

Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report

Families First Network of Lakeview Center, Inc. – Circuit 1 (Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)

Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Executive Summary:

Lakeview Center dba Families First Network (FFN) submitted an application for risk pool funding on October 15, 2021 and submitted a revised application for risk pool funding on February 16, 2022.

The department established a Risk Pool Peer Review Committee pursuant to section 409.990 (8)(a), F.S. (2021) for State Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022, the Risk Pool application process was informed by lessons learned from the prior year reviews as well as the availability of extensive additional information from reports developed pursuant to proviso language included in the General Appropriations Act (Specific Appropriation 321) for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. In compliance with this proviso language, the department completed a comprehensive, multi-year review of the revenues, expenditures and financial position of all Community-Based Care lead agencies including a comprehensive system of care analysis. This submission also included a financial viability plan from all lead agencies.

The Risk Pool Peer Review team conducted a review virtually in October 2021 and February 2022 with relevant information available from multiple sources to make recommendations. The documents reviewed are below:

- Risk Pool Funding Application FY 2021-2022
- Financial Viability Plan (FY 2021-2022)
- Budget Projections provided by the CBC
- [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#)
- [CBC Contract Monitoring Reports](#)
- CBC Contract Monitoring Data Packets
- [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#)
- Previous Risk Pool Reports
- Status Update on Prior Risk Pool Recommendations (if any)
- September 30, 2021 Single Audit (CPA Audit)

As a part of the review, the team evaluated all available information from previous on-site visits, current data and monitoring reports. To resolve any outstanding questions, additional information was requested by the team from the CBC which allowed the team to make an enhanced recommendation without an on-site visit being conducted by Risk Pool Review Committee.

The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee for FFN consisted of:

Barney Ray, DCF Director of Revenue Management and Partner Compliance (Team Lead)

Nadereh Salim, CEO, Children's Network of SW Florida

Donna Eprifania, CFO, ChildNet, Inc.

Mohamed Ghalayini, CFO, Citrus Family Care Network

James Weaver, DCF Director of Protective and Supportive Services

Charles Scherer, DCF Central Region, Regional Managing Director

While the specific areas of review and analysis varied based on the unique needs and circumstances of each Region, Circuit and Lead Agency, the following framework provided an outline for organizing the work of the Peer Review Committee.

Application Summary:

FFN's revised application for risk pool funding requested \$2,750,000. FFN projected deficit of \$4,878,368 in their application. Funding is requested to increase efforts to recruit and retain therapeutic and behaviorally based foster homes, increase services through care coordination to reduce costly placements, fund emergency shelter staff and operations and investigate opportunities in the community to expand community based and residential services for children with developmental disabilities

The primary causes FFN attributed to their current financial challenges are outlined below:

- Significant increase in children entering the foster care system with mental health challenges.
- Significant increase with children coming into care through lockout during the summer months.
- Increase of teens coming into care with human trafficking indications under Child Placing Agreements.
- Increase of children with developmental disabilities (APD service youth).

Findings:

After review of the information provided the Peer Review Committee was able to reach the following findings:

1. Findings related to the need for services and commitment of resources

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Reports](#))
- Summary below, See CBC Contract Monitoring Report, sections 2, 11, and 12 for more details

1.1. What is the relevant community context within which the child welfare system operates?

1.2. This may include incidence of calls to the hotline, child poverty in the area, local factors that influence the need for services, etc.

1.3. Factors may also include community resources available to meet the needs of children and families such as Children’s Services Councils, local governmental resources or other unique factors.

FFN serves Circuit 1 which covers Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, and Walton Counties. Child protective investigations are conducted by the department in Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa Counties; the Walton County Sheriff’s Office began conducting child protective investigations in July 2018. Children’s Legal Services (CLS) are performed by the department for all of Circuit 1.

Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties’ median household incomes are above the state average, while Escambia county is slightly lower. Inversely and consistent with lower household incomes, Escambia county’s population living in poverty is also higher than the state average.

Census Facts					
US Census Facts	Florida	Escambia	Okaloosa	Santa Rosa	Walton
Median Household Income	\$55,660	\$50,915	\$63,412	\$67,949	\$58,093
Percent of population living in poverty	12.7%	15.5%	10.6%	9.8%	10.8%
Percent of population over 25 years old with a college degree	29.9%	26.5%	31.1%	27.7%	28.5%
Percent of population over 25 years old with high school diploma	88.2%	90.5%	92.4%	91.3%	89.1%

Data Source: census.gov/quickfacts (2015-2019)

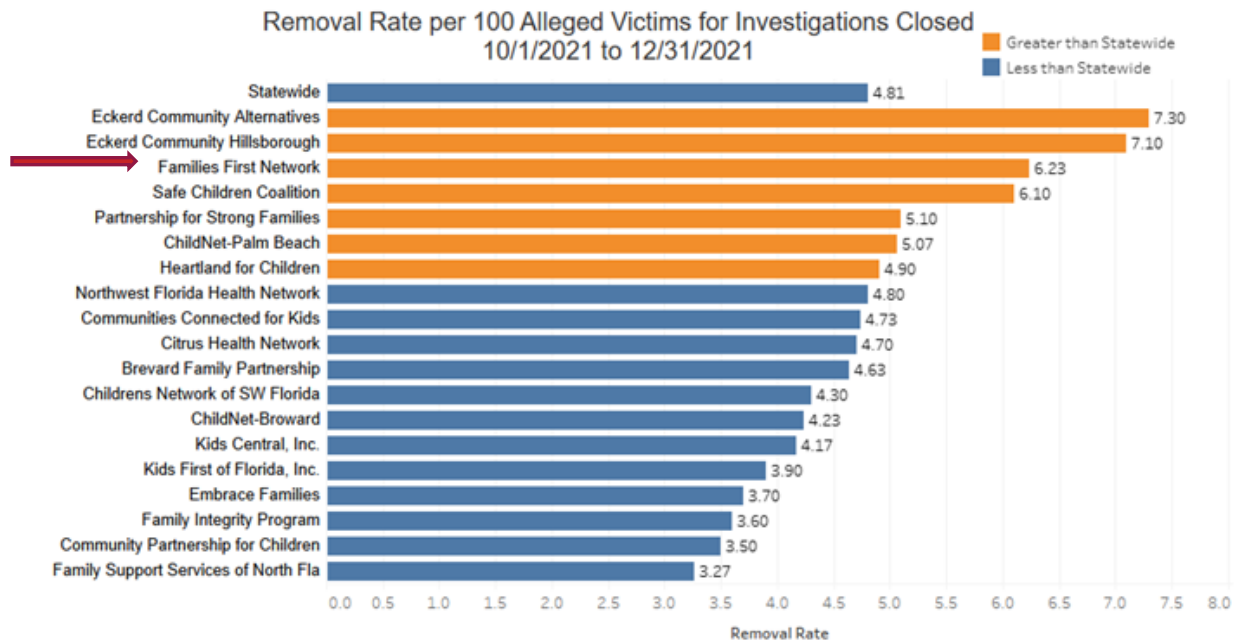
2. Findings related to protective services including removals, referrals for post-investigative services, activities to protect children without removal and use of resources focused on prevention and intervention.

