Risk Pool Peer Review Committee Report

Eckerd Community Alternatives – Circuit 6 (Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

Fiscal Year 2019-2020

November 2019

Executive Summary:

Eckerd Community Alternatives as known as Eckerd Connects applied for risk pool funding on September 13, 2019 for their Pasco/Pinellas contract (ECA P/P).

The department established a Risk Pool Peer Review Committee pursuant to section 409.990(7), Florida Statutes, for state fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020. 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 326) for FY 2019-2020. 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 (CBCs) including a comprehensive system of care analysis. This submission also included a financial viability plan from all lead agencies.

Due to the early application process this fiscal year, the Risk Pool Peer Review team conducted a review with relevant information available from multiple sources to make recommendations. The documents reviewed are below:

- Risk Pool Funding Application FY 2019-2020
- Financial Viability Plan (FY 2019-2020)
- Budget Projections provided by the CBC
- CBC Financial Viability Integrated Data Report
- The Child Welfare Dashboard
- CBC Contract Monitoring Reports*
- CBC Contract Monitoring Data Packets
- The Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report
- Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Aggregate Payment Data
- ECA-P/P Previous Risk Pool Report

*Note: The most recent CBC Contract Monitoring Report for ECA-P/P is dated January 2019. An on-site monitoring is scheduled for January 2020.

To resolve any outstanding questions, additional information was requested by the team from the CBC.

The Risk Pool Peer Review Committee for ECA-P/P consisted of:

Barney Ray, Team Leader, Director or Revenue Management and Partner Compliance

Larry Rein, CEO, ChildNet

Lauren Hahn CFO, Communities Connected for Kids

Catherine Macina, CFO, Embrace Families

Walter Sachs, Suncoast Regional Managing Director

Eric Emery, Staff Director of the Office of Child Welfare

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

Application Summary:

ECA-P/P's application for risk pool funding requested $7.4 million. In their application, ECA-P/P states that over the past three fiscal years, they have experienced a sustained increase in removals and a 10% increase in entries between SFY 2015-2016 and SFY 2016-2017. As a result of the increase in removals, there has been increases in caseloads and case management turnover. Their risk pool application also states that there was a decline in exits by 8% during SFY 2016-2017 and that ECA-P/P is one of the lowest funded jurisdictions in the state. They stated that this added a net increase of 252 children served.

They state that risk pool funds will be used to "address funding shortages as a result of the increased population of youth placed in a licensed care setting. Risk pool dollars will also be used to off-set expenditures directly associated with the need to implement new service interventions that will help achieve financial stability by the end of the contract year.

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.***

   ECA-P/P operates in Circuit 6, serving Pasco and Pinellas Counties. Child Protective Investigations are performed by the sheriff's offices in these counties and the State Attorney's Office handles the Children's Legal Services functions in these counties. Community involvement varies between the counties, as Pasco is historically rural.

US Census Facts	Florida	Pasco	Pinellas
Median Household Income	$48,900	$46,010	$47,090
Percent of population living in poverty	14.7%	13.3%	13.3%
Percent of population over 25 years old with a college degree	27.9%	22.5%	29.5%
Percent of population over 25 years old with high school diploma	87.2%	88.3%	90.4%

Table 1. Data Source: census.gov/quickfacts/(2012-2016 v2016)

According to the US Census Facts, Pasco and Pinellas Counties have slightly lower poverty rates than the statewide rate of 14.7%. Pasco and Pinellas Counties also have slightly lower median household incomes but higher percentages of individuals with high school diplomas. In comparison to the statewide average of 27.9%, Pasco County has a higher number (29.5%) and Pinellas County has a lower number (22.5%) of individuals with college degrees.

Service Area Data

		FY 2015/2016	FY 2016/2017	FY 2017/2018	FY 2018/2019
Child Protective Investigations and Child Removals (Pasco and Pinellas counties)	Reports accepted for Investigation by DCF (Initial & Additional Reports, Child Intakes)	14,962	15,677	15,279	14,982
	Reports accepted for Investigation by DCF (Initial & Additional Reports, Special Conditions)	1,003	1,110	1,174	1,278
	Children Entering Out-of-Home Care	1,430	1,575	1,510	1,430
Children Served by Eckerd Pasco Pinellas	Children Receiving Family Support Services	754	973	857	741
	Children Receiving In-Home Services	1,786	1,980	2,199	2,052
	Children Receiving Out of Home Care	2,969	3,265	3,476	3,564
	Young Adults Receiving Services	236	255	251	232

Table 1. Data Sources: Child Protective Investigation Trend Report, Child Welfare Dashboard, FSFN OCWDRU Report 1006. Data Run Date: July 24, 2019

The number of reports accepted for investigation decreased in FY 2018-2019 as did the number of children entering out-of-home care. During this same time period, the number of children receiving out-of-home care increased while the number of children receiving in-home services, family support services, and the number of young adults receiving services decreased.

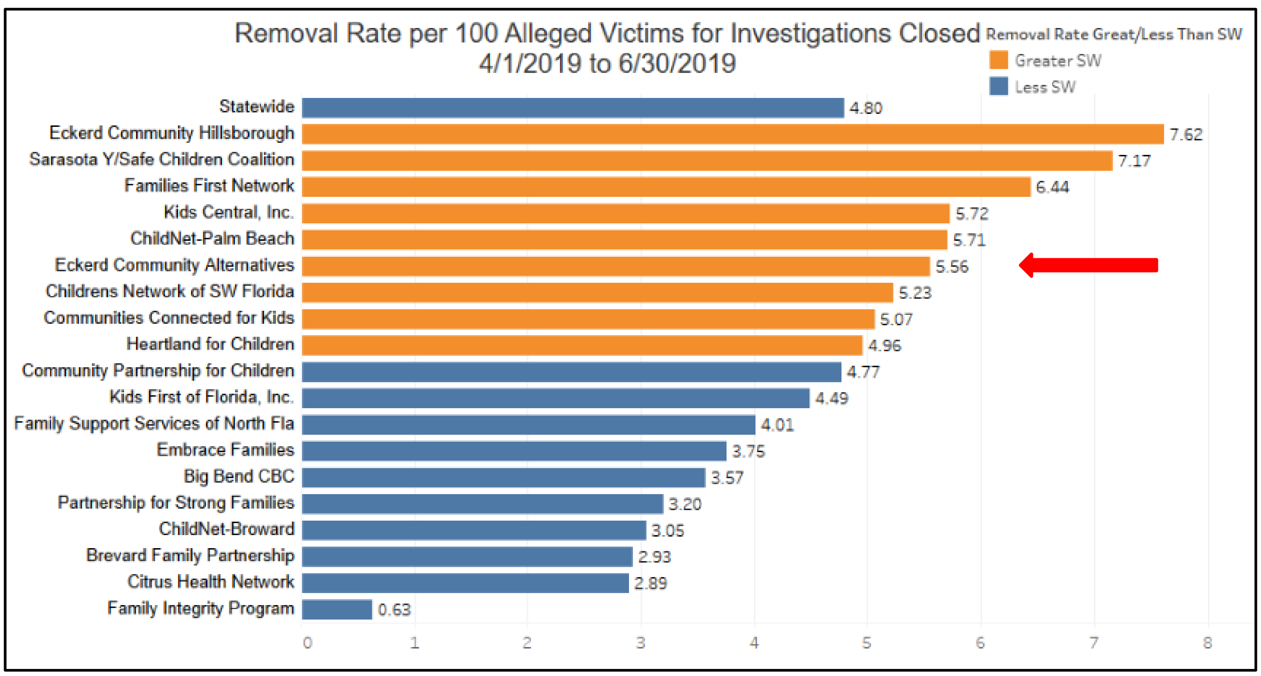
The local Children's Services Council focuses on delivery of prevention services to non-dependent children. Service availability for both dependent and non-dependent children and their families varies between counties; Pinellas County has a variety of resources available, while Pasco has fewer resources available due to the historically rural nature of the county.

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

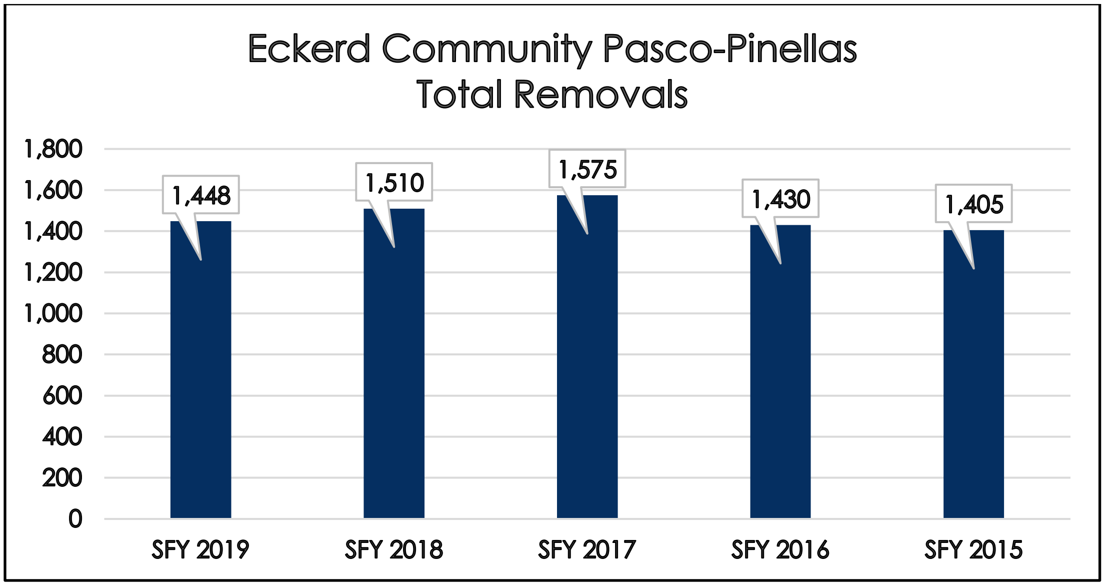
    2.1. ***What are the rates of removal, rates of verification, and other measures from protective investigations that affect the need for child welfare services? How have these measures changed over time and how do they compare with other areas of the state?***

