

# KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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*Mission: To protect children,  
promote healthy families  
and encourage personal  
responsibility.*

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*Strong families make a strong Kansas.*



*Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY



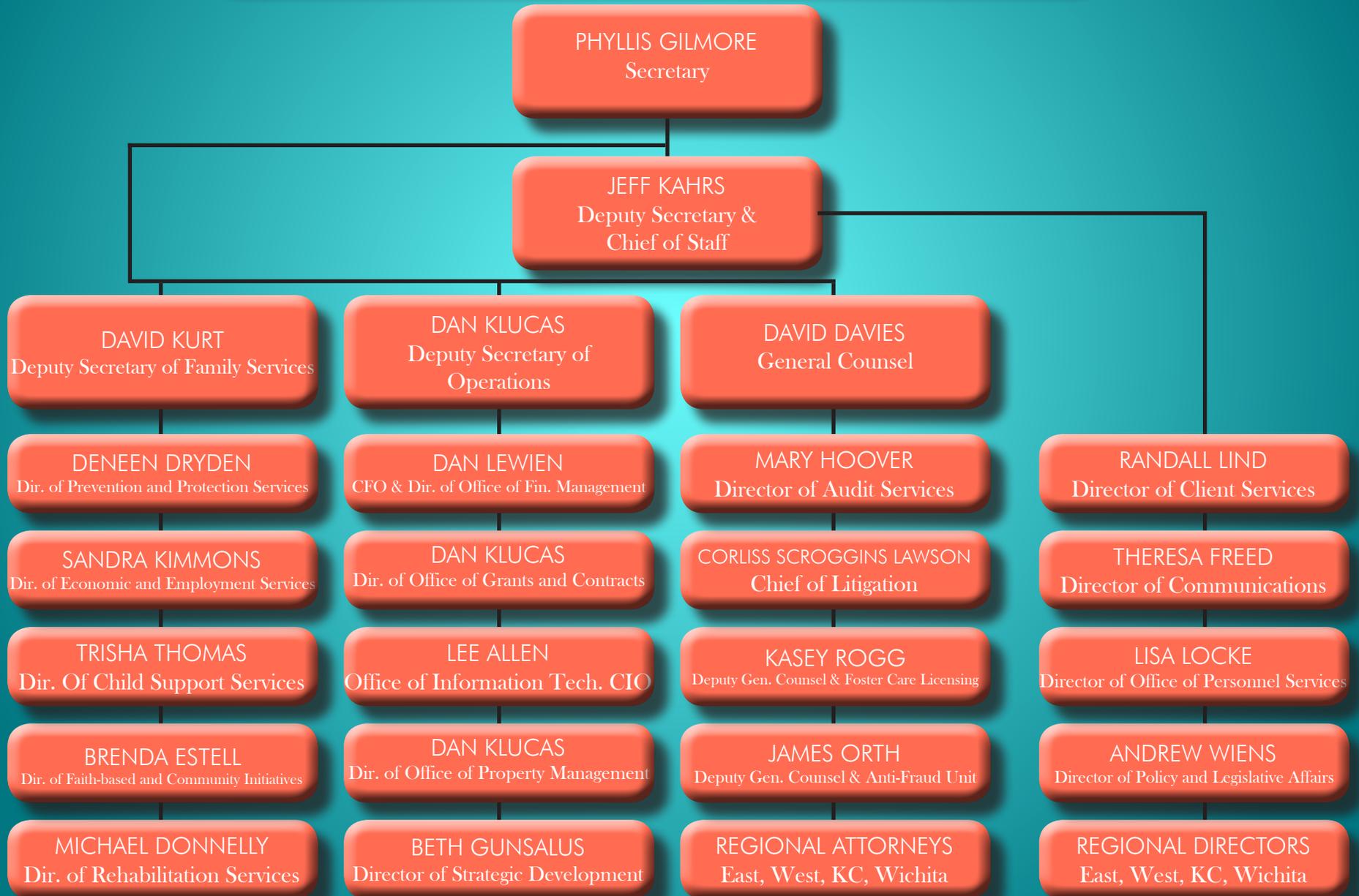
Phyllis Gilmore

Welcome to the 2016 Annual Report for the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). DCF serves as the State social service agency, providing oversight for the well-being of children and their families. Our staff of approximately 2,300 people in four regions is dedicated to serving the agency's mission of protecting children, promoting healthy families and encouraging personal responsibility.

Every year, we strive to make improvements in all DCF program areas. 2016 was no different. Our focus remained on helping families achieve self-reliance through employment, protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect, growing our services to families receiving child support and increasing our connections in the community to promote foster care recruitment and strong partnerships that further our strategic objectives.

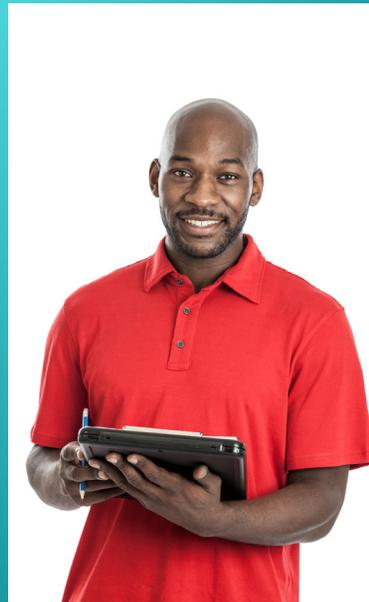
*Phyllis Gilmore*

# DCF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## OUR MISSION

To protect children,  
promote healthy  
families and  
encourage  
personal  
responsibility



## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen families
- Safely reduce the number of children in care
- Promote employment
- Exercise responsible stewardship of public resources
- Build public and private partnerships

# DIVISION OF OPERATIONS

- \$2.96 million in budget savings
- Substantial reduction in travel costs
- Improved safety for staff and clients throughout the state



## New Deputy Secretary of Operations Named

Daniel Klucas became the new Deputy Secretary of Operations in 2016. Deputy Secretary Klucas was initially employed with the agency in 2006, as a Special Investigator. Additional roles within the agency since that time have included Grant Manager, Senior Manager of Procurement, Special Assistant to Deputy Secretary of Operations, Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts, Director of Facilities Management and Chief of Security. He has served in the Interim Deputy Secretary role and subsequently the permanent Deputy Secretary role since June 2016.