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#))
- Summary below, See CBC Contract Monitoring Report, sections 5, 9, and 11 for more details

2.1. What are the rates of removal, rates of verification and other measures from protective investigations that affect the need for child welfare services? How

have these measures changed over time and how do they compare with other areas of the state?

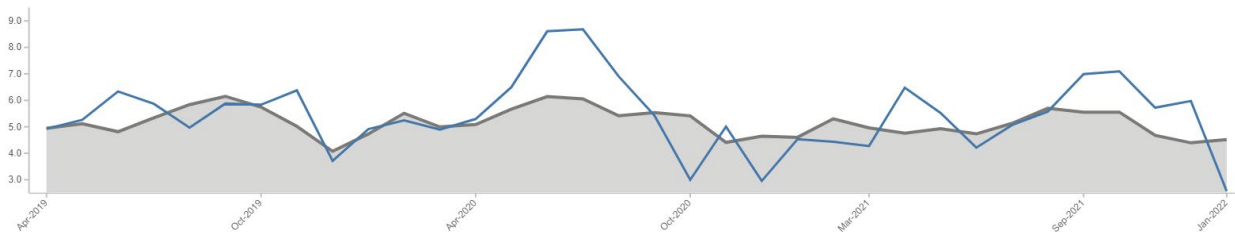
- 2.2. ***What activities are in place to provide support to protective investigators and families to permit children to remain safe in their homes? What services are provided with funds used for prevention and intervention?***
- 2.3. ***What services are provided with funds used for prevention and intervention?***
- 2.4. ***How well integrated are the CPI, safety management and intervention services components? Are there case transfer issues that affect performance?***



The removal rate per 100 alleged victims from 10/1/2021 to 12/31/2021 is 6.23 which is higher than the statewide average of 4.81 and the third highest in the state.

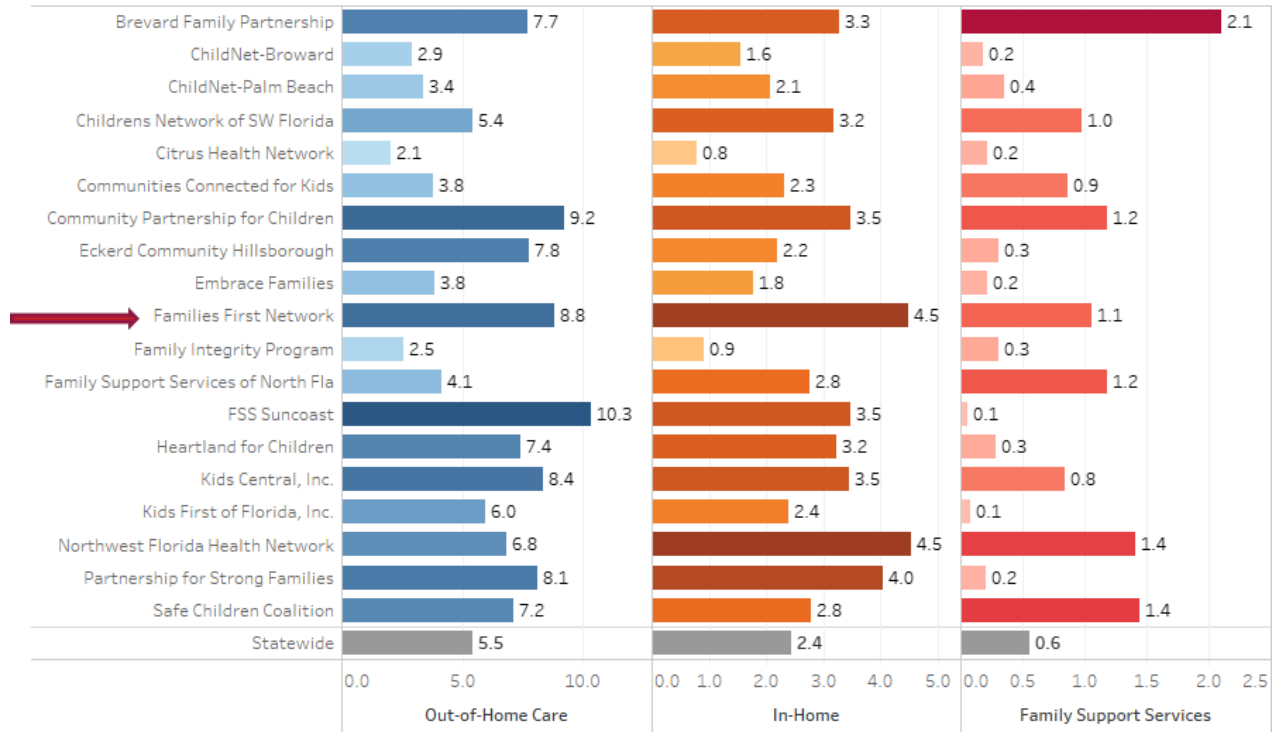
Removal Rate per 100 Alleged Victims

Removal Rate per 100 Alleged Victims in Investigations Closed During Report Month
Last Updated: 2/18/2022 (Data on or after Dec-2021 is draft data and will be updated next month.)



Removal rates within the circuit have been mostly above the state average for several years and the circuit has experienced several spikes, getting as high as 8.7 in July 2020.