    2.2. ***What activities are in place to provide support to protective investigators and families to permit children to remain safely in their homes? What services are provided with funds used for prevention and intervention?***

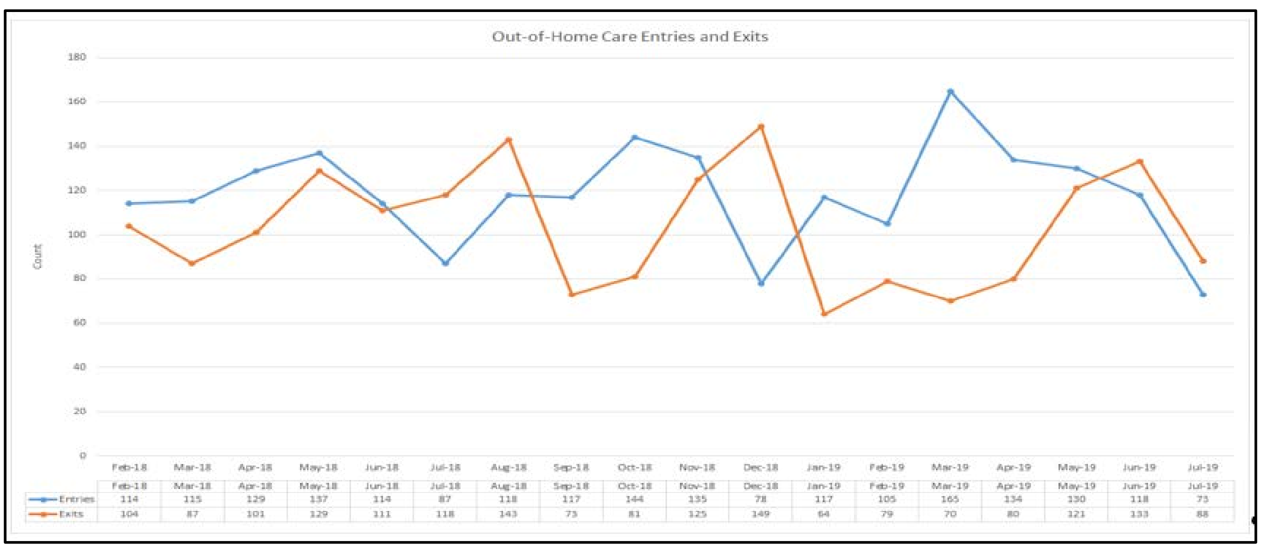
    2.3. ***How well integrated are the CPI, safety management and intervention services components? Are there case transfer issues that affect performance?***



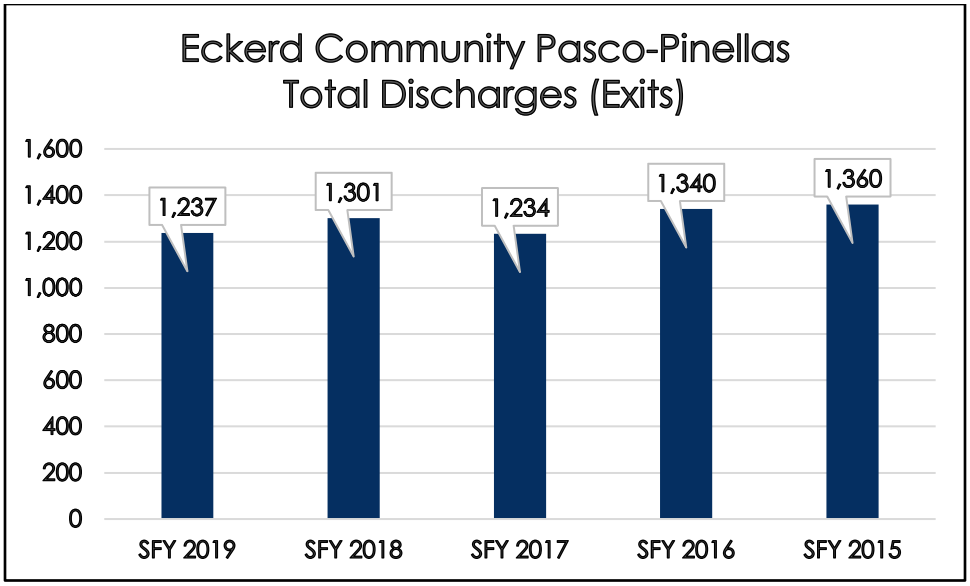
The removal rate per 100 alleged victims for investigations closed from 4/1/2019 to 6/30/2019 is above the statewide average, as shown in the graphic above. For the same quarter in 2018, the removal rate was 5.1 statewide and 6.7 for ECA-P/P. So while the statewide rate increased, the rate of removal actually decreased for Circuit 6.



There was a sharp increase in total removals (entries) in SFY 2016-2017 that has slowly declined over the last two fiscal years as shown in the chart above. (Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children Entering Out-of-Home Care)



In the past year, ECA-P/P had a spike in Out-of-Home Care Entries in March through May 2019 with five (5) consecutive months of entries greater than Exits from January through May 2019.



Discharges (Exits from Out-of-Home Care) have continued to be about 200 less than the number of Entries in each of the last three (3) years which contributes to the overall increase in children served and increasing length of stay. (Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children & Young Adults Exiting Out-of-Home Care)

ECA-P/P has a higher rate of children being served in out-of-home care, a slightly higher rate of children receiving in-home services and a lower rate of children receiving family support services than the statewide average.

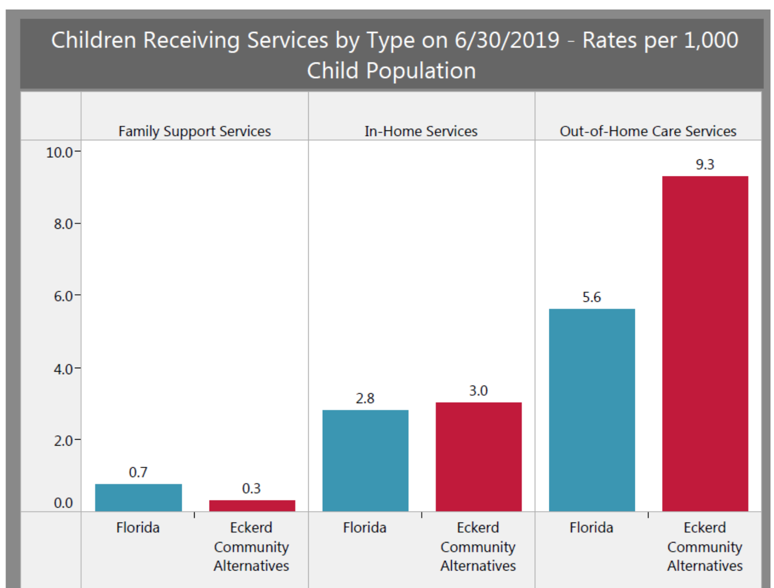
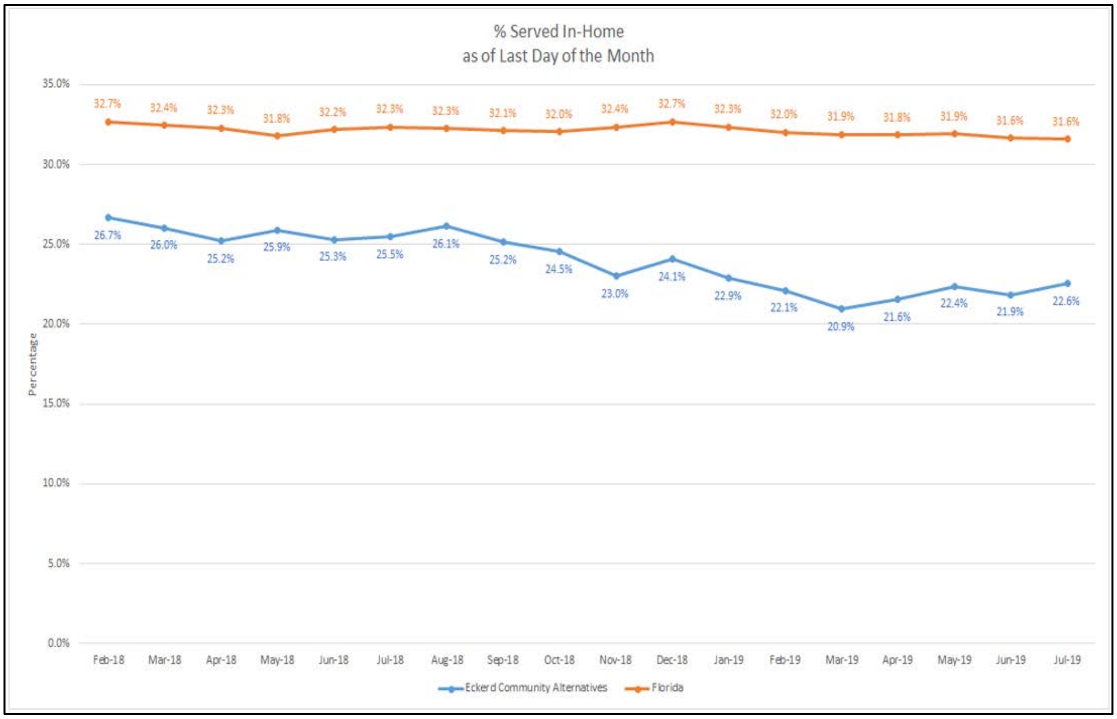
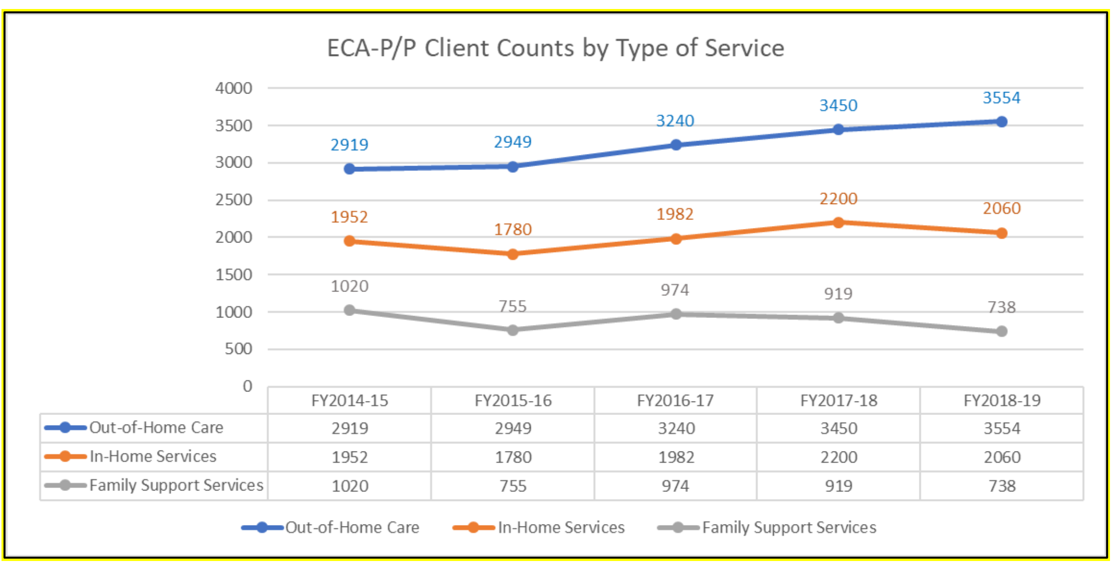