Prior to his employment with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) (then Social and Rehabilitation Services), Klucas retired from the San Bernardino Police Department, where he served as Sergeant of Vice and Narcotics.

In the Deputy Secretary role, he has demonstrated tremendous leadership and organizational skills.



# BUDGET

MAJOR SERVICES	CASELOAD UNIT	PERSONS SERVED			ANNUAL SERVICE DOLLARS		
		FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
TANF Cash Assistance	Average Monthly Persons	17,681	15,008	12,482	\$23,770,891	\$20,442,060	\$16,921,420
TANF Employment Services	Average Monthly Adults	6,935	5,941	4,673	\$5,644,587	\$5,016,788	\$4,533,247
Child Care Assistance	Average Monthly Children	14,429	12,779	11,214	\$54,858,701	\$49,492,943	\$43,913,575
Food Assistance (SNAP)	Average Monthly Persons	301,377	277,614	258,412	\$415,767,025	\$376,604,917	\$350,433,060
Energy Assistance	Total Persons	112,825	83,734	94,491	\$21,264,113	\$18,328,952	\$28,394,327
Rehabilitation Services	Average Monthly Persons	8,654	6,977	6,165	\$14,007,220	\$9,903,707	\$9,347,824
Family Preservation	Average Families Referred	2,576	2,620	2,530	\$9,697,046	\$10,078,384	\$10,160,171
Reintegrations Foster Care	Average Monthly Children	5,561	5,840	6,137	\$135,912,260	\$142,106,090	\$153,619,045
Adoptions Support	Average Monthly Children	8,158	8,456	8,694	\$35,0007,997	\$35,861,373	\$36,535,628
<b>TOTAL OF PROGRAMS LISTED</b>					<b>\$715,929,840</b>	<b>\$667,835,214</b>	<b>\$653,858,297</b>

The **Operations Division** has the goal of achieving greater coordination, consistency and cost savings for the department by overseeing the day-to-day operations of DCF.

**Fleet Stewardship:** DCF replaced 50 high-mileage and damaged vehicles for employees to utilize within our agency. This effort improved safety for our staff by removing old and unreliable vehicles from our fleet. Many of the vehicles had begun to show their age and did not present a professional image to our clients.

The replacements also increased our efficiency, as there were less vehicle breakdowns and repairs needed. The frequent downtime to address maintenance issues resulted in increased vehicle rental costs to the agency.

**Space Efficiency:** The Operations Division worked to have more efficient use of space by reducing DCF's overall storage cost and footprint. Both of the previous storage centers, located at the DCF Records Center Building and Jayhawk Storage, were vacated for a new location that is less expensive with more space, saving the agency time and money.

**Safety Awareness:** Safety Training for Active Threats (STAT) began in 2016, with the goal of training all DCF employees in the state by the end of calendar year 2017. STAT provides employees with practical safety and security tools they can use in any situation and location. These tools significantly increase the probability of an employee's survival in the event of an active shooter or other immediate safety threat.

**Children's Room Redesign:** Operations worked closely with DCF's Communications and Prevention and Protection Services divisions to create new and inviting spaces for children removed from their homes

into foster care. The project utilized staff donations and the agency budget.

**Provider Agreement Form Update:** At the beginning of FY16, DCF reviewed and updated the provider agreement form to help ensure that they included that most accurate information and

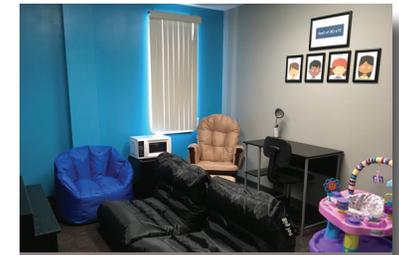
that they provided that best protection for the agency and its providers.

The updated Provider Agreement form created an opportunity to ensure that all providers had current signed agreements. The updated provider agreements included the DA146, new HIPAA language requirements, new audit requirements, termination information, and records retention requirements. The updated agreements also require providers to submit a Debarment Letter and Tax Clearance certificate.

**Children's Cabinet Moved to the Kansas Department of Education:**

In July 2016, the Kansas Department for Education became the fiduciary agency for the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. The children's cabinet trust fund is devoted to prevent child abuse and neglect in the state of Kansas. This change allowed DCF Administrative staff more time to focus on other programs within our organization and improve our efficiencies.

**Travel:** DCF has made a concerted effort in 2016 to reduce the agency over all travel budget. We have done this through concentrated efforts to move training for staff online, schedule training in areas that require no overnight stay, train the trainer seasons, and having the trainer travel to the classes. DCF has also put into place policy limiting out of State travel to one staff member unless federal required, lowering the use of personal vehicles, and State Vehicles.



Garden City Children's Room

THE AGENCY  
ACHIEVED A  
\$2.96  
MILLION SGF  
SAVINGS

**FY 2016 ACTUALS \$1.4 million**

Within the Operations division is **Strategic Development (SD)**. This program area plays a unique role within the agency to ensure all staff members are fully trained and ready to serve DCF clients. In 2016, SD unveiled the agency's Strategic Plan to guide and motivate the agency's work.

**Development of the Widely Important Goal (WIG):** The agency utilized the well-known 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) model by FranklinCovey to implement the strategic plan. Emphasizing the agency's mission to encourage self-reliance with clients they serve, a Widely Important Goal (WIG) was identified and WIG teams were established statewide, setting weekly goals consisting of behaviors they could act upon in a new way to propel agency outcomes and performance. The Self-Reliance Matrix (SRM) was designed to track eight agency-specific benchmarks for self-reliance. WIG teams developed scoreboards to serve as visible reminders of weekly progress that fed data into the overall SRM. This work ran throughout 2016.