Children Receiving Service by Type on 1/31/2022-- Rates per 1,000 Child Population



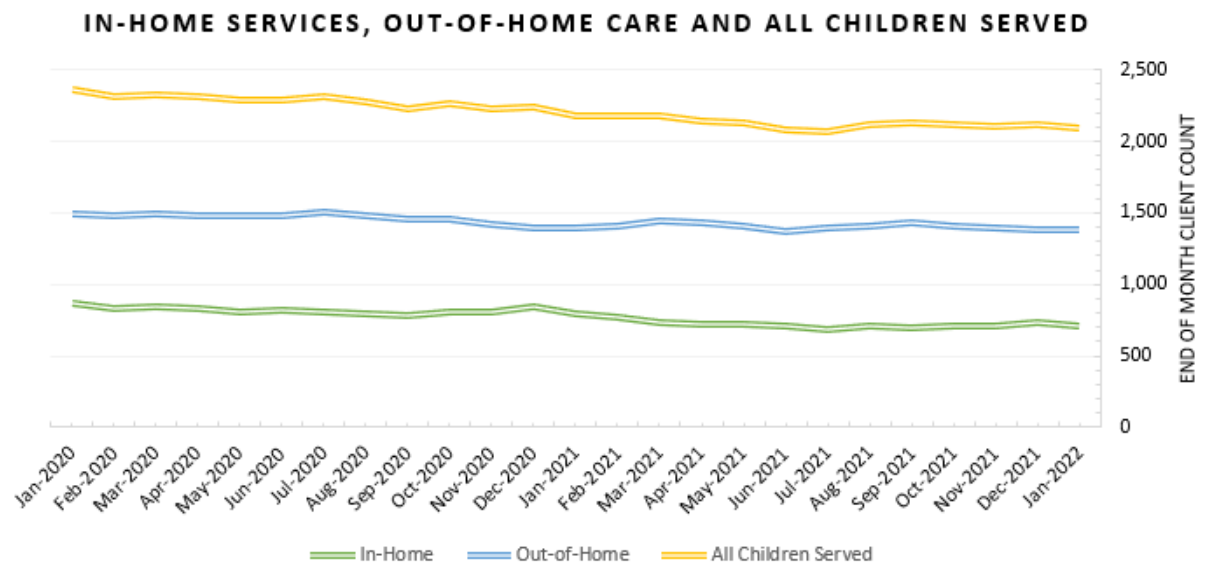
Data Source: FSN Data Repository, Tableau Data Source

FFN has the second highest number of children receiving services in out-of-home care at 8.8 children per 1,000 child population. This is almost double the statewide average of 5.5 and is a heavy financial burden on the system of care. The rate of children being served in-home is 4.5 per 1,000 children and is also almost double the statewide average of 2.4. FFN serves 1.1 children per 1,000 child population with family support services, 83% more than the statewide average of 0.6.

3. Findings related to provision of services for children in care (both in-home and out-of-home)

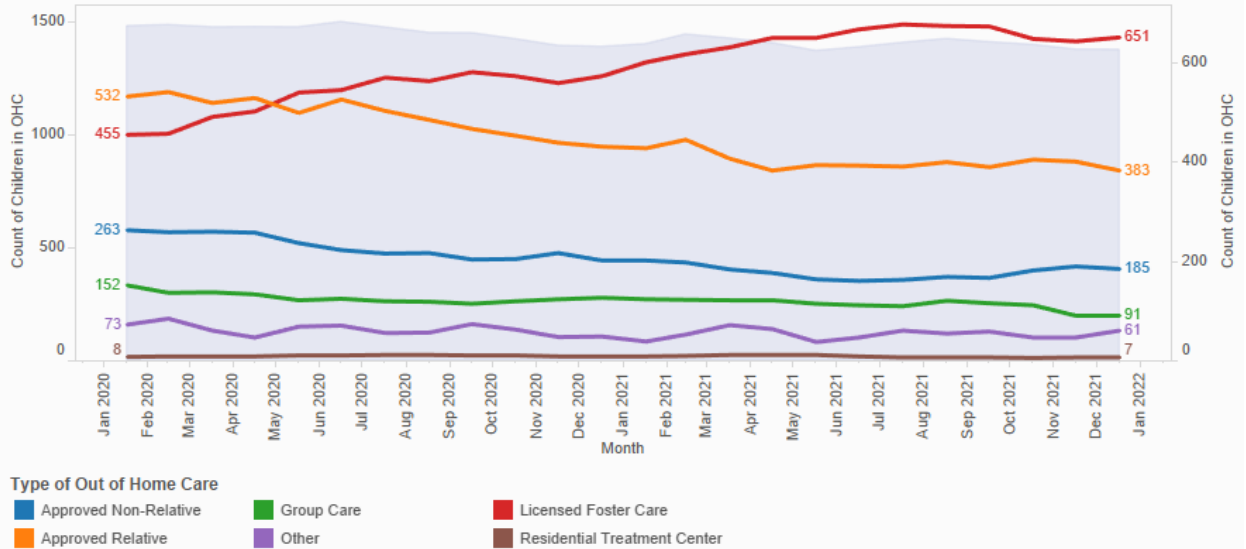
- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), CBC Financial Viability Report, CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, CBC Budget Projections, and Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Aggregate Payment Data)
- Summary below, See CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, CBC Budget Projections, CBC Financial Viability Report, and [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#) for additional details.

- 3.1. **What is the composition of the children in care including age cohorts, placement types, use of specialized higher costs settings, use of congregate care, etc.**
- 3.2. **What is the cost of various placement types? To what extent are the rates paid for foster care (including care with various rates of intensity), congregate care consistent with statewide norms (considering community context)? Have these rates remained relatively consistent over the past few fiscal years?**
- 3.3. **What is the cost for dependency case management? Is this consistent with norms for such services? Have these rates remained relatively consistent over the past few fiscal years?**
- 3.4. **To what extent is the Lead Agency appropriately utilizing non-child welfare funding for services (such as DCF SAMH Funds, Medicaid, and other non-DCF funding sources).**
- 3.5. **What evidence exists that case management services are well-managed by the Lead Agency? (see overall management section for response)**
- 3.6. **To what extent is the CBC meeting its obligation to the Family First Prevention goals? Have they reduced reliance on Residential Group care? How much? If not, what is the action plan going forward? Has the CBC met the 40% goal for all relative/non-relative placements licensed as Level I Foster Homes?**



The number of clients being served is trending down. The number of clients being served in-home and out-of-home are following the overall trend. Overall, children served is down from a peak of over 2,383 children in November 2019.