Figure 1. Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, March 2019



While ECA-P/P had a rate slightly above the statewide rate, the percentage of children receiving in-home services has been consistently below the statewide percentage for at least the past 18 months as shown in the chart above. The percent served has also **decreased** from 26.7% to 22.6%. (Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children & Young Adults Receiving In-Home Services & Children in Out-of-Home Care).



	FY2014-15	FY2015-16	FY2016-17	FY2017-18	FY2018-19
Out-of-Home Care	2919	2949	3240	3450	3554
In-Home Services	1952	1780	1982	2200	2060
Family Support Services	1020	755	974	919	738

ECA-P/P has experienced an increase of children in out-of-home care over the last four years, an increase in children receiving in-home services until SFY 2018-2019 when it decreased, and the use of family support services has been on a downward trend over the last two fiscal years and was at its lowest level in five years in FY 2018-2019. (Source: Children and Young Adults Receiving Services by CBC Lead Agency and Type of Service - OCWDRU Report #1006)

as of: 8/31/2018

CMO	Average # of Children per Worker	Case Load	Case Manager Turnover Rate Last 12 months	Case Manager Supervisor Turnover Rate Last 12 months
DFL	20.5	12.5	76%	63%
LSF	22.1	13.2	96%	100%
YFA	19.3	12.0	70%	50%
Total	20.5	12.5	80%	71%

as of: 8/31/2019

CMO	Average # of Children per Worker	Case Load	Case Manager Turnover Rate Last 12 months	Case Manager Supervisor Turnover Rate Last 12 months
DFL	23.7	13.2	105%	125%
LSF	27.9	17.2	112%	0%
YFA	24.7	14.6	96%	22%
All	25.3	14.9	104%	46%

Turnover of front-line staff has a negative impact on service delivery. ECA-P/P's section 409.988, Florida Statutes, reporting as of August 2018 and August 2019 (Source: Eckerd Weekly Progress Reports) shows a high Rolling Year turnover rate for case managers. The Average number of Children per Worker increased from 20.5 to 25.3 in the last 12 months. Case Manager turnover was already high at 80% and is now 104%. The case management subcontract with Directions for Living (DFL) was terminated effective 11/1/2019 and ECA-P/P has recently announced that it is in the process of assuming the majority of the cases from DFL but will subcontract with Lutheran Services Florida (LSF) for three additional case management units.

In July 2016, the Office of Child Welfare initiated a **Service Array Assessment** with each CBC across the state. The assessment focuses on evaluating the availability, access and application of services for families involved with the child welfare system.

Based on the most recent information provided, ECA-P/P has a rating of “3” for the safety management services programs and a rating of “3” for their family support services programs. A "3" indicates the CBC is providing the services consistently as defined, with no capacity issues as demonstrated by no waiting lists and access across all service areas.

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), and 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 CBC 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 CBC?*** *(see overall management section for response)*

As of July 16, 2019, more children ages 6-17 being served by ECA-P/P were placed in group care than the statewide average.

ECA-P/P is trending up on placements in licensed foster care, group care, approved relatives and approved non-relatives while fluctuating on placements with approved relatives.