**Simulation Training Lab:** The newly-developed Simulation Training Lab was specifically designed to support reality-based simulation training for child and adult welfare professionals in Kansas. Simulation training immerses the worker in realistic, interactive experiences, while maintaining a safe learning environment. The lab can be set up to include multiple interactions, including family interviews, documentation of safety concerns in a home environment and courtroom testimony. The training lab, located in the DCF Administration Building, Topeka, is equipped with cameras that produce a live feed in a nearby control room, that can also be viewed in regional offices in real time, where other workers, trainers and supervisors can observe the interactions.

**Kansas Child Welfare Professional Training Program (KCWPTP):** KCWPTP, a competency-based training system focused on promoting high-quality, family-centered, culturally-competent child welfare services, was established in 2016. A pilot of the Standardized Core Courses (eight modules) was held between April-September 2016. Core consists of 17 days of training, including learning labs. The pilot participants included statewide representation from the DCF, the contract Child Welfare Case Management Providers (CWCMP), KVC and Saint Francis Community Services.

Kansas has also identified the need to better prepare CWCMP and Child Placing Agency staff to assess and prepare children and families for adoption. To address this need, Assessor Training began in April 2016. The initial participants included DCF, CWCMP and CPA staff who provide foster care and/or adoption services. Eight rounds of the Core Courses and three rounds of Assessor Training will be held during 2017.

**Play-based Interactions:** With the creation of the new children's rooms for those coming into foster care, it was important to also prepare staff for how they should interact with the children in these rooms in a constructive way. The agency partnered with Mid-America Nazarene University, leaders in play therapy certifications, to train staff how to use suitcases full of toys specifically designed to help children going through trauma. The training workshops covered topics such as neural developmental processes and sequences that contribute to critical concepts that are applicable to play-based interventions.



**Manager and Supervisor Forums:** In 2016, SD and the Office of Personnel Services collaborated to offer three rounds of forums to spotlight topics with practical information for staff about the agency.

Also within the Operations division is the **Office of Information Technology Services (OITS)**, which works to facilitate the mission of the DCF by maintaining agency-wide automated information systems, establishes and maintains information architecture and provides application support to network users.

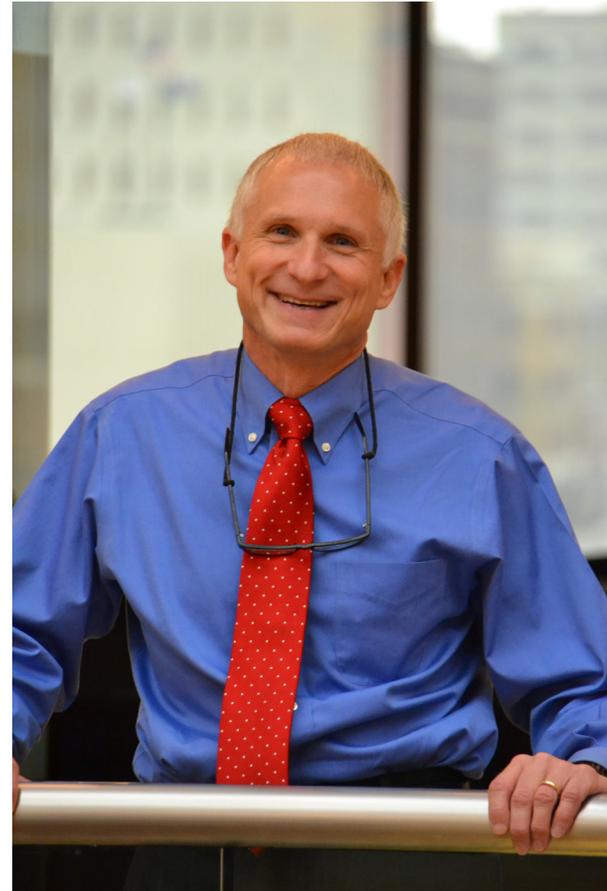
**KEES Deployment:** Among the many projects OITS takes on, recent years, including 2016, have involved preparation for DCF's launch of the Kansas Eligibility and Enforcement System (KEES). The Medical portion of the system was launched in 2015. Now, work is underway to prepare for the 2017 rollout of the welfare benefits portion of the system.

## New Deputy Secretary of Family Services Named

In June 2016, former West Regional Director David Kurt was promoted to Deputy Secretary of Family Services. Kurt has worked for the agency for 20 years.

He began his work with DCF as a Child Support Services (CSS) attorney, then became CSS Program Administrator for the former Garden City Region. He later served as Regional Operations Director before becoming the West Regional Director in 2011. Most recently, in May 2015, he became Deputy Secretary of Operations. He gained experience in Prevention and Protection Services as a Juvenile Prosecutor by handling thousands of cases, including Child in Need of Care and Juvenile Offender cases, as well as and Mental Illness Petitions. He also dealt with other social issues as an attorney representing inmates while working for Legal Services for Prisoners.

Kurt has a passion for serving others and leading Family Services—Prevention and Protection Services, Economic and Employment Services, Child Support Services, Faith-based and Community Initiatives and Rehabilitation Services.



# PREVENTION & PROTECTION SERVICES

- New finding structure adds clarity to investigations
- Practice Model created to guide work of child welfare workers
- Agency makes widespread improvements to foster care services



## New Prevention and Protection Services Director Named

Deneen Dryden became the new Prevention and Protection Services Director in 2016. Dryden received her bachelor's degree from Oklahoma State University and her master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Friends University in Wichita. She is a licensed clinical Marriage and Family Therapist and has worked with clients at Family Life Counseling Center for the past 20 years. Dryden has a passion for affecting systemic change in a way that allows individuals, couples, families and communities to work together. Dryden has been adjunct faculty at Friends University. She taught a master-level course: Treating Abuse in the Family. She was also a clinical supervisor of master-level therapist students.



