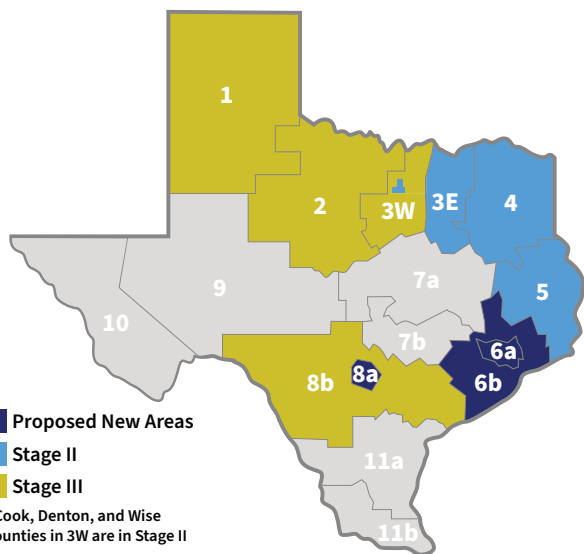




THE CURRENT STATE OF COMMUNITY-BASED CARE IN TEXAS' FOSTER CARE SYSTEM



Community-Based Care (CBC) is the model adopted by Texas to transform the state's foster care system. Under CBC, responsibilities for child welfare services are shifted from the state to Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCCs), which are regional organizations tasked with delivering a full spectrum of services, including foster care placements, family reunification services, case management, adoption, and more. The model aims to improve outcomes by allowing for a unique, community approach to services and providing more tailored care to children and families.

Throughout the early 2000s, Texas faced increasing challenges in its child welfare system, including high caseloads, low caseworker retention, and poor outcomes for children in foster care. These issues prompted calls for reform and a move towards a more community-focused approach that could better serve the diverse

needs of families across the state. In 2004, the Texas Legislature authorized the creation of Community-Based Care pilot programs in selected areas of the state. The goal was to provide more individualized, community-specific solutions, increase accountability, and improve outcomes for children and families. Starting in 2015, the Texas legislature passed significant reforms aimed at expanding CBC statewide and the state has expanded CBC efforts, with gradual implementation across various regions.

Current State

Implementation Progress

- CBC has been implemented in seven regions, covering nearly half of Texas children in foster care. Expansion to additional regions is ongoing, with plans to scale statewide. Three additional regions are in active procurement negotiations.
- SSCCs have shown early success in improving placement stability and reducing the use of congregate care. However, progress varies significantly by region due to disparities in resources and service infrastructure.

Challenges

- **Capacity Issues:** Many SSCCs report difficulties in recruiting and retaining foster families, especially for children with high needs.
- **Funding Constraints:** The methodology to fund the implementation of CBC is fundamentally flawed and is being redesigned over the next several years, but this creates funding gaps that hinder service delivery.

Positive Outcomes

- Some regions have seen measurable improvements in family reunifications and timely permanency outcomes.
- Localized service delivery allows for innovative approaches tailored to community needs, though this is largely dependent on available resources.
- Increased collaboration among community organizations has strengthened support networks for children and families.



Key Concern Sustainability

Funding uncertainties and escalating costs threaten the long-term viability of the CBC model.

Condensed Policy Directives for Community-Based Care Model Sustainability

- Ensure better stability in the CBC funding model to support ongoing financial sustainability, allowing providers to deliver high-quality services while benefiting from more predictable resources, clear expectations on fixed costs, and a long-term framework for financial health.
- Allow CBC to truly be implemented as designed by the Legislature to pilot and deploy unique and innovative programs, specific to the needs of the youth in each area of the state, particularly youth with high-acuity needs and older youth.
- Remove the unnecessary administrative burden of child-placing agency licensure requirements for SSCCs and continue to use performance-based measures to ensure accountability.
- Ensure efficient and appropriate data exchange and system interoperability to improve communication between the department and SSCCs and decrease duplication.
- Create an official DFPS and SSCC Workgroup to resolve implementation issues, such as joint funding requests, resource transfers, system functions and resources, and more. Further, this group should jointly work to evaluate and report on unaddressed system functions and resources, including shared roles, insurance and turnover costs, and more.



Community-Based Care represents a significant shift in Texas' foster care system, with promising early results in improving outcomes for children and families. However, the sustainability of the model must be ensured for Texas to achieve the outcomes it needs for children and families. With strategic investments and a focus on stability and transformation, CBC has the potential to fully implement a more effective and responsive child welfare system in Texas.

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