

***GREETINGS* from the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards and the Department of Family and Protective Services!**

You have accepted the challenge from your County Commissioner's Court to assist the Department of Family and Protective Services in meeting the needs of the children and families in your county who are in a crisis situation. In order to be an effective board member, you will want to have an understanding of CPS, the families served and the role of the child welfare board. This understanding will enable you to make informed decisions.

For more information regarding Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards, go to <http://www.tccwb.org>. Thank you for your interest and your dedication in serving the children of Texas!

LOCAL CHILD WELFARE BOARDS:

The Texas Family Code Sec. 264.005 provides for the appointment of county residents to a child welfare board (CWB) by the county commissioners court. With the approval of DFPS, two or more counties may establish a joint CWB. The CWB is an entity of DFPS for the purposes of providing coordinated state and local public welfare services for children and their families, and coordinating the use of federal, state, and local funds for those services. Since CWB members are appointed by the commissioner's court, CWB's are also an extension of the county government.

CWB's are established through a contract between a county commissioner's court and DFPS.

MEMBERSHIP:

The commissioner's court and DFPS determine the size of the board and the qualifications of members. Requirements are that a CWB be comprised of no less than seven and no more than 15 members and that members be county residents. Members are appointed by the county commissioner's court. At the commissioner's court discretion, a CWB

may make recommendations of potential board candidates. A member may be removed by the court for just cause at any time. Members serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the fulfillment of their duties.

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION:

Each member completes the following forms as a part of the DFPS volunteer registration process:

- Form C-105-0250, Volunteer Application and Background Check Authorization
- Confidentiality Statement

Copies of these forms are available from the local Community Initiatives Specialist.

ANNUAL BACKGROUND CHECKS:

CWB members are authorized by the Texas Family Code, to receive confidential client information and at times may have contact with children and families receiving services from DFPS. For this reason, it is recommended that all members authorize a background check annually prior to appointment by the commissioner's court. CWB members are removed from contact with children and families when there are pending or confirmed allegations that they committed abuse, neglect, or exploitation against a child, an adult with disabilities, or an elderly person or a crime involving an offense against the family, public indecency, or the Texas Controlled Substance Act. Any allegations/findings against members should be reported to the commissioner's court.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER:

Each CWB designates a member to maintain a roster of current members. At any time a change in membership or contact information

is identified, the designated member updates the Board Roster and sends copies to the DFPS Community Initiatives Specialist for the region. This roster may be forwarded to the Executive Director of TCCWB.

PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS:

Individuals who are not CWB members may assist with planning, preparation, and implementation of CWB-sponsored activities. Non-members who have contact with children in care or confidential case information must comply with the requirements for DFPS volunteer registration and background checks.

ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

An active and effective CWB possesses a clear sense of purpose and a strong organizational framework. Members are well-informed and able to commit the time required for CWB meetings and activities. Each CWB should have:

- A mission statement
- An annual goal setting meeting
- Bylaws approved by the commissioner's court
- An annual budget
- A current roster of members
- Job descriptions for officers, members, and committees and
- Timely orientation for new members

JOB DESCRIPTION OF OFFICERS:

The Texas Family Code Sec. 264.005 mandates that each CWB have a presiding officer. Other officers are designated in the CWB Bylaws.

Chair/President

The Chair/President oversees the CWB affairs and ensures the effectiveness of the CWB in completing its responsibilities. Duties include:

- Developing meeting agendas.

- Presiding over all CWB meetings
- Appointing committee chairs and any needed special committees and liaisons.
- Coordinating work and communications between committees
- Serving as CWB spokesperson and representative to the county, DFPS, and community.
- Presenting the annual report, budget, and goals to the commissioners court, and
- Providing leadership to the board.

Vice-Chair/Vice-President

The Vice-Chair/Vice-President assists the Chair/President as needed. Duties include:

- In the absence of the Chair/President, performing all duties pertaining to such office
- Performing other duties as designated by the Chair/President and or bylaws, and
- According to the bylaws, serving as the chair/President elect.