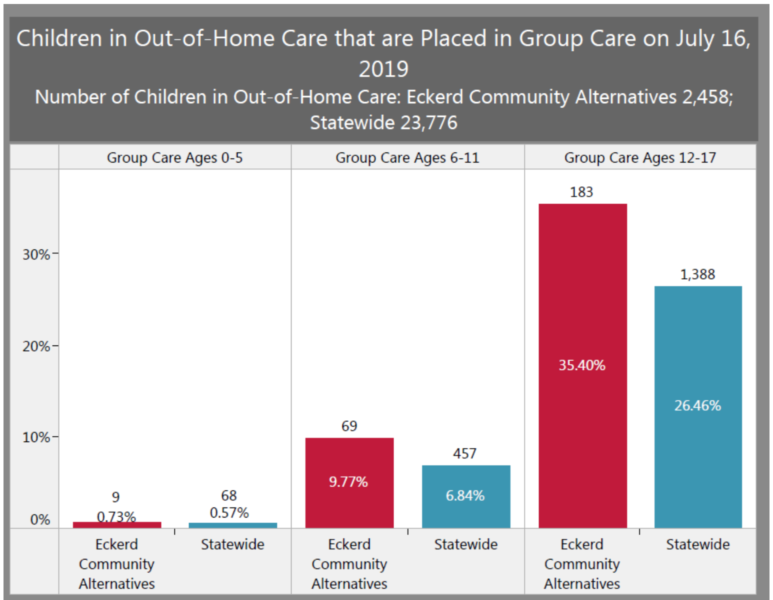
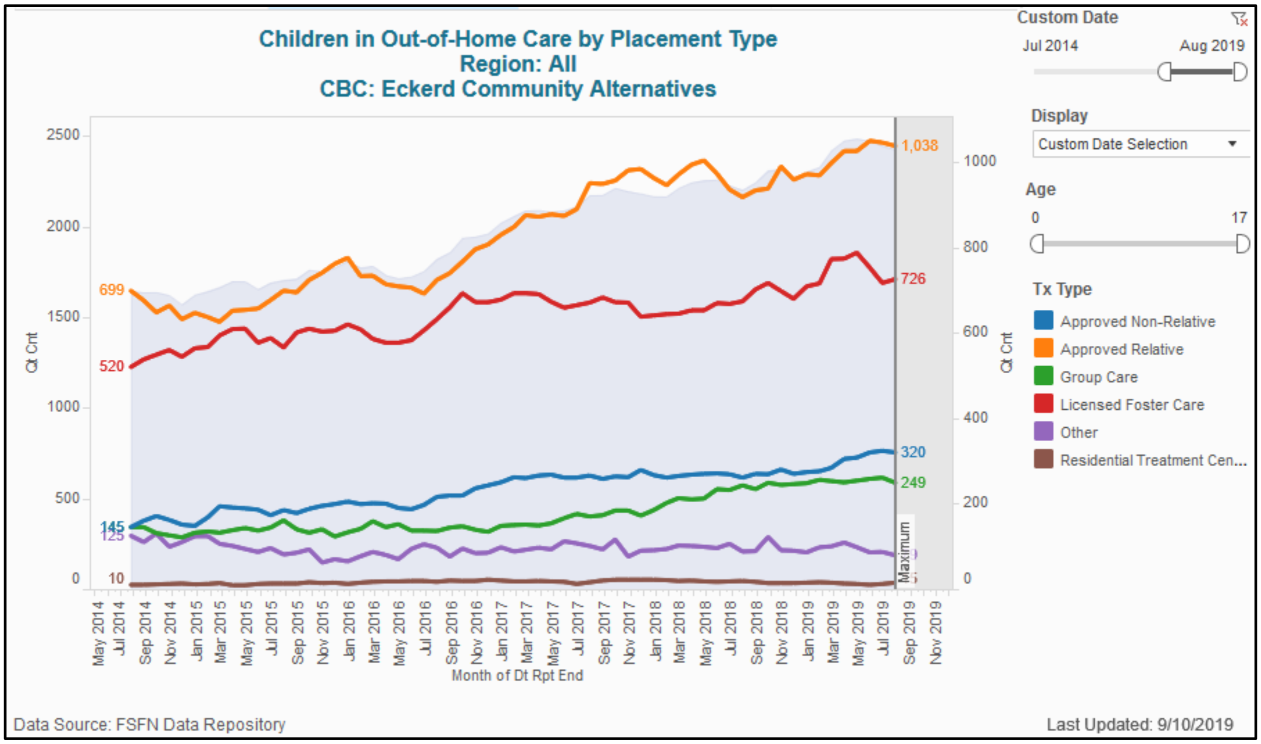
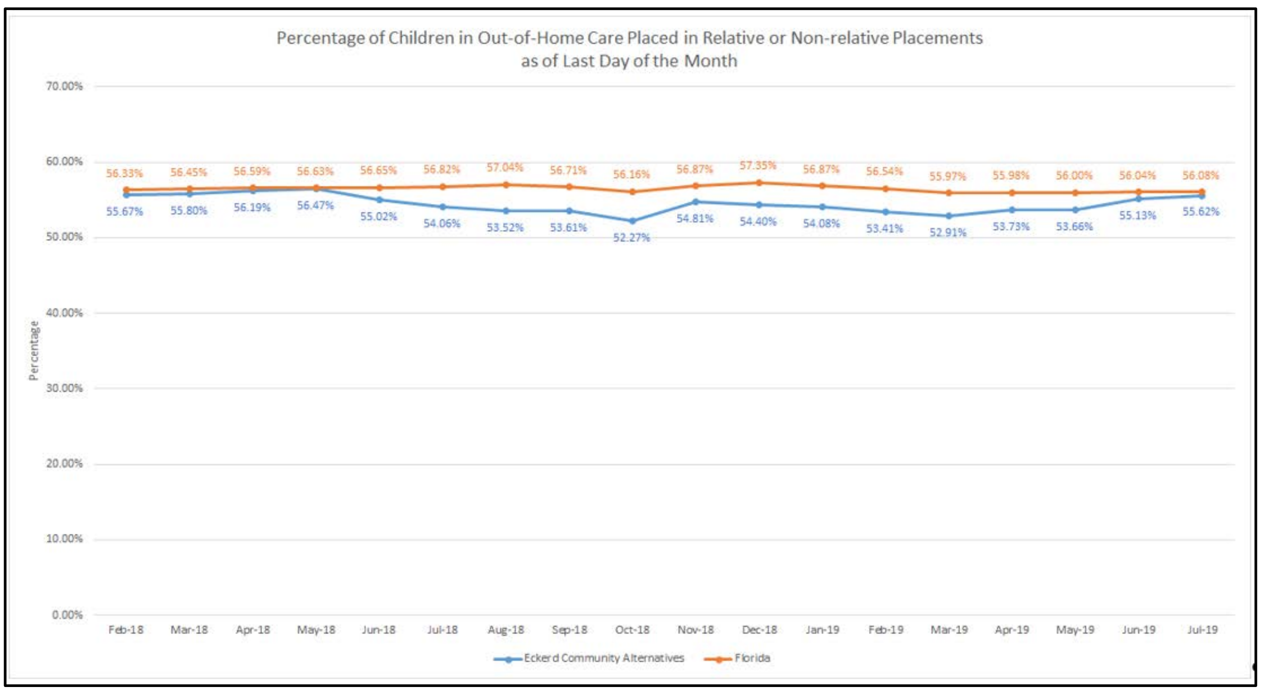
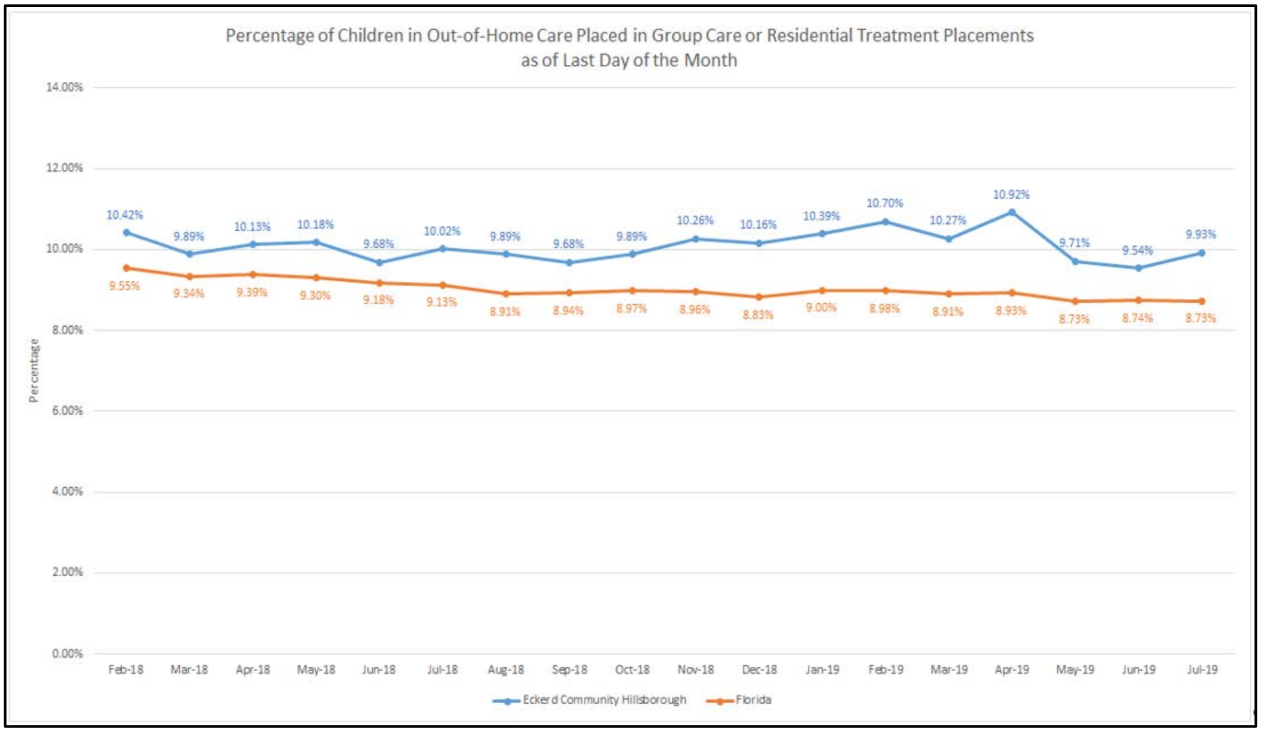


Figure 4. Source: FSFN OCWDRU Report #1005





While ECA-P/P percentage of Children in Out-of-Home Care placed with relative or non-relative caregivers dipped in mid-2018, it has increased in the most recent months to near the statewide average. (Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children in Out-of-Home Care)



ECA-P/P has consistently exceeded the statewide average for percentage of children placed in group care and residential treatment facilities for at least the last 18 months. (Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children in Out-of-Home Care)

Eckerd Connects – Pasco-Pinellas **Out-of-Home Placements by Type** **(Source: Child Welfare Dashboard – Children in Out-of-Home Care)**					
As of:	6/30/2019	6/30/2018	6/30/2017	6/30/2016	6/30/2015
Relative/Non-relative	1,370	1,244	1,135	893	843
Foster Home	753	670	659	583	577
Group Care/Residential Treatment Placements	268	251	183	156	149

While the number of children in relative/non-relative and foster home placements has increased significantly over the last four (4), the increase in group care/residential treatment placements has been disproportionately increasing especially in the last two fiscal years.

Eckerd Connects (Pasco-Pinellas) - Contract # QJ511 Total $ of FSFN Payments to Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Ages	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
0-5	$159,538	$368,080	+$208,542	+131%
6-12	$3,129,222	$4,575,520	+$1,446,298	+46%
13-17	$7,148,992	$8,973,728	+$1,824,736	+26%

Between FY 2017-2018 and FY 2018-2019, ECA-P/P more than doubled the amount paid for group care for children ages 0-5. Additionally, while not doubling the cost, there was a substantial increase in group care expenditures for children ages 6-17. Also, during this time period there was an increase in the average daily rate for group care. There was a total of $3.5 million more spent in group care, with the largest portion for the age 13-17 population. The age 6-12 population saw an 46% increase in spending for group care and the age 0-5 population saw a 131% increase.

Eckerd Connects (Pasco-Pinellas) - Contract # QJ511 Total Number of Unique Clients in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Ages	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
0-5	28	15	-13	-46%
6-12	197	219	+22	+11%
13-17	350	358	+8	+2%

Eckerd Connects (Pasco-Pinellas) - Contract # QJ511 Median Daily Rate $ in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Ages	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
0-5	$113.80	$115.00	+$1.20	+1%
6-12	$115.00	$115.00	+0.00	+0%
13-17	$130.00	$140.00	+10.00	+8%

Eckerd Connects (Pasco-Pinellas) - Contract # QJ511 Total $ of Payments by FSFN Service Type in Licensed Residential Group Care (OCA LCRGE)				
Service Type	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase/ (Decrease)
Group Home	$8,694,482	$11,957,728	+$3,263,246	+38%
APD Daily Rate Service/Payment	$775,178	$815,931	+$40,753	+5%
APD Group Home	$267,543	$451,297	+$183,754	+69%
Residential Treatment – CBC Funded	$494,239	$455,224	-$39,015	-8%
Group Home Bed Hold	$97,658	$119,935	+$22,277	+23%
Shelter Facility	$37,740	$26,344	-$11,396	-30%
Clothing Allowance	$47,375	$73,697	+$26,322	+56%

According to the COU report, ECA-P/P's enhanced collaboration with the University of South Florida is anticipated to yield opportunities for a greater local applicant pool. A program, anticipated to start in the fall semester of 2019, will provide an internship experience that will also allow social work graduates to become certified child welfare professionals before graduation. Pre-services classes begin monthly to ensure ongoing training is readily available to new hires. Additionally, ECA P/P Human Resource Department meets regularly with Case Management Organizations Human Resource Departments to discuss hiring practices and identified trends. ECA P/P meets regularly with Case Management Organizations to identity systemic issues that are impacting turnover and strategies to boost staff morale. Eckerd Connects has added transportation FTE's to the Lead Agency as requested by the Case Management Organizations. These positions are currently providing some relief to case managers. Actual caseloads of case managers are reviewed weekly and are reviewed when reviewing system capacity weekly. A System Capacity report is generated weekly that details how many case manager positions are filled, how many case manager positions are filled and case carrying, how many case manager positions are in training and how many case managers are awaiting training. The System Capacity Report also identifies case managers that that have more than 25 children and the case managers assigned more than 30 children. Senior Case Manager positions are within the sub contracted Case Management Organizations and the agencies decide their caseloads, incentives available to them and their intended duties. The Region has included a review of case-load size in monthly meetings.