**Children in Out-of-Home Care by Placement Type
Region: Northwest Region
CBC: Families First Network**

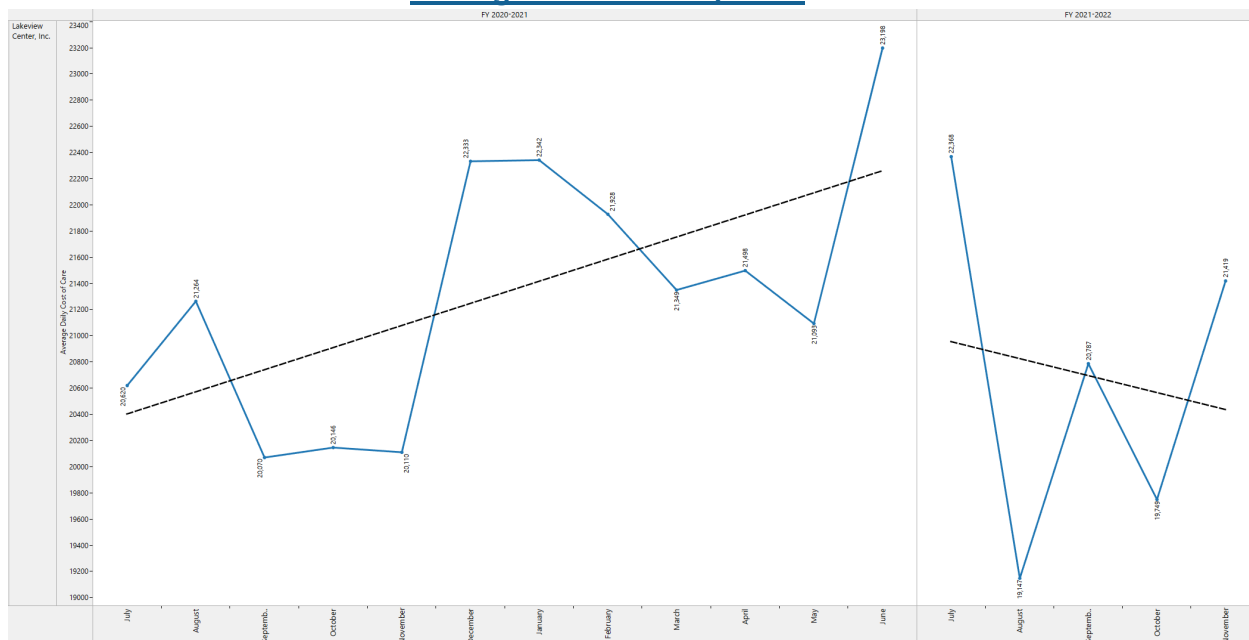


Data Source: FSFN Data Repository

Last Updated: 2/10/2022

The number of children in group care has decreased from 152 in January 2020 to a total of 91 in January 2022. This equates to 7.1% of FFN’s out-of-home care population compared to the statewide average of 7.6%. While this decrease represents a 40% decline in the total number of children in congregated care, there are still children in a residential group care setting that would not meet the criteria for federal funding under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) beginning in October 2021. Therefore, the total number in residential group care could be reduced further.

Average Cost of Group Care



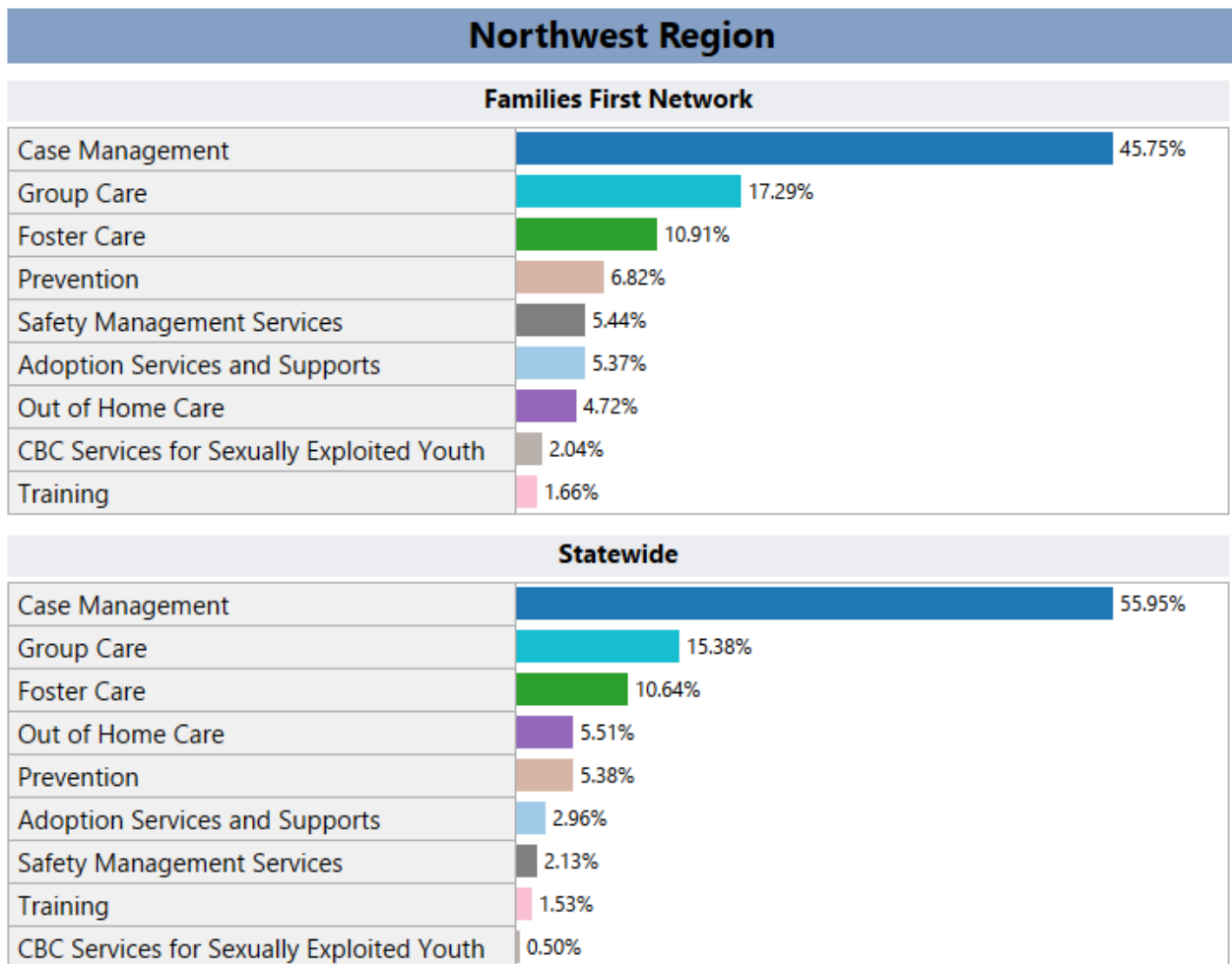
FFN saw an increase in the average daily cost of group care in FY 2020-21, averaging \$21,329/day. In the first five months of FY 2021-22, the average daily cost of group care was averaging \$20,694/day.