Dryden previously served as the Director of Gerard House, a non-profit residential maternity home in Wichita, since 1998. She built and implemented successful programs throughout her years at Gerard House, guiding them through the stages of development to achieve sustainability and impact. Dryden has a deep appreciation and commitment for empowering staff to serve clients through mindful, strength and evidence-based practices. She is known for her calm and focused presence when managing conflict.

Dryden and her family have always had a passion for foster care and adoption. Throughout their many years of being foster and adoptive parents themselves, they have embraced open adoptions. Dryden and her family continue to advocate and network for involvement in the foster care system through sharing their personal experiences at speaking engagements and seminars.

**Prevention and Protection Services (PPS)** offers a variety of services to children, families and vulnerable adults, including protection services, family-based assessments, family support services, independent living services for older youth, and foster care. PPS made substantial improvements in 2016 to all service areas in an effort to better serve clients, add clarity to the child welfare system and greater oversight to contractors and others.

**Finding Structure:** In July 2016, PPS revised the finding structure for abuse/neglect reports. Prior to July 1, 2016, when the department received an allegation of abuse/neglect, the finding options for the victim and perpetrator were only unsubstantiated and substantiated. Established under the Sebelius Administration, the evidentiary standard was clear and convincing. At the time, Kansas was the only state using this level of evidence. For reports assigned on and after July 1, 2016, the evidentiary standard became preponderance, and there are now three finding options: unsubstantiated, affirmed and substantiated. Only a substantiated perpetrator is placed on the Child Abuse/Neglect Central Registry. This revision, allows the department to better reflect what the evidence demonstrates. Additionally, this finding is better understood by our partners and the public.



KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL

**Purpose:**

The Practice Model serves as a blueprint to describe the values underlying our work and partnership with families, providers and communities in the Kansas child welfare system. The mission of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) is to protect children, promote healthy families and encourage personal responsibility. Prevention and Protection Services (PPS) promotes safe and healthy homes while strengthening children and families.



**Supervisor Conference:** In September 2016, PPS re-initiated the Child Welfare Supervisors Conference. This conference is designed for child welfare supervisors from DCF, provider agencies and the Child Placing Agencies, to provide information about leadership, motivation and to give the supervisors much-earned appreciation. This conference was last held previously in 2013. The 2016 conference was held in Manhattan with the theme “Recharge, Rejuvenate and Redefine your Leadership”. The conference featured national speakers. The supervisors were appreciative of the special treatment and focus on them and their needs. As a result of all of this positive feedback, this will become an annual conference.

**Practice Model Created:** In late 2016, work began to create the Child Welfare Practice Model. The model serves as a blueprint to describe the values underlying the work of the agency with families, providers and communities in the child welfare system. The model includes a list of child welfare values—statements of what workers believe as they perform their work. The list of 10 items will be communicated first to agency staff and then others who comprise the child welfare system, and then finally to the public so they have a deeper understanding of child welfare workers’ motivation to respect families and empower them with the tools they need to stay together in a safe and loving environment.

**Agency Unveils Plan to Address Legislative Post Audit Review of Foster Care:** 2016 marked the beginning of a three-part Legislative Post Audit review on foster care in Kansas. The review gave the agency an opportunity to share with the public that compared to all other states, it has one of the safest child welfare system in the country. The review process also helped the agency identify needed areas of improvement. Through the course of the audit, the agency developed a comprehensive plan to address concerns of agency oversight of contractors, background checks, monthly in-person visits in foster homes, foster home exceptions and more.

**Social Worker Raises Announced:** In May 2016, Governor Sam Brownback authorized social worker salary increases to address the shortage of social workers. The \$1.1 million budget increase allowed the agency to offer higher starting salaries for qualified PPS staff.

**Increasing Client Self-Reliance:** The State of Kansas, in connection with Franklin Covey, developed a Wildly Important Goal (WIG) for the agency of increasing client self-reliance. From this WIG, the Independent Living (IL) program developed a sub-WIGs relating to increasing the self-reliance of youth participating in the IL program. The sub-WIGs goal was to increase youth utilization of IL services. Each region defined its own success indicators to meet these goals. Data collection began in January 2016, with goal dates set for December 2016. IL staff focused on having quality contacts with youth at case plans with the Child Welfare Case Management Provider (CWCMP) and when the youth are released of custody to inform them of the program and the services that are available to them. IL staff spent a great deal of time reaching out to community partners and strengthening collaboration across programs to assist in better meeting the needs of youth.

**YouThrive Partnership:** The IL program partnered with YouThrive, a non-profit, to enhance services for older youth in care and the IL program participants. YouThrive is a newer nonprofit organization that is focused on empowering and supporting youth in foster care as they transition to adulthood. The vision of YouThrive is to see all youth become adults who thrive in their communities. Although the program was limited to the Kansas City area, in 2016, DCF's HOPE Mentoring program was expanded to assist youth transitioning from foster care into independence.

**CarePortal Partnership:** A partnership with a Kansas organization grew in 2016. The CarePortal launched in 2015 in the Kansas City area, and rapidly expanded to other parts of the state. The organization supplies foster families with needed items donated by community churches.



**K-PARC Announced:** K-PARC is a DCF-funded initiative in which the agency collaborated with the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) to develop a network of support services and resources for parents of adopted children. This new program offers adoptive parents (of children both from foster care and not) peer support training, parent mentor training, adoptive couples retreats, parent tips and more.

**Project Warm Embrace:** Project Warm Embrace is an initiative to partner with community quilters to provide quilts for children in foster care. This initiative was expanded to the DCF Kansas City Region in 2015, from the DCF West Region. In 2015, Project Warm Embrace was implemented in Atchison County, and in 2016, the goal was to expand the initiative to the other counties within the Kansas City Region. In 2016, Project Warm Embrace was implemented in Johnson County and was a success. When children come into foster care, it is a time of insecurity and instability. They also come with very few possessions. The quilts send an encouraging message letting the children know they are special and the community cares. The donated blankets come from individuals, church groups, sewing groups and others. In 2016, A Topeka firefighters union donated money to a church sewing group to make quilts. The partnership was celebrated in local media reports.