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 CBC in the recognized measures of children achieving permanence? Do these findings indicate that children are not remaining in care for longer than necessary? Are these permanency achievement rates consistent across placement settings?***

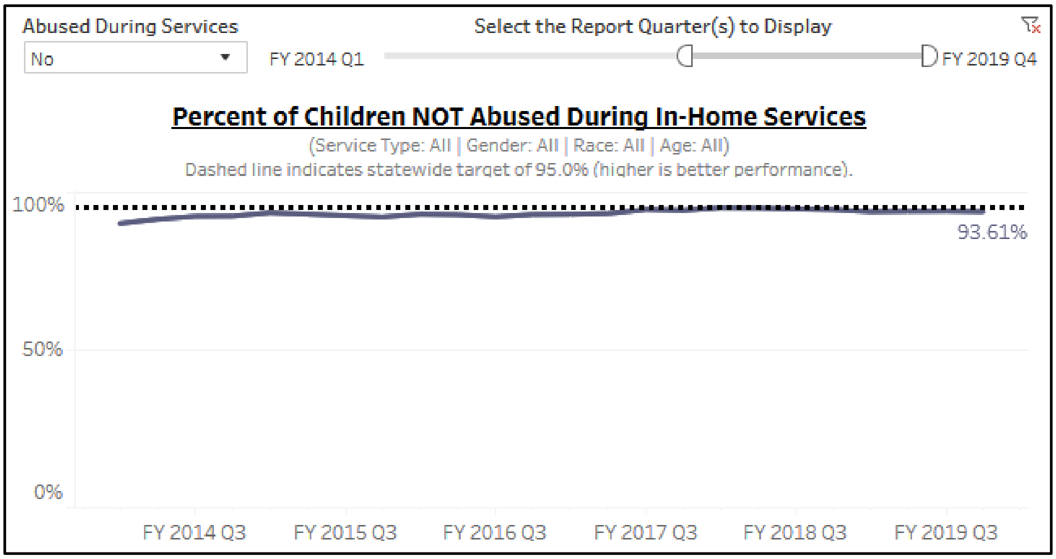
4.2. ***What contextual factors (such as Children's Legal Services, dependency court dynamics, etc.) influence time to permanence for children served by the CBC?***

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

During the last quarter of FY 2018-2019, ECA-P/P did not meet the established targets for:

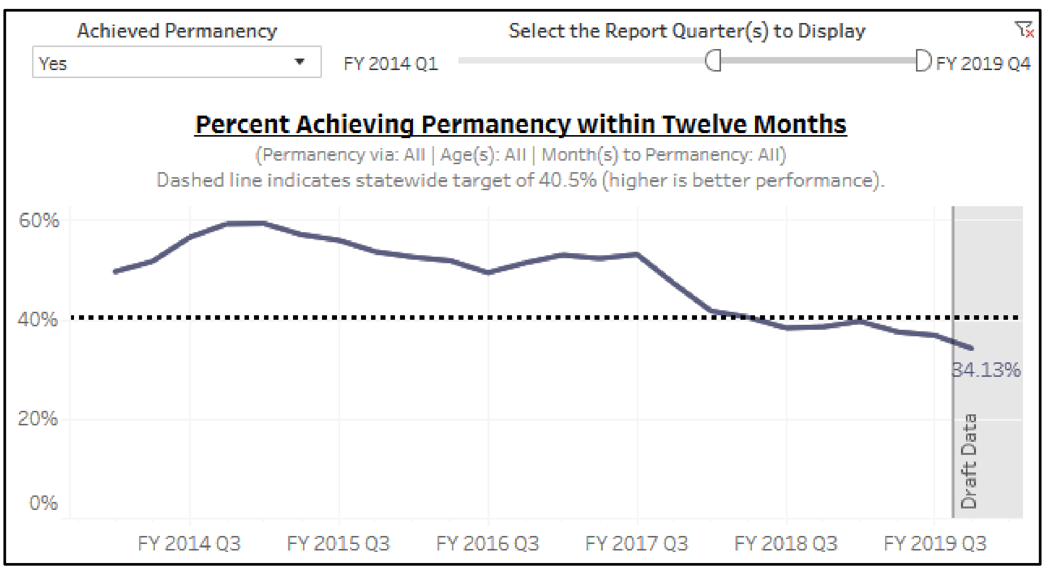
- M02: Percent of children who are not neglected or abused during in-home services

- M05: Percent of children exiting to a permanent home within 12 months of entering care
- M07: Percent of children who do not re-enter care within 12 months of moving to a permanent home
- M08: Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care
- M12: Percent of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together

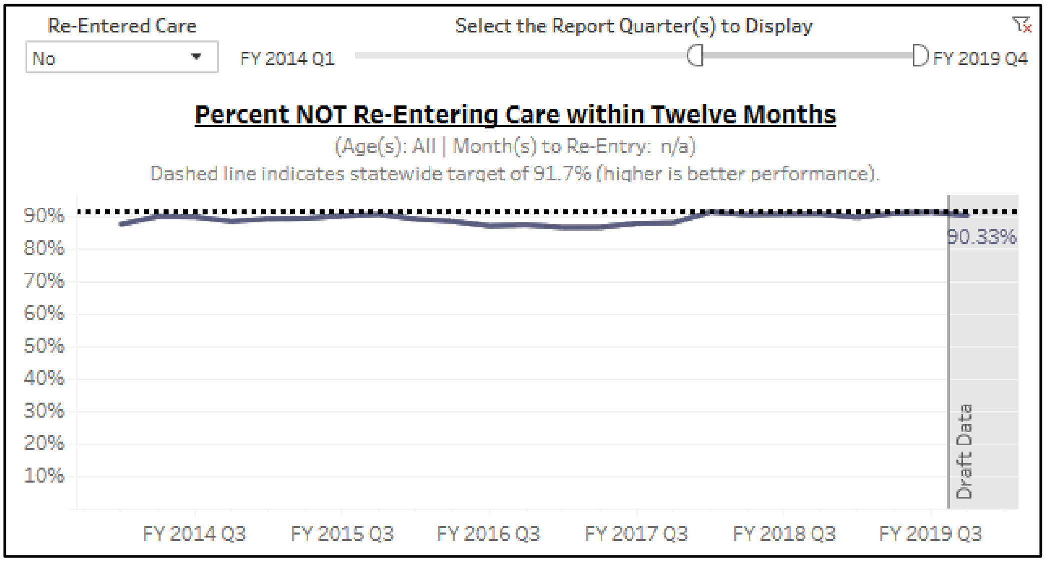


ECA-P/P been below the target since at least FY 2013-2014 Q1 with a low of 89.92% and a high of 94.79% in FY 2017-2018 Q1 with a downward trend to the current rate of 93.61% in FY 2018-2019 Q4

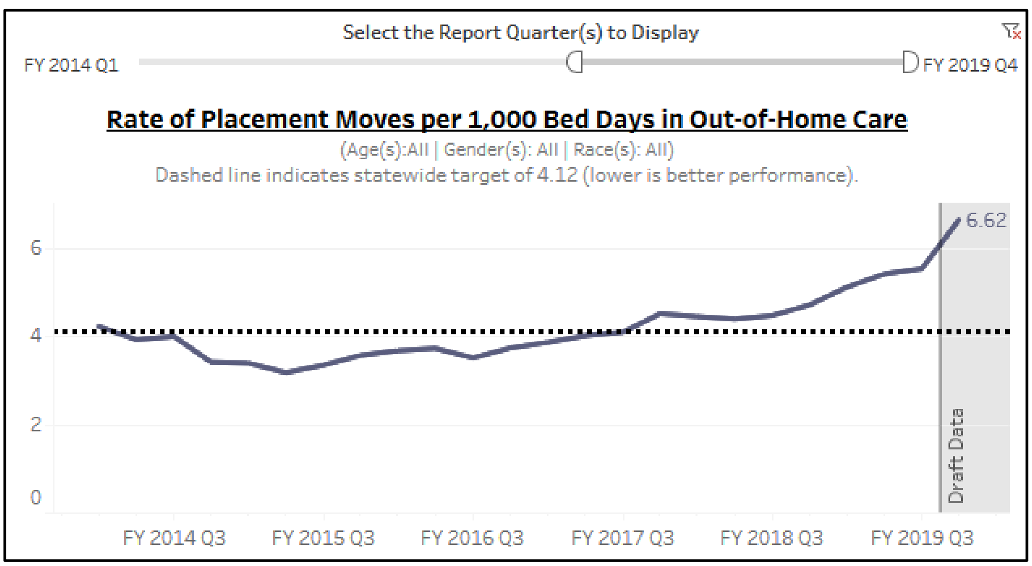
Children Entering Care Who Achieve Permanency within 12 Months