Total \$ of FSFN Payments to Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE, LCGHE & LCGHI)						
Ages	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)	FY 2020-21 (Thru Dec. Service Mths- 50% of the year)	FY 2021-22 as a % of FY 2020-21
0-5	\$588,740	\$194,905	(\$393,835)	-67%	\$84,242	43%
6-12	\$3,076,190	\$3,494,583	\$418,393	14%	\$1,476,682	42%
13-17	\$4,454,923	\$4,006,657	(\$448,266)	-10%	\$2,513,048	63%
Total Number of Unique Clients in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE, LCGHE & LCGHI)						
Ages	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)	FY 2020-21 (Thru Dec. Service Mths- 50% of the year)	
0-5	28	7	(21)	-75%	6	
6-12	160	113	(47)	-29%	75	
13-17	138	110	(28)	-20%	87	

Median Daily Rate \$ in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE, LCGHE & LCGHI)						
Ages	FY2019-2020	FY2020-2021	\$ Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)	FY2021-22 (Thru Dec. Service Mths- 50% of the year)	
0-5	\$157.00	\$140.00	(\$17)	(11%)	\$202.78	
6-12	\$140.00	\$149.60	\$9.60	7%	\$140.00	
13-17	\$160.00	\$185.00	\$15	9%	\$200.00	

While number of unique clients served are down, group care rates are more costly in the 0-5 and 13-17 age group. In Fiscal Year 2019-20, there were 326 clients in group care placements. In FY 2020-21, there were 230 clients in group care placements. As of December 2021 (Fiscal Year 2021-22), there were 168 clients in group care placements.

**Percent of Core Services Expenditures
FY 2021-22**



As of November 2021, case management expenditures for FY 2021-22 are 45.75% of FFN's budget, significantly below the statewide average of 55.95%. In contrast FFN spends significantly more than the state on group care, prevention, adoption services and supports and safety management services.

Case Managers				Unit Managers			
Period	12 Month Average On-Hand	12 Month Actual Terms	12 Month Rolling Turnover	Period	12 Month Average On-Hand	12 Month Actual Terms	12 Month Rolling Turnover
2/2021	137	50	36%	2/2021	21	2	10%
3/2021	137	53	39%	3/2021	21	2	10%
4/2021	136	52	38%	4/2021	22	2	9%
5/2021	146	52	36%	5/2021	22	1	5%
6/2021	145	50	34%	6/2021	23	5	22%
7/2021	145	47	32%	7/2021	25	5	20%
8/2021	144	50	35%	8/2021	22	6	27%
9/2021	142	60	42%	9/2021	22	6	27%
10/2021	141	71	50%	10/2021	21	5	27%
11/2021	139	67	48%	11/2021	21	5	27%
12/2021	138	71	51%	12/2021	22	5	23%
1/2022	136	74	54%	1/2022	23	5	23%

Budgeted Case Manager Positions	133
Case Manager Vacancies	43
Total Number Children Receiving Services:	2082
Average Child Caseload: per Case Manager based on filled positions:	20.6

FFN retains the case management function in-house. Per FFN's September 27, 2021 posting of caseload and turnover as required by s. 409.988, F.S., the agency had average child caseload per case manager based upon filled positions of 20.6 and a 12-month rolling turnover rate for case managers of 54% and supervisors of 23%.

The number of children placed in unlicensed relative/non-relative care has declined due to the increase in the child specific Level 1 foster home licensed care beginning in July 2019. As of February 27, 2022, FFN was not meeting the goal of achieving 40% relative/non-relative placements licensed as Level 1 foster homes. FFN has 31.61% homes licensed, below the statewide average of 37.54%. FFN is ranked 16th in the state for this metric.

4. Findings related to exits from care including exits to permanence.

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), [Financial Viability Integrated Data Report](#))

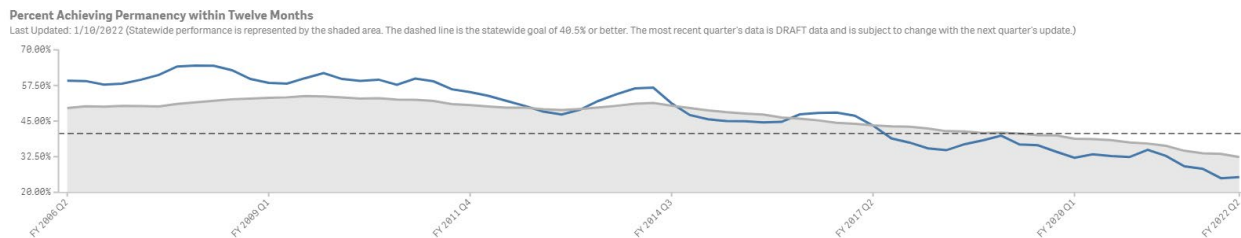
- Summary below, see [The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), [Financial Viability Integrated Data Report](#), [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#) – Sections 4 and 11, for more details.

4.1. What is the performance of the Lead Agency in the recognized measures of children achieving permanency? Do these findings indicate that children are not remaining in care for longer than necessary? Are these permanency achievement rates consistent across placement settings?

4.2. What contextual factors (such as Children’s Legal services, dependency court dynamics, etc.) influence time to permanency for children served by the Lead Agency?