Secretary

The secretary is the recording officer of CWB business. Duties include:

- Retaining an attendance record for each CWB meeting.
- Recording the minutes for each CWB meeting.
- Reporting CWB volunteer activities and hours to other interested parties, including the county commissioners and DFPS

Treasurer

The Treasurer manages CWB financial responsibilities. Duties include:

- Reporting to CWB the status of all funds and assets
- Tracking and dispersing funds according to CWB policies and procedures.
- Recording/tracking donations and providing reports, and
- Preparing for and assisting with any audits.

Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian advises the CWB as to correct parliamentary procedure.

Committees

Each CWB decides what standing committees are needed to meet its needs. CWB bylaws identify and govern standing committees. Committees are chaired by CWB members and MAY include non-board members as volunteers. Examples of committees include, but are not limited to Awareness Committee, Resource Development and Fundraising/Special Events, etc.

CHILD WELFARE BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

To County Commissioners' Court:

Advocate for the special needs of Children.
Present an annual report about the Board's work.

To Itself:

Maintain an organization through selection of officers and committees, and a schedule of meetings.
Set annual goals for the board.
Orient new members and continue the education of Board members.

To the Child Welfare Staff:

Advise Child Welfare Staff on Board Policy.
Assist in recruiting foster parents.
Participate in projects for foster children, foster parents, and adoptive parents.
Provide resources for children and families in crisis situations to prevent removals and stabilize placements.

To the Community:

Educate the community on the needs of children, Child Welfare policies, programs, and needs.

Encourage community and individual involvement in child welfare.

Study child welfare issues in the community.

Identify gaps in children's services and find the resources to fill the gaps.

Stimulate reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Work for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Improve community understanding of the welfare client, the abusive parent, and the foster child.

Dual Status as a Nonprofit Entity

A CWB may choose to create a separate nonprofit 501.c.(3) board to be eligible for certain donations and grants. If so, the CWB must act as two separate entities. The meetings for each entity must be held separately but may be held back-to-back. For example, the CWB meets to conduct county business as a governmental entity, closes that meeting, and then reopens a meeting for the nonprofit entity to discuss business related to such items as privately donated funds, grants, fundraising efforts, and expenditures of these funds. The CWB keeps separate minutes and separate financial records for each entity.

A CWB operating as a nonprofit 501.c.(3) entity must stay apprised of Texas Secretary of State and Internal Revenue Service reporting requirements.

CWB MEETINGS:

CWB meetings must be conducted according to the Open Meetings Act, Government Code Sec. 51. Any gathering that involves a majority of members discussing or transacting public business is subject to the open meeting requirements in this statute. Telephone calls, conference calls, videoconferences, and email may also be subject to the open

meetings requirement. EACH MEMBER MUST HAVE COMPLETED THE OPEN MEETINGS TRAINING online at www.oag.state.tx.us.

Upon completion, file a copy with the county clerk's office and a copy to the Community Initiatives Specialist at DFPS.

Frequency:

Most CWB's have fixed meeting dates and usually meet monthly. CWB members must receive adequate notice of meetings.

Agenda:

Agendas and basic background material are sent to the full board membership at least a week before the meeting. To comply with the Open Meetings Act, the time, date, location, and subject matter of the Meeting must be POSTED in a location accessible to the public at least 72 hours prior to the meeting time. Generally, the county clerk posts the notice on a bulletin board convenient to the public at the county courthouse. (See example attached)

Minutes:

The Open Meetings Act requires that minutes or tape recordings be kept of all meetings. The minutes must include the subject of discussion and the outcome of any vote, order, decision, or other action taken.

Minutes of business conducted in open meetings are considered public records. Separate minutes or tape recordings are required for meetings that are closed for confidentiality reasons and business conducted as a non-profit 501.c. (3) entity.