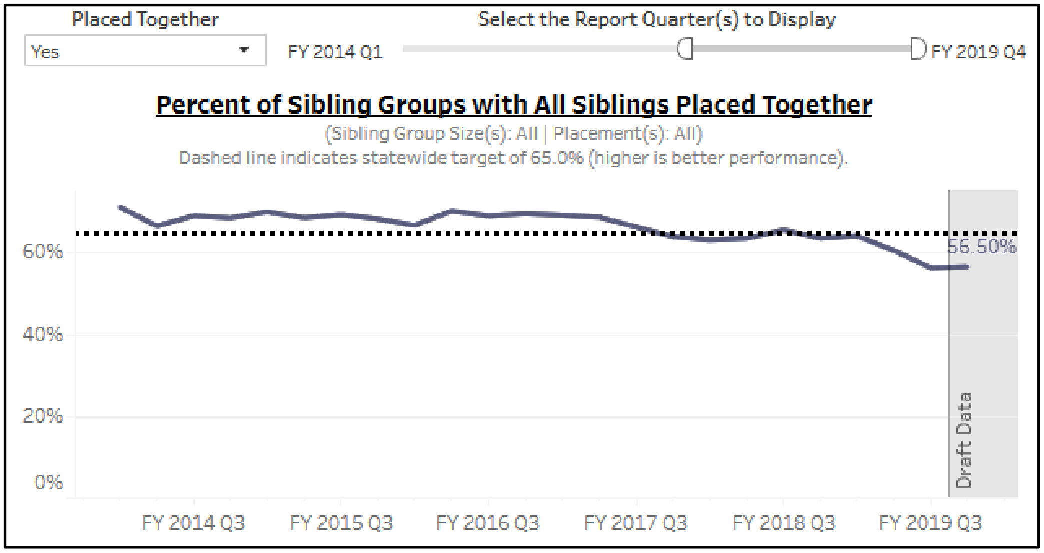
ECA-P/P had been exceeding the target with a high of 59.29% in FY 2014-2015 Q1 and then began a downward trend in FY 2016-2017 Q3 that fell below the target in FY 2017-2018 Q2 and have not met the target in the past seven quarters with their current rate being 34.13% in FY 2018-2019 Q4.



ECA-P/P remained below the target for at least the past five years from a low of 86.63% in FY 2016-2017 Q1 to a high of 91.30% in FY 2017-2018 Q1 and a current rate of 90.33% in FY 2018-2019 Q4.

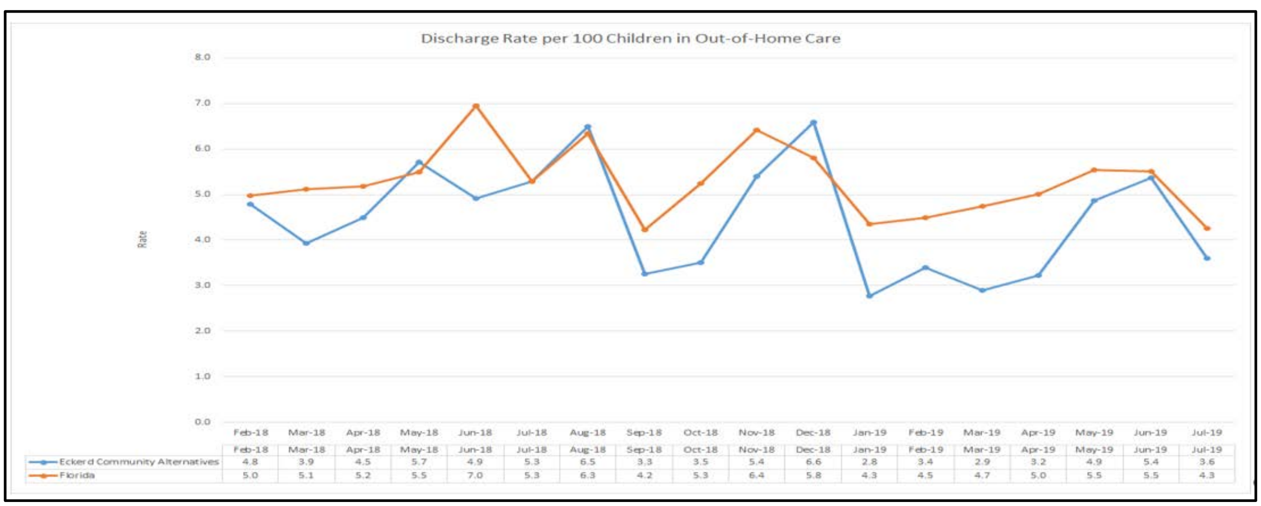


ECA-P/P was below the target from FY 2013-2014 Q2 through FY 2016-2017 Q3 with a low of 3.17 in FY 2014-2015 Q2 and has had been steadily increasing through FY 2018-2019 Q3 reaching a rate of 5.52 and then had a significant increase to the current rate of 6.62 in FY 2018-2019 Q4 and was placed on a corrective action plan September 20, 2019.



ECA-P/P was above the target from FY 2013-2014 Q1 through FY 2016-2017 Q3 with a high of 71.16% in FY 2013-2014 Q1. ECA-P/P dropped below target in FY 2016-2017 through FY 2017-2018 Q2, reached target, in FY 2017-2018 Q3, and has been below target since trending downward to the current rate of 56.50% in FY 2018-2019 Q4.

Exits



	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19
Eckerd Community Alternatives	4.8	3.9	4.5	5.7	4.9	5.3	6.5	3.3	3.5	5.4	6.6	2.8	3.4	2.9	3.2	4.9	5.4	3.6
Florida	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.5	7.0	5.3	6.3	4.2	5.3	6.4	5.8	4.3	4.5	4.7	5.0	5.5	5.5	4.3

ECA-P/P has been below the statewide discharge rate per 100 children in out-of-home care for 14 of the last 18 months.

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 CBC managed these changes? What adjustments to the available array of services have been made?*** (For service array response see section1)

5.2. ***How has any changes to core services funding contributed to any projected deficits for FY 2018-2019?***

5.3. ***In what ways are funding dynamics in the CBC unique or atypical of funding in other CBCs?***

5.4. ***What is the amount of the anticipated deficit for the current year? How reliable and valid are these projections?***

5.5. ***Are their options other than Risk Pool funding available to reduce the deficit?***

5.6. ***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?***

5.7. ***Are there fiscal practices that could be completed with greater efficiency in order to reduce the projected deficit?***

5.8. ***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)	FY14-15	FY15-16	FY16-17	FY17-18	FY18-19	FY19-20
Core Services Funding	$46,205,052	$44,550,216	$44,759,756	$45,555,137	$45,888,895	$48,375,445
Risk Pool Funding	$0	$0	$0	$866,570	$4,970,419	$0
CBC Operations "Back of the Bill" Funding	$0	$0	$0	$2,837,214	$2,263,802	$0
Other Amendments to Initial Allocations	$100,506	$740,821	$119,700	$34,899	$657,605	$185,436
Amended Core Services Funding	**$46,305,558**	**$45,291,037**	**$44,879,456**	**$49,293,820**	**$53,780,721**	**$48,560,881**
Funding not defined as Core Services Funding						
Independent Living (IL and Extended Foster Care)	$1,386,293	$1,386,293	$1,386,293	$1,630,662	$2,224,750	$2,552,253
Children's Mental Health Services (Cat 100800/100806)	$647,125	$647,125	$647,125	$647,125	$647,125	$647,125
PI Training, Casey Foundation or other non-core svcs	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Safety Management Services (Nonrecurring)	$0	$0	$604,942	$0	$604,942	$604,942
Total at Year End	**$48,338,976**	**$47,324,455**	**$47,517,816**	**$51,571,607**	**$57,257,538**	**$52,365,201**
Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS)	$17,321,233	$19,028,560	$19,666,457	$20,572,633	$22,196,558	$23,151,409
Guardianship Assistance Payments (GAP)						$89,654
MAS Prior Year Deficit		-$642,471				
Carry Forward Balance from Previous Years	$1,470,997	$2,717,806	$1,125,711	-$195,642	-$508,998	-$52,009
Total Funds Available	**$67,131,206**	**$68,428,350**	**$68,309,984**	**$71,948,598**	**$78,945,098**	**$75,554,255**

ECA-PP received a total of $10.9 million in risk pool and "back of the bill" additional funding for deficits since FY 2017-2018.

Increases in Funding for SFY 2019-2020		
Core Services (increase)	Core Services	$860,541
Core Services (increase)	Annualization of Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) licensing positions	$744,417
Core Services (new)	Level 1 Licensed Foster Homes	$881,592
MAS (increase)	Maintenance Adoption Subsidies	$954,851
Independent Living / Extended Foster Care	Independent Living / Extended Foster Care	$327,503
GAP program (new)	Guardianship Assistance Payments	$89,654
Excess Earnings	Prior Year Excess Earnings (non-recurring)	$185,436
	Total	$4,043,994

Since ECA-P/P received $4,970,419 from risk pool, $2,263,802 from "Back of the Bill" funding for CBC Operating Deficits, $657,605 from prior year excess earnings last fiscal year, the net is a decrease in funding by these amounts less the carry forward balance.