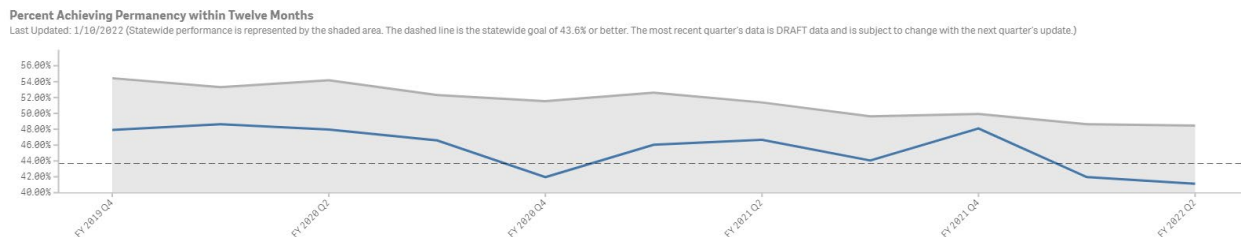
4.3. Has there been a change in number of exits or time to exit that is materially influencing the cost of out-of-home care?

Children Achieving Permanency within 12 months



The lead agency has seen a steady trend downward from a high 64.32% of children achieving permanency in 12 months during FY 2007-08. FFN last met the statewide target of 40.5% in 2016-17. Most recently, FFN achieved permanency for 226 of 804 children in FY 2021-22, Quarter 2 (25.21%). Currently, FFN is ranked 19th in the state for this metric.

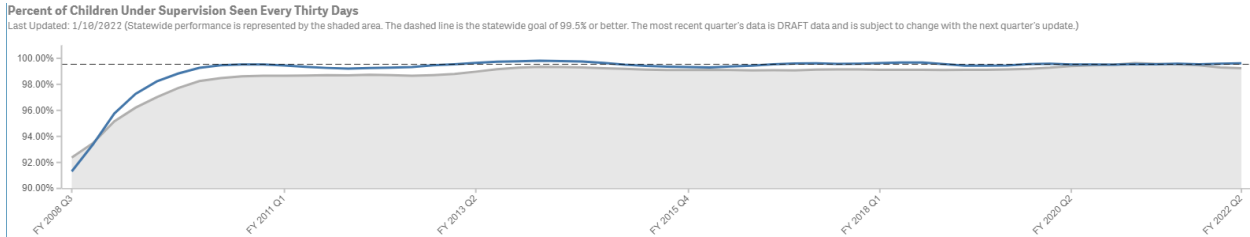
Children in Care 12 to 23 Months Achieving Permanency within 12 months



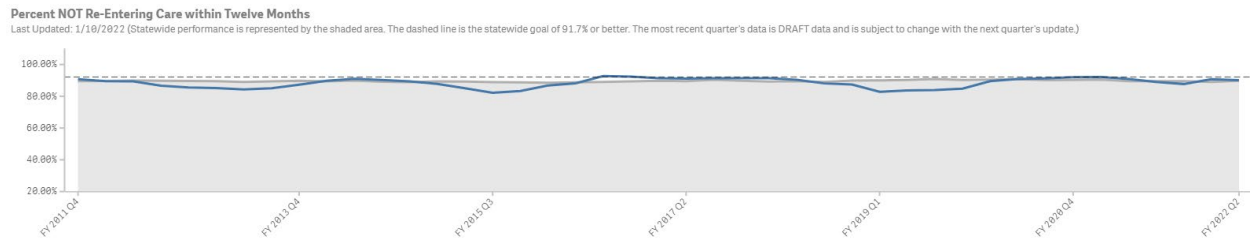
The dotted line represents the statewide goal of 43.6% of children in care 12 to 23 months achieving permanency within 12 months. The last two quarters, SFY 2021-22 Q1 and SFY 2021-22 Q2, FFN has fallen below the target.

Children Under Supervision Seen Every Thirty Days

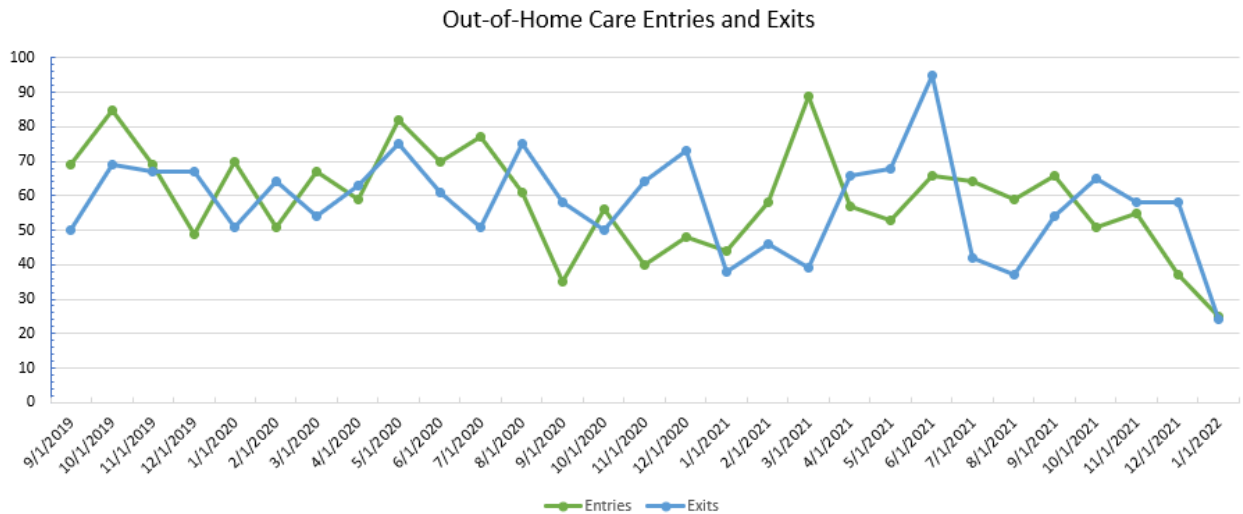
In the past, FFN has struggled to meet the target of seeing 99.5% of children under supervision every thirty days. FFN did achieve the target every quarter in FY 2020-21 and in for the first two quarters in FY 2021-22.



Children Achieving Permanency and Not re-entering Care within 12 Months



The statewide target for children not re-entering care within twelve months is 91.7%. In FY 2020-21, FFN reached the target once and historically hovers below the target.



Comparing entries to exits over a twelve-month period, FFN had a greater number of entries to exits. A one year look back (February 2021 to January 2022, entries were 680 and exits were 652 for a net increase of 28.