Project Warm Embrace Donation, Topeka

**Adult Protective Services Grants:** In 2016, Adult Protective Services (APS) provided grant money to 10 of the 11 Area Agency on Aging/Aging and Disability Resource Center throughout Kansas. The funds were used to provide emergency assistance to those vulnerable adults who, without this assistance, may need to be referred to APS. More than 227 individuals received assistance with items such as utility payments, food, rent, transportation to doctor appointments, house cleaning in hoarding situations. 98 percent of those receiving assistance were reported to have their risk for self-neglect reduced. Less than .03 percent of those served were subsequently referred to APS for protective services.

# ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- HOPE Mentoring program launched for TANF clients
- Welfare reforms continue to incentivize employment over dependency
- Employment program for food assistance clients rolls out



**Economic and Employment Services (EES)** offers a variety of services to individuals and families including: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Child Care and Early Education Assistance, Food Assistance (also known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)), USDA Commodity Programs and Employment Services. The agency's focus is to help individuals on a path to self-reliance through employment.

**Kansas HOPE Act Welfare Reforms Continue:** In 2015, Kansas enacted the most comprehensive welfare reform in the nation. This effort was known as the Kansas HOPE (Hope, Opportunity and Prosperity for Everyone) Act. HOPE Act 2.0 then became law in 2016, that further promoted employment over welfare dependence. Measures included verifying identity of all cash, food and child care assistance adults in the household, requiring applicants and recipients of cash and child care assistance to cooperate with any fraud investigations, reducing the TANF lifetime limit to 24 months, and monitoring excessive benefit card replacements for referral to DCF's Anti-fraud Unit.

**TANF Clients Hit 40,000 New Employments Milestone:** In December 2016, DCF announced that since January 2011, 40,176 new employments had been reported since January 2011. Although this number is impressive, it is likely underreported, since clients are not required to report new employment; they can simply request their case be closed as they are no longer in need of services. The employment success is due to the comprehensive services available to clients through the agency's Employment Services program.

**Kansas Recognized for Employment Success:** In 2016, Kansas was named as one of only 12 states in the country to meet the federal work participation rate for both overall and two-parent families receiving cash assistance. The federal Office of the Administration for Children and Families measures how many adults are actively engaging in job preparation and employment. Activities include short-term vocational training, job search and readiness training, high school or GED education and employment.

**Food Assistance Work Program Rolls Out:** In January 2016, DCF launched a new employment and training pilot program called GOALS (Generating Opportunities to Attain Lifelong Success). In 2015, Kansas was selected as one of 10 states to receive a federal grant to promote employment-focused solutions for food assistance clients. The \$13.5 million grant covers three years and 36 counties across the state. Those not served by GOALS may still receive the traditional employment and training services through DCF. Throughout the year, as clients graduated from GOALS supported training programs, they were celebrated and given an opportunity to share their success stories with others. As of December 2016, 1,878 food assistance recipients had been enrolled in the program.

**DCF Secretary Recognized for Welfare Reform Leadership:** In 2016, the Foundation for Government Accountability released a study demonstrating the overwhelming effectiveness of Kansas welfare reforms, specifically pertaining to Able-bodied Adults without Dependent Children. Kansas discontinued its use of a federal waiver in 2013, that allowed this population to receive benefits with no work requirement. Following return of the work requirement, nearly 60 percent of those clients who left the program were employed within 12 months, and their incomes increased by nearly 130 percent during the first year. FGA recognized DCF Secretary Phyllis Gilmore with the Executive of the Year Award for her leadership in helping Kansans attain self-reliance through employment.

**Program for At-risk Youth Expands:** At the start of the 2013-2014 school year, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) was in 25 public high schools in Kansas. As of 2016, its now in 69 schools, within 29 school districts across the state, serving more than 2,100 Kansas students. JAG is a non-profit organization that partners with school districts, DCF and others to help underserved students overcome barriers to graduation through mentoring, tutors, academic support and links to social services, among other interventions. Students are guided to post-secondary education, entry-level careers and the military. Without the program, the selected group of students would have a 50 percent graduation rate; with the program, they reach nearly 95 percent graduation.

**HOPE Mentoring Program Announced:** In January 2016, Governor Sam Brownback unveiled the HOPE Mentoring program to assist cash assistance clients. The voluntary program was closely modeled after the Kansas Department of Corrections' Mentoring for Success initiative, started in 2011. In July 2016, HOPE Mentoring expanded to include youth aging out of foster care.

**New Kansas Benefits Card Option Made Available:** In March 2016, DCF announced a new option available to Kansas Benefits Card holders when their card became lost or stolen. They are now allowed to suspend the card (temporarily deactivate it) while the individual searches for the card. If the card is found, the client can then unsuspend the card. Previously, the individual would have to permanently deactivate the card and wait for a replacement. In 2011, the card replacement rate was more than 3 percent. It has now been reduced nearly 40 percent. In 2013, the agency took several steps to reduce fraudulent use of benefits cards. Among the measures, the agency went to mail issuance, instead of providing cards through DCF service centers.



# CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

- New technology utilized to connect with families
- Education campaign encourages employers to report their new hires for child support
- Incentives offered for fathers to complete programs to improve their relationships with their children



The goal of **Child Support Services (CSS)** goal is to assist children in getting the financial support necessary for them to develop and thrive by establishing parentage, as well as establishing and enforcing child and medical support orders. CSS is available for any family that applies for services regardless of income or residency. CSS programs include serving families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), medical assistance, child care assistance and foster care.

