualified professional staff.

## Early Childhood

**Objective A: Guide clients toward self-sufficiency while providing temporary benefits, support and opportunity for skill development.**

**Outcome Measure IV:** Number of families receiving day care subsidies.

The Child Care Block Grant distributed \$12,332,119 for the July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005 time period. Each month childcare subsidy payments serve an average of 2,642 families and 4,789 children. Total average payments equal \$1,027,676 per month with an average cost of \$215 per child. Overall, there was a cost increase of 22 percent. The subsidy program continues to grow as more parents are finding it necessary for both parents to

work. Wages in Wyoming remain low resulting in parents qualifying for assistance with child care.

**Objective D: Assist the development of safe and healthy environments for children and families.**

**Outcome Measure I:** Number of children in day care.

There were approximately 16,664 children in licensed day care facilities per month during FY 05. The number of facilities and children being served by licensed facilities has leveled off and remain close to the same numbers as 2004.

**Outcome Measure II:** Number of certified day care providers.

The Child Care Licensing program is responsible for licensing approximately 750 child care facilities. A second seven-day training for infant/toddler was provided. There are now 60 individuals across the state who can provide quality infant/toddler training to providers, parents, nurses, social workers and other interested parties. This training will result in more infants and toddlers receiving quality care from well informed care givers.

# Department of Family Services organizational chart