Projected Revenues

The due date for risk pool applications for FY 2019-2020 from CBCs to the department was mid-September which was before the final FY 2018-2019 expenditure reconciliations were completed. Therefore, applicant CBCs had to make some assumptions about their FY 2018-2019 carry forward surplus or deficit and any excess federal earnings as part of their revenue projections.

The total projected revenues by ECA-P/P was $76,204,192 which included $1,330,506 of revenues from other funders and a reduction in revenue for unspent Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS) payments in the amount of $547,142. ECA-P/P did include the initial allocations but did not include estimated carry forward surplus of $516,701 or an estimate for prior year excess federal earnings which has been identified as $135,907. Adjusting for these corrections, the total revenues were $75,526,294.

Projected Expenditures

The total projected FY 2019-2020 expenditures by ECA-P/P was $83,610,050. This included a total of $1,241,037 in expenditures charged to other funders. The total DCF expenditures were $3,623,243 greater than the FY 2018-2019 actual expenditures reported of $78,745,770. ECA-P/P removed the Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS) surplus from the projection.

The projection includes the following:

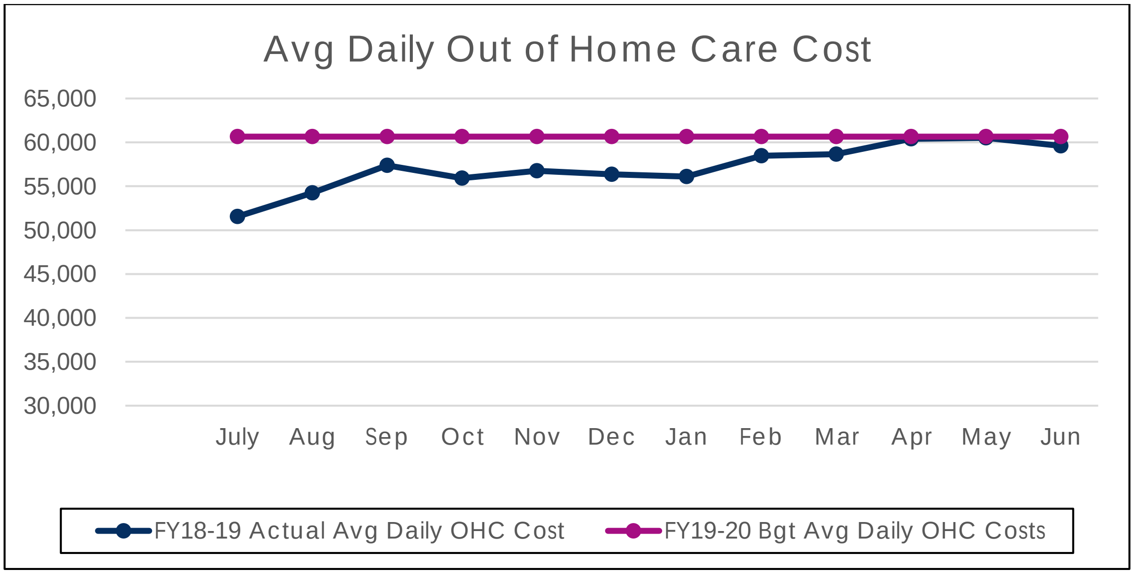
Budget & Expenditures (DCF contract)	FY 2019-20 Budget	FY 2018-19 Actuals	Increase /(Decrease)	% of Inc/-Dec
Lead Agency Related	$ 10,179,685	$ 8,202,405	$ 1,977,280	24%
Client Related	$ 1,472,622	$ 1,776,613	$ (303,991)	-17%
Contracted Services	$ 21,331,326	$ 19,679,196	$ 1,652,130	8%
Independent Living	$ 2,552,250	$ 2,129,848	$ 422,402	20%
Out-of-Home Care	$ 21,172,354	$ 21,142,193	$ 30,161	.14%
Guardianship Assistance Pmts	$ 89,654	$ 0		
MAS	$ 22,604,268	$ 22,219,658	$ 384,610	1.7%
Support Center Alloc	$ 2,966,854	$ 3,595,857	$ (629,003)	-17%
Subtotal - DCF Contract	**$ 82,369,013**	**$ 78,745,770**	**$ 3,623,243**	**4.6%**

Budget & Expenditures (not from DCF contract)	FY19-20 Budget	FY18-19 Actuals	Increase / (Decrease)	% of Inc/-Dec
CBC-IH	$ 349,464	$ 380,352	$ (30,888)	-8%
DCF Enhanced Prevention	$ 74,200	$ 148,400	$ (74,200)	-50%
National Foundation for Youth	$ 0	$ 99,126	$ (99,126)	-100%
Case Management Retention	$ 367,373	$ 0		
Case Management Support	$ 450,000	$ 0		
Subtotal - Other	**$ 1,241,037**	**$ 627,878**	**$ 613,159**	**98%**
Total Expenditures	**$ 83,610,050**	**$ 79,373,649**	**$ 4,236,401**	**5%**

Increases to their **Lead Agency Related** budget include $992,556 increase for GAP licensing positions and $301,884 for Family Finders positions (included in the service interventions below) and $180,000 for police officers on site to ensure safety and security during peak times when kids are awaiting placement.

The training contract with USF was moved from the **Support Center Allocation** line to the **Contract Services** line which accounts for the decrease in one and part of the increase in the other line.

ECA-P/P is projecting a flat budget in the **Out of Home Care** with no increase or decrease from last year's actual expenditures. This is the line where the new Level I Licensed Foster Home would appear which they received $881k in new funding from DCF to pay. Therefore they would need a decrease in spending on other levels of licensed foster home and group homes for this to occur.



Under the **Contract Services** line, several new service interventions were added totaling $830,449.

Projected Deficit

The due date for risk pool applications for FY 2019-2020 from CBCs to the department was mid-September which was before the final FY 2018-2019 expenditure reconciliations were completed. Therefore, applicant CBCs had to make some assumptions about their FY 2018-2019 carry forward surplus or deficit and any excess federal earnings as part of their revenue projections.

In their risk pool application, ECA-P/P requested $7,400,000. They stated in the application that the funds received would be used to address funding shortages generated as a result of the increase population of youth placed in a licensed care setting. They also stated that funding will also be used to off-set expenditures associated with the need to implement new service interventions to help achieve financial stability by the end of the contract year.

ECA-P/P projects a total deficit of $7,495,327.

The most recent CPA audit of June 30, 2018. Identified a Significant Deficiency in Accounts Receiving Aging. Eckerd Connects stated that this deficiency was related to funding they receive for the Workforce Development programs and has been resolved which they state will be reflected in their next audit.

6. Findings related to overall management.

- Sources: (CBC Contract Monitoring Report, Financial Viability Plan)
- Summary below; see 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 CBC, the Sheriff (if applicable), case management organizations and other key community partners?***

6.2. ***How actively and effectively does CBC management track programmatic performance and fiscal performance?***

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

Overall, the Region, CBC, and sheriff's offices have a positive working relationship and are typically able to resolve issues. ECA-P/P's leadership style is to provide data to the case management organizations or other partners and have them come up with a solution, versus working together as a team to identify solutions. The community expresses this feeling and indicates that they wish Eckerd would take more of a leadership role in problem solving. Additional concerns from the community were that ECA-P/P leads more from crisis resolution than from a strategic, prevention-based perspective.

ECA-P/P gathers and utilizes a significant amount of data to try and improve performance and distributes this data through weekly data reports. While there is a large amount of data that could prove beneficial to the system as a whole, ECA-P/P's delegative leadership approach, evidenced by their preference to provide the CMOs with data and ask them to come to solutions, has proven to not be the most effective nor well received. Additionally, ECA-P/P provided no formal contract monitoring for their CMOs this last fiscal year. This has led the community to feel that ECA-P/P needs to take a more hands-on leadership approach.

FY 2019-2020 Financial Viability Plan

In their design and instruction for the Financial Viability Plan (FVP) templates, the department 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

ECA P/P's FVP does contain actions to address the three primary cost drivers affecting their financial position. The actions include:

- o Reduce the number of children entering the child welfare system at the time of Diversion Services Case Closure from 268 to 240 or less (Cost Savings $122,455).
- o Increase the percentage of children in Relative/Non-Relative Placements compared to out-of-home care placements from 57% to 65% (Cost Savings $1,476,226).
- o Reduce the number of youth placed in Residential Group Care from 268 to 228 or less (Cost Savings $772,769).
- o Increase the total number of licensed foster beds from 618 to 678 (Cost Savings of $378,424).
- o Reduce in the number of children placed in Licensed Foster Homes (Level II through Level V) by 5% (Cost Savings of $124,696).
- o **Total cost savings of above actions is $2,874,570.**

The actions in the FVP does contain specific measurable performance numbers and projected cost savings however the last two actions that appear contradict each other. One action seeks to increase the number of licensed foster home beds while the other wants to reduce the number in licensed foster homes. Given the reliance on group care, ECA-P/P needs to increase licensed foster home placements to reduce the number in group care but also reduce the length of time to permanency for any child in out-of-home care regardless of placement type.

The cost savings identified in their plan is not reflected in their budget projections. Depending upon the success of these actions, the projected deficit could be reduced this year.