5. Findings related to funding, fiscal trends and fiscal management.

- Sources: ([The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report](#), [The Child Welfare Dashboard](#), CBC Financial Viability Report, CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report and CBC Budget Projections)
- Summary below, See CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report, CBC Budget Projections and CBC Financial Viability Report for additional details.

- 5.1. **How has core services funding changed over time? (Financial) How has the Lead Agency managed these changes? What adjustments to the available array of services have been made?** (For service array response see section1)
- 5.2. **How have any changes to core services funding contributed to any projected deficits for FY 2020-2021?**
- 5.3. **What is the ratio of core funding as a Percent of the Allocation formula?**
- 5.4. **In what ways are funding dynamics in the Lead Agency unique or atypical of funding in other Lead Agencies?**
- 5.5. **What is the amount of the anticipated deficit for the current year? How reliable and valid are these projections?**
- 5.6. **Are their options other than Risk Pool funding available to reduce the deficit?**
- 5.7. **If the Lead Agency meets the criteria for Risk Pool funding, but the amount of funding available is insufficient to cover the projected deficit, what other options are available?**
- 5.8. **Are there fiscal practices that could be completed with greater efficiency in order to reduce the projected deficit?**
- 5.9. **Has the most recent CPA audit indicated any issues that would affect the financial health of the organization?**

Total Funding

DCF Contract Funds Available at Year End (by Fiscal Year)	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22
Core Services Funding	\$34,221,547	\$34,623,974	\$34,807,617	\$36,181,276	\$39,009,125	\$40,141,191
Risk Pool Funding	\$0	\$0	\$664,252	\$0	\$0	\$0
CBC Operations "Back of the Bill" Funding	\$1,310,473	\$0	\$0	\$3,771,089	\$2,107,445	\$0
Other Amendments to Initial Allocations	\$23,137	\$119,774	\$193,421	\$260,336	\$0	\$0
Amended Core Services Funding	\$35,555,157	\$34,743,748	\$35,665,290	\$40,212,701	\$41,116,570	\$40,141,191
Funding not defined as Core Services Funding						
Independent Living (IL and Extended Foster Care)	\$889,196	\$1,365,673	\$1,822,671	\$1,871,539	\$1,871,539	\$1,871,539
Children's Mental Health Services (Cat 100800/100806)	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106	\$290,106
PI Training, Casey Foundation or other non-core svcs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,288,391
Safety Management Services (Nonrecurring)	\$462,805	\$0	\$462,805	\$462,805	\$0	\$0
Total at Year End	\$37,197,264	\$36,399,527	\$38,240,872	\$42,837,151	\$43,278,215	\$43,591,227
Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS)	\$11,035,777	\$12,328,714	\$13,597,396	\$14,899,929	\$16,756,008	\$17,935,386
Guardianship Assistance Payments (GAP)				\$57,652	\$57,652	\$100,903
MAS Prior Year Deficit						
Carry Forward Balance from Previous Years	\$106,138	-\$335,810	\$2,667	-\$964,500	-\$612,321	-\$321,343
Total Funds Available	\$48,339,179	\$48,392,431	\$51,840,935	\$56,830,232	\$59,479,554	\$61,306,173

In FY 2018-2019, FFN received risk pool funding. Additionally, in FY 2016-2017, FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021, FFN received “Back of the Bill” funding for operating deficits. In FY 2020-2021, FFN had a carryforward deficit of \$321,343.

Allocation of New Funding for Caseload 1 to 17 in State Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (Table 1)					
CBC Lead Agency	Current Level of Funding	% of Optimum Funding Before Allocation	Allocation of New Funding	New Level of Funding	% of Optimum Funding After Allocation
Big Bend CBC	27,835,031	90.4%	363,641	28,198,672	91.4%
Brevard Family Partnerships	21,190,590	87.1%	373,008	21,563,598	88.8%
Childnet (Circuit 17)	60,818,442	95.6%	296,310	61,114,752	96.6%
Childnet (Circuit 15)	34,886,015	89.3%	511,688	35,397,703	90.4%
Children’s Network of SW FL	37,774,164	67.8%	2,165,220	39,939,384	71.6%
Citrus Family Care Network	77,376,515	117.0%	0	77,376,515	117.4%
Communities Connected for Kids	23,854,417	96.6%	104,872	23,959,289	96.9%
Community Partnership for Children	28,328,507	74.5%	1,171,780	29,500,287	77.5%
Eckerd Community Alternatives (Circuit 6)	50,610,140	65.4%	4,371,313	54,981,453	70.9%
Eckerd Community Alternatives (Circuit 13)	60,277,503	73.4%	3,863,739	64,141,242	78.3%
Embrace Families	61,938,655	101.1%	0	61,938,655	101.0%
Families First Network	37,820,641	72.1%	1,757,925	39,578,566	75.5%
St Johns County	5,024,545	71.5%	243,478	5,268,023	74.7%
Family Support Services of North Florida	39,009,868	88.7%	615,527	39,625,395	89.8%
Heartland for Children	36,231,773	82.5%	935,158	37,166,931	84.4%
Kids Central	42,246,842	78.0%	1,424,759	43,671,601	80.7%
Kids First of Florida	7,426,216	72.3%	347,084	7,773,300	75.3%
Partnership for Strong Families	25,000,080	87.7%	434,325	25,434,405	88.9%
Safe Children Coalition	24,765,387	71.2%	1,203,895	25,969,282	74.7%
Total	702,415,331	83.8%	20,183,722	722,599,053	87.0%

FFN is funded at 75.5% based upon the Florida Funding for Children Model (FFFC). This is the sixth lowest funded CBC in the state.