**Educational Employer Outreach:** CSS has partnered with Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) in order to educate employers about the benefits, laws and process of how to report their newly-hired and re-hired employees. CSS has established an Employer Unit dedicated to providing educational outreach to employers. Topics the Employer Unit discusses are geared toward addressing the importance and law of reporting new hires, how to update business information on the federal e-Portal (a location that houses employer contact information that is shared across the country), teaching them how to sign up for KPCpay (an online payment option) and encouraging them to participate in electronic income withholding order (e-IWO), which eliminates long postal times and provides expedited communication with the states. By increasing employers' understanding of the importance of what their human resource departments should be doing, and providing them with the appropriate tools, Kansas has been able to increase electronic child support payments and get support to children and families of Kansas faster than ever before.

**Text Messaging:** In April 2016, CSS began utilizing text messages as a quick and easy way to communicate with clients. CSS sends text messages with reminders such as court dates, payments information, genetic testing appointments as well as other helpful information surrounding a case for both non-custodial and custodial parents. By expanding methods to communicate with clients, CSS has been able to obtain locate information as well as seen an increase in court appearances and payments made.



**System Modernization Feasibility Study:** Kansas was approved to conduct a feasibility study and contracted with MAXIMUS, Inc. to complete the study. The feasibility study report will be presented to the Office of Child Support Enforcement around June 2017 showcasing the preferred alternative and cost benefit analysis identified throughout the project.

**Collaboration with the Kansas Department of Revenue:** CSS has worked with the Kansas Department of Revenue to increase the amount of license sanctions. CSS has have gone from 25 per month to 2,000 as non-custodial parents (NCPs) meet criteria.

**New Child Support Cash Payment Option:** In 2016, CSS introduced new cash payment options for unbanked NCPs, making it easier for them to pay their child support. PayNearMe accepts cash payments at 7-Eleven, CVS and Family Dollar. MoneyGram accepts cash payments at Walmart, Dollar General, CVS and many more retailers.

**Electronic Income Withholding:** CSS implemented electronic incoming withholding orders (e-IWO) via the federal portal in 2016. This change expedites employers receiving income withholding orders for NCPs who owe child support, which, in turn, expedites Kansas families receiving payments.

**Child Support Savings Initiative:** CSS has a partnership with the State Treasurer entitled Child Support Savings Initiative (CSSI) to assist parents in establishing and building 529 college savings funds for their children. Eligible NCPs receive a reduction in State-owed arrears of \$2 for every \$1 deposited into the 529 account. This effort continued with success in 2016. CSS received a \$50,000 grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation for this program and has used these funds for airing of commercials on television and radio and for outreach materials. An additional grant of \$600,000 was received from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) to expand the CSSI program to include cases with arrears owed to custodial parents. The WKKF funds are used to match deposits into the 529 account as a payment through the Kansas Payment Center toward the custodial-owed arrears.

**Betagov:** Kansas CSS continues to work in partnership with Betagov to test locally-generated advances in processes through supporting randomized controlled trials. Betagov supports CSS in testing innovative ideas for efficiency and effectiveness and has provided support for trials including: testing the methods to contact and provide education to employers for reporting of new hires to the Kansas Department of Labor, text messaging for genetic testing appointments, text messaging for court hearings, and the practice of offsetting foster care costs through court-ordered child support. Betagov provides expertise and supports the use of pragmatic randomized controlled trials alongside practitioner partners to help identify challenges and solutions.



**Other State-owed Arrears Incentives Promoted:** Additional State-owed arrears forgiveness efforts include a \$1,000 adjustment for NCPs who obtain their GED or high school diploma, \$1,500 for vocational training certificates, and \$2,000 for gaining a college degree. CSS also provides incentives to NCPs for attending certain courses/classes that will further their ability to provide stable support for their children, such as financial counseling and parenting classes.

**Fatherhood Initiative Grants Awarded:** Beginning July 1, 2016, new grants totaling \$1.46 million, which were awarded to five agencies across the state, began providing services designed to meet the unique needs and challenges of fathers who want to reconnect and provide for their children. Services to fathers include but are not limited to: career assessment tools, career counseling services, mentoring program, peer support groups, and personal and professional development of participants. Participants may receive credit towards State-owed arrears for completion of programs offered by the grantees. The grantees are Connection to Success, the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, the Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas, The Mirror, Inc., and Saint Francis Community Services. The grants are for one year, with the option of two, one-year renewals.

**Child Support Services Federal Performance Measures:** Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP) is one of the five federal Performance Measures IV-D child support programs are graded on to vie for a piece of a capped pool of incentives available from federal funds. To prevent a penalty, states must maintain a 90 percent PEP rate. There are two ways states are able to report PEP—statewide or IV-D. Statewide PEP is determined by taking the number of children in the state born out of wedlock with paternity established or acknowledged during the fiscal year, divided by the number of children in the state born out of wedlock in the preceding fiscal year. In Statewide PEP reporting, CSS counts all children born out of wedlock in Kansas, regardless of whether they have an open case with CSS. Kansas CSS began a statewide project in 2016 to audit open cases for accurate system information and documentation in preparation to convert to IV-D PEP reporting. IV-D PEP is figured by dividing the number of children with paternity established by the number of children born out of wedlock, within the IV-D CSS caseload. This will help Kansas to increase the PEP rate significantly, resulting in additional incentive funds for the program.



# REHABILITATION SERVICES

- Multi-agency initiative launched to help Kansans with disabilities obtain employment

- Partnerships result in increased services for older individuals who are blind

- Grants to independent living centers focus on community inclusion



**Rehabilitation Services (RS)** offers a variety of programs to meet the diverse employment needs of Kansans with disabilities. Services include job and skills support, independent living, deaf and hard of hearing assistance and disability determination. In 2016, the program continued to make strides in helping individuals with disabilities achieve independence.