Follow up to FY18-19 June Recommendations	
Recommendation	**Action/Update**
The Secretary may want to secure a commitment from ECA-P/P on the following items: • A process flow map for each service that illustrates ECA-P/P's accountability for the system of care in Circuit 6. The process flow map will be developed by ECA-P/P in conjunction with the region within 30 days of any approved disbursement and shared	

Follow up to FY18-19 June Recommendations	
with the region and all subcontracted providers to provide clear lines of responsibility and accountability from ECA-P/P to the provider for each service offered to children and their families. Any changes/updates must be made within 30 days of the change, will use the same collaborative process, and shared with the region and all subcontracted providers.	
The Secretary may want to secure a commitment from ECA-P/P on the following items: <u>Four detailed action plans as follows:</u> • A detailed action plan to increase the number of children exiting to permanency within 12 months.	<u>Update at 9/12/2019</u> Eckerd Connects has worked with each of our system of care partners to develop a plan to increase overall exits. Since May of 2019, countermeasures have proven effective and Eckerd Connects has been successful in exiting more children each month than the number entering care, thereby, reducing the total population served since June netting a reduction of 38 children over 3 months. With this level of momentum, we believe that our system of care is well on its way to stabilization. We are anticipating significant improvements in reducing system stress by the end of this fiscal year. Eckerd Connects is also strategically focused on increasing the timeliness of exits within 12 months.
• A detailed action plan to significantly reduce the number of children in residential group care, particularly ages 6-12. This reduction recommendation was included in the initial review in October 2018.	<u>Update at 9/12/2019</u> Over the course of the last 12 months (7/31/2018 to 7/31/2019), Eckerd Connects has failed to have a significant impact in the reduction of youth placed in Residential Group Care maintaining an average of approximately 11.22% compared to the statewide average of 8.89%. Eckerd Connects did experience some incremental improvements during the 4th quarter of last fiscal year, and recognizes that we must maintain consistency achieving gains. Our agency has also struggled to effectively reduce the number of youth served in RGC settings that are ages 6-12. Our average performance is 12.27% compared to the SW

Follow up to FY18-19 June Recommendations	
	average of 9.16% (child welfare indicator report data 7/31/18-7/31/19). In October of 2019, Eckerd Connects will launch a new program called, YAP (Youth Advocate Program). This program is grant funded and will focus on stepping down or exiting from paid placement, 20 RGC youth that are high utilizers of services. We anticipate achieving significant cost savings associated with this program by June 30, 2019 (anticipate six months of net cost savings in RGC of no less than $300,000).
• A detailed action plan to address case manager turnover. Until ECA-P/P is able to operate without a deficit, a more appropriate caseload is a ratio of 1:20 with a goal of 1:17 long term. This goal recommendation was included in the initial review in October 2018.	<u>Update at 9/12/2019</u> Eckerd Connects took steps to move in this direction by funding the system during FY20 at a rate of 1:19 instead of the previous structure of 1:18. Eckerd Connects did not move to a 1:20 ratio during FY20 because it would have resulted in the reduction of funding from case management agencies during a time of critical need. Case management turnover was at an all-time high and shifting to 1:20 would have resulted in increased workloads and the potential for even higher turnover rates.
• With the current decrease in the number of children entering care, a detailed action plan to operate within their allocated budget – assuming no changes in allocation – next fiscal year.	
As a supplement to any decision the Secretary makes, the Risk Pool Peer Review Committee recommends the following: • ECA-P/P should revisit recommendations from the FY 2017-2018 and FY 2018-2019 Risk Pool Peer Review Committee along with the CBC COU monitoring recommendations and work with the region to develop a strong action plan to implement countermeasures in order to resolve issues.	<u>Update at 9/12/2019</u> Eckerd Connects' Financial Viability Plan and internal action plan addresses specific countermeasures that were launched this year (to include new service interventions) that will help ensure our agency's continued success in reducing overall expenses to include the reduction of youth placed in paid placement with a targeted focus on the reduction of youth placed in a residential group care setting.

Follow up to FY18-19 June Recommendations	
• ECA-P/P should take more ownership and have processes in place to ensure actions are being completed.	
• ECA-P/P should develop an action plan to address high turnover and stabilize the workforce of its CMOs.	Update at 9/12/2019 Eckerd Connects has an ongoing HR workgroup whose strategic focus is to address case management turnover. This workgroup is comprised of HR representatives from each of our case management agencies. Eckerd Connects was also successful in obtaining an Eckerd Foundation Grant (National Foundation for Youth Grant) in the amount of $800K that will be used this year to pay stay-bonuses every quarter for case managers and supervisors that remain dedicated to helping our system regain stability. Staff will be eligible for the stay-bonus during every 90 days in which they are actively receiving and working cases.
• ECA-P/P should consider pursuing a stronger effort with a sense of urgency towards developing more robust diversion programs to reduce removals, licensing larger capacity foster homes, increasing permanency, implementing a Family Finders program, and reducing the use of group care.	Update at 9/12/2019 During FY19, Eckerd Connects funded a Family Finders Team inclusive of a unit supervisor and five Family Finders Specialists. This resulted in additional expenses of $301,884.00. This team was fully staffed as of September 1, 2019. Eckerd Connects anticipates it will take a minimum of six months to achieve the desired outcome associated with this recommendation. Eckerd is already projecting to spend $320K less in OHC expenses this FY and we believe the cost savings will increase over time.
• ECA-P/P would benefit from developing an FVP that is more structured towards problem resolution and addresses the projected deficit. The plan should meet existing and trending client needs while reducing costs more in-line with their recurring core services funding allocation in anticipation of being financially viable next fiscal year.	

Summary of Findings:

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

- While ECA-P/P's service area did experience a 10% increase in entries in SFY 2016-2017, the number of entries did decline in the following two years.
- The total number of discharges (exits from out-of-home care) have also decreased over the past three years and the discharge rate per 100 children in out-of-home care is consistently below the statewide average. The lack of improvement in this area is a significant contributing factor to the increased caseloads, case manager turnover and high out-of-home care costs.
- ECA-P/P's service area has experienced a decrease in children receiving in-home services, children receiving family support services, and the number of young adults receiving services when compared to the prior FY. Despite these decreases from the prior FY, and a decrease in the number of children entering out-of-home care for the past two FYs, the number of children in out-of-home care has increased due to fewer exits from out-of-home care.
- ECA-P/P has implemented some, but not all, of the recommendations from the previous risk pool review committee reports.
- ECA-P/P has increased the number of children placed in foster homes over the past three years from 583 to 753.
- ECA-P/P continues to rely on residential group care for some children ages 6-17.
- ECA-P/P should continue to engage the sheriff's offices to improve the use of diversion services as a safe alternative to removals.
- High Caseload and case manager turnover continue to be an issue for case management agencies and has not improved in the last year. Average caseloads increased from 20.5 to 25.3 between August 2018 to August 2019 and turnover exceeds 100%.
- According to their SFY 2019-2020 Financial Viability Plan (FVP), ECA-PP could reduce their projected deficit of $7.4M from their risk pool application by $2.9M by meeting their goals in the plan. ECA-P/P needs to resolve the apparent conflicting goals of two actions in their plan on foster home placements. They should seek to increase them in lieu of group home placements.

Recommendations:

The Peer Review Committee review found that ECA-P/P does qualify for risk pool funding based upon an increase in the number of children in out-of-home care and recommends a distribution of $1,592,997. which is equal to the total of the new service interventions in ECA-P/P's budget. A distribution of risk pool funds would fund service interventions identified by ECA P/P to stabilize youth sheltered, identify relatives or non-relatives for children in group care, provide services and security to youth during the day, provide emergency foster home placement, increase diversion services, and increase pre and post reunification support.

New Service Interventions identified were:

1. First Responders – Program to help stabilize youth that are sheltered into foster care – Cost $5,000.
2. Family Finding – Program created to help identify relatives or non-relatives for children that are in residential group care – Cost $301,884.
3. Sailfuture Day Treatment - provides services to up to eight youth during the day so that youth are not in the office being supervised by case managers - Cost $208,621.
4. HEADS Day Treatment Program – provides services to up to eight youth during the day so youth are not in the office being supervised by case managers - Cost $158,484.
5. Manifestation Day Treatment Program - provides services to up to 20 youth during the day so youth are not in the office being supervised by case managers - Cost $47,232.
6. Emergency Foster Home Placement – Foster Home providing emergency shelter program to assist kids refusing placement – Anticipated Cost $109,228.
7. Contract increase to support additional diversion services in Pasco County – Cost $452,326
8. Contract increase to support pre and post reunification support and intervention services to families in order to prepare the family for the child's (ren) return home. – Cost $135,222
9. Additional security at CMO offices for children awaiting placements - Cost $180,000

Any further distribution would be evaluated in January 2020, with an update of ECA-P/P's budget projections for re-evaluated at that time. Prior to the re-evaluation, ECA-P/P must:

1. ECA-P/P should request and accept the Department's assistance in the form of sending experienced employees and/or contractors to help with one or more areas of specific need which could help improve case manager stability, discharges to permanency, the effectiveness of frontend services and reduce the number of children ages 6-12 in RGC.
2. Risk Pool funding provides a stopgap (non-recurring) resource intended to mitigate unanticipated changes in the number of clients and/or services needed for clients; it is not designed to annualize expenses. ECA-P/P should develop a plan to meet existing and trending client needs while reducing costs more in-line with their recurring core services funding allocation in anticipation of being financially viable by the end of the

fiscal year.

3. ECA-P/P must continue to follow their financial viability plan and show measurable and substantial progress in meeting their goals.

4. ECA-P/P must reduce the cost of out-of-home care as identified in their FVP by reducing the number of children in residential group care in total but especially those ages 6-12.

5. ECA-P/P should develop an action plan in conjunction with the sheriff's offices to improve the utilization of diversion services as a safe alternative to removals.

6. ECA-P/P must increase efforts toward timely and safe permanency in order to reduce the total number of children in care.

7. ECA-P/P should continue to focus on addressing case manager turnover to improve retention.