Core Services Expenditures by Category

Reported Expenditures by Fiscal Year	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20	FY20-21
Administrative Costs	\$2,071,364	\$1,837,862	\$1,516,181	\$1,654,357	1,542,263
Admin Cost Rate (Exp as % of Total Allocations)	4.3%	3.8%	2.9%	2.9%	2.6%
Core Services Expenditures					
Dependency Case Management	\$16,658,383	\$16,619,067	\$16,635,154	\$18,376,315	\$18,124,539
Adoption Services Promotion & Support	\$2,557,570	\$2,610,098	\$2,745,293	\$2,399,710	\$2,068,483
Prevention/Family Support/Family Preservation	\$3,434,922	\$2,574,666	\$3,487,329	\$4,078,697	\$3,535,418
Client Services	\$1,488,708	\$544,497	\$873,858	\$648,126	\$1,075,917
Training - Staff and Adoptive/Foster Parent	\$1,531,437	\$1,647,736	\$1,401,203	\$842,041	\$850,247
Licensed Family Foster Home (Level I Child Specific)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$108,499	\$658,696
Licensed Family Foster Home (Level II-V)	\$3,732,846	\$3,249,769	\$3,504,991	\$3,665,071	\$4,225,382
Licensed Facility Based Care	\$5,330,431	\$5,286,344	\$6,191,604	\$8,110,569	\$7,783,810
Services for Victims of Sexual Exploitation	\$251,160	\$144,352	\$487,230	\$399,244	\$560,808
Safety Management Services	\$462,805	\$1,565,157	\$1,873,481	\$1,825,301	\$2,069,177
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Core Services Expenditures	\$35,448,261	34,241,686	37,200,143	40,453,574	40,952,477

When comparing core service expenditures by category, FY 2020-21 had a significant increase in client services expenditures from \$648K to \$1M representing a 66% increase. Prevention/family support/family preservation as well as adoption services and promotion spending decreased 13% and 14%, respectively. Safety management services had a 13% increase and Level II-V foster homes increased 15%. Level I foster home expenditures were up 507% in FY 2020-21 due to significant increase in the number licensed. Case management costs declined 1%.

No findings were identified in the most recent CPA audit for September 30, 2021.

FY 2021-2022 Financial Viability Plan

In their design and instruction for the Financial Viability Plan (FVP) templates, DCF requested that CBCs identify their actions to address three primary cost drivers:

1. Factors related to entries into care
2. Factors related to the cost of children while in care
3. Factors related to exits from care

FFN's FVP contains actions to address the three primary cost drivers affecting their financial position. The actions are:

- Increase visibility to resources that will assist with keeping children safely in their homes. Measured by increasing the percentage of children served in home vs. out of home.
- Partner with internal and external stakeholders to identify and overcome barriers to keeping children safe in their homes. Measured by providing prevention and in home services and reducing out of home care costs.
- Maintain stability for children placed with Relatives or Non-Relatives. Improve the search process to move children to relatives or non-relatives when located.

Measured by increasing the percentage of children placed with relatives or non-relatives.

- Reduce the overall cost of children in our most expensive placements. Measured by the cost of the top 25 high-cost placements.
- Increase Level 1 to the statewide goal of 40%
- Decrease Enhanced Board Rates (EBR)
- Increase foster bed capacity
- Deploy all of Conditions for Return strategies to ensure timely and safe reunifications. Measured by reducing the average length of stay.
- Overcome barriers to finalizing adoptions in a timely manner. Measured by increasing the monthly finalized adoptions.

6. Findings related to overall management.

- Sources: ([CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#), Financial Viability Plan)
- Summary below, [CBC Contract Monitoring Report](#) – Sections 4 and 11, and the Financial Viability Plan for more details.

6.1. To what extent is there clear and effective communication between and among the Region, the Lead Agency, the Sheriff (if applicable), case management organizations and other key community partners?

6.2. How actively and effectively does Lead Agency management track programmatic performance and fiscal performance?

6.3. What actions have been taken by the Region and/or the Lead Agency to resolve the fiscal issues without accessing the Risk Pool? What further actions are planned?

7. Other factors or considerations noted on the application or determined relevant by the Peer Review Committee.

FFN has received additional state funding from Risk Pool and Back of the Bill for Operating Deficits in four of the past five years for a total allocation of \$7,853,259.

8. Provide a detailed analysis of the projected Return on Investment (ROI) in terms of future cost avoidance, reduction in Out of Home Care, increase in prevention in home services, reduction in removals or other related factors.

FFN did not provide a specific calculation for ROI. FFN instead provided specifics on how risk pool funds would be used. Those are:

- Recruitment and retention of therapeutic/enhanced foster care settings including enhanced stipends to include but not limited to the addition of specialized personnel to oversee the initiative - \$300,000

- Increased services through care coordination to avoid high-cost placements to include but not limited to the addition of two full time personnel and community-based wraparound services to maintain children in the least restrictive environment - \$500,000
- Fund emergency shelter to stabilize children with significant mental health histories and/or delinquency histories that require assessment stabilization (to include personnel, building and operational expenses) - \$1,250,000
- Expand community base and residential services for children with developmental disabilities to include enhanced in-home behavioral intervention services as well as community-based respite for this population - \$700,000

9. The areas identified above are illustrative of the expected areas for review and analysis, but additional factors may be identified in the application or suggested by findings during the course of the Peer Review Committee's work.

Summary of Findings:

Based on the information reviewed the Risk Pool Review Committee was able to affirm the following:

- FFN is funded at 75.5% of optimum funding based on the Florida Funding for Children model (FFFC) which placed them 13 out of 19 CBC contracts in optimum funding.
- FFN has kept a low administrative rate and has reduced their rate almost every year. Most recent decrease from 2.9% in FY 2019-2020 to 2.6% in FY 2020-2021.
- According to the annual adoptions report, FFN had a record year with 318 adoptions in FY 2020-2021 which was 31 or (11%) more than FY 2019-2020.
- FFN has consistently trailed statewide efforts to license at least 40% of all relative and non-relative placements as child specific Level I foster homes. As of February 2022, they were at 31.61% which ranked 16 out of 19 contracts which is significant due to having the fifth (5th) highest number of relative and non-relative placements by contract in the state.
- In June 2021, FFN self-identified thirty-one (31) children in a residential group care setting that would not meet the requirements for federal funding under FFPSA beginning in October 2021 without the grandfathering clause.

Risk Pool Allocation:

The Peer Review Committee found that Families First Network qualifies for risk pool funding.

The expenditure of approved risk pool funds is based on relevant and verifiable service trends and changes that have occurred during the current fiscal year. The applicant's financial need is caused by circumstances beyond the control of the lead agency management. The use of risk pool funds meets at least one of the purposes specified in section 409.990 (8)(c), F.S.

Recommendations:

1. While FFN did increase the number of adoptions finalized last year, there is still a large number of children waiting for adoptive placements or adoption finalization. FFN needs to focus on reducing the time to permanency for adoptions.
2. FFN should continue to focus on increasing the number and percentage of Level 1 licensed foster home placements.
3. FFN should place a stronger emphasis on the reduction in the number of children in residential group care to an appropriate placement setting specifically for those whose placement setting does not meet the requirements of FFPSA.