**Employment-driven Solutions:** Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services are the cornerstone of RS efforts to empower people with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment—real jobs in the community labor market. Encouraging personal responsibility and promoting greater self-reliance are central to the mission of VR. In SFY 2016, 73.2 percent of persons employed through VR reported their own income as their largest source of support, a significant milestone towards self-reliance. From SFY 2011 to 2016, a total of 9,006 Kansans with disabilities became employed in competitive integrated jobs as a result of VR services. This averages 1,501 persons a year, which is a 12 percent increase when compared to SFY 2010.

**End-Dependence Rolls Out:** This is a significant initiative to increase employment of Kansans with disabilities. The State invests in this initiative to strengthen and increase the capacity of community partners to provide evidence-based and promising employment services. As a result of this initiative, 2,000 Kansans with disabilities are projected to achieve employment and increased self-reliance in the first five years. End-Dependence Kansas is built on Governor Brownback's commitment to improving opportunities for employment and self-reliance for people with disabilities. Five cabinet agencies are collaborating with the singular purpose of increasing employment opportunities and outcomes for Kansans with disabilities, including youth, persons exiting correctional facilities, persons with limited work experience, persons seeking employment as an alternative to benefit programs, and persons being served or pursuing services through Home and Community Based Services Medicaid waivers. The cabinet agencies are DCF, the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, the Kansas Department of Commerce, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and the Kansas Department of Corrections. Each of the five agencies has senior-level staff who will serve on the End-Dependence Kansas oversight panel to ensure policy alignment, sustainability and accountability. DCF's RS is the lead agency.

In 2016, a total of 15 community agencies received contracts to implement Individual placement and support for individuals with behavioral health disabilities, individualized discovery and customized employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities, or progressive employment for all disability populations. Service providers have received extensive training from national experts and support from RS staff. Measuring fidelity to the evidence-based models and continuous improvement are important aspects of the initiative. A significant goal of End-Dependence Kansas is to promote sustainable systems change to improve the quality and quantity of employment outcomes. End-Dependence Kansas emphasizes and supports community partners to prioritize competitive, integrated jobs in the community rather than sheltered employment, non-work day activities, other more segregated services or reliance on benefits.



**Examples of jobs  
obtained by  
persons with  
disabilities in  
Kansas:**

**Project Manager  
\$40.65 per hour**

**Crane Operator  
\$35 per hour**

**Associate Developer  
\$27.41 per hour**

**Assistant Professor  
\$26.92 per hour**

**Focus on Youth with Disabilities Achieving Employment:** Empowering youth with disabilities to achieve their highest employment potential as one of the major goals of the program. In 2016, VR began implementing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), which were authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Pre-ETS are designed to provide job exploration, counseling and other services to help young people prepare for employment and self-reliance, rather than dependency on public benefits. VR is emphasizing paid work-based experiences where youth can learn the basic skills necessary to succeed in the workplace and experience the benefits of earned income. VR has hired Pre-ETS staff stationed in DCF regional offices. Service provider agreements with community organizations and workforce partners have been implemented for specific components of Pre-ETS services.

**Federal Mandates Encourage Greater Collaboration for Clients:** VR is included as Title IV of WIOA. WIOA, which was signed into law July 22, 2014, was designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. As a result of WIOA, in 2016, VR and other core partners undertook significant planning and collaboration to ensure that the State's workforce system is strategically aligned and complementary. Other core partners are the **KANSASWORKS** workforce development centers, overseen by the Kansas Department of Commerce and Adult Education, overseen by the Board of Regents. Through the Workforce Innovation Fund, all partners collaborated in state-wide cross-informational training to improve collaboration and referrals.

**Career Counseling for Individuals with Disabilities Employed in Sub-minimum Wage Jobs:** WIOA affirmed the VR program's emphasis on competitive integrated employment. This type of employment, frequently described as "real jobs in the community" rather than segregated or group employment environments, is consistent with the Kansas Employment First Initiative law, which was signed by Governor Brownback in 2011. Kansas was the first state to enact a law declaring the policy that competitive integrated employment should be the first service option offered to people with disabilities. WIOA now sets out limitations for employers who hire individuals with disabilities under subminimum wage certification. Under WIOA and its regulations, youth with disabilities must be given the opportunity to prepare for competitive integrated employment through VR before they can be hired at subminimum wage. Adults already employed in subminimum-wage jobs must also be given opportunity for career counseling about their employment options and VR services leading to competitive, integrated employment. To meet this requirement, in 2016, RS contracted with qualified counselors to provide career counseling, information and referral services for the 3,000 Kansans employed in sheltered workshops around the state.



**Comprehensive Needs Analysis Demonstrates Program's Strengths:** As part of the State Plan development process required under WIOA, in 2016, RS contracted with the Learning Tree Institute, Girard, to conduct an independent comprehensive needs assessment. Based on findings from the key informant interviews and stakeholder feedback, strengths of the VR system were described as including a strong and comprehensive array of services, as well as effectiveness in oversight, communication and responsiveness. Additionally, overall satisfaction with VR services was communicated by respondents across multiple data sources used for this assessment, including individuals, providers and key informants. Multiple data sources included in the comprehensive assessment also provided feedback that characterized VR staff and counselors as one of the greatest assets of the State VR service delivery system, describing them as caring, effective, supportive, willing to “go the extra mile,” and a vital aspect of individual success in the attainment of education or employment-related goals for VR clients.

**Increased Capacity and Improved Services for Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB):** In 2012, Rehabilitation Services redesigned the service delivery system for the OIB program. OIB services assist individuals who are aged 55 or older and blind to continue living in their own homes and communities, rather than moving to more costly institutional settings. Now, rather than maintaining a centralized program operating out of Topeka, services are provided through grants to community-based organizations with expertise in serving this population. As a result, the number of persons served has increased each year. For example, in FFY 2016, the number of Kansas seniors served increased by 55% compared to the baseline year of 2011.

**DDS Earns National Recognition:** The Kansas Disability Determination Services (DDS) tied for first in the nation for producing medical determinations for Kansans applying for Social Security disability benefits, with a combined initial accuracy of 97.9 percent in FY 2016. This performance benchmark is set by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Kansas DDS has received this recognition for accurate and timely case processing for the past 11 years. DDS makes disability and blindness determinations on behalf of SSA on most Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income claims filed or reviewed in Kansas.

**Independent Living Centers:** RS provides grant funding to 10 Centers for Independent Living (CILs). CILs are support agencies that provide services to people regardless of disability type or age that empowers them to live in the community of their choosing. CILs focus on those services and activities that prevent unnecessary institutionalization of individuals with disabilities as well as assistance in learning dialing living skills, full participation in their communities, safe and affordable housing, transportation and employment. In 2016, CILs served approximately 10,000 Kansans with disabilities.

**Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) is an education, advocacy and service program within DCF. KCDHH operates the Kansas registry of qualified sign language interpreters. Additionally, KCDHH provides sign language interpreter referral to Kansas citizens, businesses, State or federal agencies, schools, etc. that need assistance in communicating effectively with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2016 Governor Brownback signed legislation to create a statewide language assessment program to be developed under the auspices of KCDHH with ongoing responsibilities to collect and report annual assessment data on the assessments completed. KCDHH will also develop and make recommendations for improved language development for children with hearing loss intended to improve educational outcomes, community integration and employment success of children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing.

# FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- Program focuses on family foster care recruitment
- Hope for the Holidays gift drive provides for youth from foster care



**Faith-based and Community Initiatives (FBCI)** is a program within the agency that offers support primarily to Prevention and Protection Services (PPS), by providing community outreach for foster and adoptive family recruitment. FBCI also supports agency efforts to encourage healthy families. Although in years past, FBCI has provided other important functions within the agency, such as human trafficking awareness, beginning in 2016, the program became more focused promoting the vital need for more family foster homes.

**Family Foster Home Recruitment:** In 2016, FBCI continued its efforts to engage faith-based and community organizations in recruiting foster and adoptive families for youth in out-of-home placement. FBCI accomplished 657 face-to-face meetings and 63 presentations in 2016, which included a presentation at the Governor’s Crime Victims’ Rights Conference, presence at the Kansas State Fair and meetings with the CarePortal, mentioned earlier in this report. FBCI is working closely with PPS and DCF’s Communications divisions to implement a Diligent Recruitment plan for the targeted recruitment of needed families. This effort will be fully implemented in 2017, and include a multi-media campaign with public service announcements provided by lawmakers throughout the state.

**Hope for the Holidays:** In December 2016, FBCI worked with PPS’ Independent Living program to identify an estimated 600 young adults, ages 18 to 23, formerly in Kansas foster care, who would benefit from gifts during the holiday season. Youth who have aged out of foster care may not have a family to call their own or loved ones to share the holidays with. The agency collected donations of \$100 gift cards to provide the youth. Many businesses and private citizens also wanted to contribute other tangible items, so wish lists were collected, items were purchased and wrapped, and then delivered just in time for Christmas. The annual collection drive brought smiles to faces all over the state.

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# OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

- Anti-fraud efforts yield \$1.65 million in judgements
- Foster Care Licensing division improves foster home and contractor oversight and accountability
- Audit Unit created to oversee child welfare system



**The Office of General Counsel** plays an integral role within the agency and is involved in almost every initiative, project, reform or reorganizational effort mentioned elsewhere in this report. DCF attorneys provide a wide range of legal services and advise the Secretary and staff on matters related the mission and programs administered by the agency. Attorneys also provide legal advice to administrators, draft administrative regulations, prepare and review testimony, and at times, provide testimony before legislative committees. They also defend administrative actions before the Office of Administrative Hearings and defend the agency on judicial review. Agency attorneys also provide training on legal issues relevant to agency work, such as employment law, HIPPA and employee union agreements.

**Anti-fraud Unit Continues to Protect Program Integrity:** DCF's Anti-fraud Unit was created in 2011, as a way to combat welfare benefits fraud. In 2012, nine new fraud special investigator positions were created, bringing the unit's total investigator staff to 16. In 2013, the unit implemented a statewide fraud investigations and legal action case tracking system, that offers nearly real-time ability to view statistics, trends and types of investigations. For 2016, 347 judgements were obtained, totaling \$1.65 million. This represented program savings of almost \$1.2 million savings for the year.

**The Foster Care and Residential Facility Licensing Division Makes Changes to Improve Accountability:** In 2015, DCF acquired the Foster Care and Residential Facility Licensing division from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). Licensing is housed within the Office of General Counsel because of its separate function from Prevention and Protection Services (PPS). PPS is designed to serve the best interest of children in foster care, while Licensing has the important function of regulating foster homes for the protection of children. Work immediately began after the transition from KDHE to review the program and identify areas of improvement. In 2016, substantial changes got underway to increase accountability among child placing agencies and improve safety measures within family foster homes. Efforts included working with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation to finger print those older than 10 in family foster homes. On Sept. 1, 2016, the division implemented a policy to ensure sufficient financial resources of foster families. Additional measures will be following in 2017.

**Child Welfare Compliance Unit Created:** In 2016, work began to develop a new unit with DCF's Audits division to oversee internal and external child welfare work of DCF staff and contracted service providers. The unit will be fully operational in 2017. The audit team consists of professionals with evaluation, accounting, auditing, analytical, research and program skills. Auditors' duties include evaluating and mitigating risk, analyzing business and program operations, reviewing compliance, recommending corrective actions, promoting appropriate ethics and values within the agency and ensuring effective organizational performance, management and accountability.



# EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NAMED

Stacy Kentzler was named the 2016 Employee of the Year.

The Human Services Specialist, based in Atchison, has worked for the agency for 22 years. She is a dedicated State worker who, for the last 18 years, has processed applications for food, child care and cash assistance.

“It is a great honor,” Kentzler said. “I’m really blessed to work for this agency. Great people work here, and we’re just like a big family.”