Closed Meetings:

CWB meetings are generally open to the public, but a CWB may conduct a closed meeting under Government Code Sec. 551.101, to discuss, consider, or act on a matter that is confidential under Human Resources Code, Sec. 40.005, or Family Code Sec. 261.201. Information relating to the identity of a reporter of alleged abuse or neglect, a recipient of DFPS service, or an investigation DFPS conducts in performing its duties and responsibilities may not be disclosed in an open meeting. When conducting a closed meeting, the CWB must first

convene an open meeting and identify the statutory authority that allows them to go into a closed meeting.

Confidential information may sometimes need to be shared during a CWB meeting in order that members can make an informed decision regarding expenditures. If confidential information is to be shared during a meeting the following steps are taken:

- The board announces it is going into a closed session and invites guests and non-voting members to step out of the room.
- The board receives the confidential information needed to take action.
- After the information is given, the board goes back into open session to vote on a motion regarding the situation.
- The board will word the motion in such a way as to not breach confidentiality.

The full name of a child or family served by DFPS is NOT to be used in CWB documents that are subject to the Open Meetings Act or in documents that may be viewed by others who do not have the legal right to view the confidential information.

DONATED FUNDS, GOODS, AND SERVICES:

If a CWB sponsors a Rainbow Room, the board must adhere to DFPS's guidelines when providing resources and support for the children and families they serve. An inventory log must be kept, recording donated items received, date received and the donor's name. An inventory log must also be kept for items when removed from the Rainbow Room indicating the case number, client's name, caseworker's name, and a full account of items that were given to the child/family. If Gift Cards are available to workers to shop for specific items for a specific family, then the board should have a tracking procedure, showing a record of the receipts after the purchases are made.

CWB'S FINANCES:

Income Tax Reporting:

A child welfare board that does not have nonprofit 501©(3) status is not required to file an annual report with the Internal Revenue Service even if the CWB has received charitable donations during the year. As an affiliate of a governmental unit, a CWB is exempt from filing a Form 990.

For tax periods beginning after December 31, 2006, all 501©(3) organizations **ARE** required to file an annual report with the IRS. The type of report depends upon the organization's gross receipts in the tax year.

If gross receipts are normally:	Then, the organization is required to file:
\$25,000 or less,	Form 990-N, Electronic Notice (e-postcard) for Tax-Exempt Organizations not Required File Form 990 or 990-EZ
Greater than \$25,000 but less than \$100,000 or total assets at the end of the year are less than \$250,000,	Form 990-EZ
Greater than or equal to \$100,000 or total assets are greater than or equal to \$250,000	Form 990.

You can access Forms and filing deadlines for filing requirements on the IRS website at www.irs.gov/charities.
(Always consult your board's tax accountant)

FUNDING SOURCES:

A CWB may receive funding from several sources:

- County general fund

- Specialty License Plate fees(see www.tccwb.org)
- County jury donations
- County Title IV_E match revenue
- Municipal funds
- School district funds
- CWB fundraisers and donations, and
- Corporation and foundation grants.

County general funds are provided, at the county's discretion, for the care of children in DFPS conservatorship who are ineligible for Title IV-E foster care, state-paid foster care, or Medicaid and for medical care not covered by Medicaid.

REGIONAL COUNCILS:

A Regional Council is not a government entity, but is comprised of representatives from each child welfare board in the region.

Representatives may hold in person meetings or meet via conference calls, t times set by the Council, but no less than quarterly. The Regional Council conducts a yearly training for ALL child welfare board members. At the Regional Council's discretion, resources purchased from DFPS contract funds are available to county boards. Regional Council is governed by bylaws, and officers are elected and committees appointed as needed. Each regional Council selects two to three representatives to the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards.

EXAMPLES OF CHILD WELFARE BOARD PROJECTS

Education Projects:

- Operate information booths for county fairs and other community events.
- Arrange public service billboards which support reporting child abuse and neglect and recruiting of foster parents and adoptive parents.
- Distribute bumper stickers, posters, and other items encouraging the reporting of child abuse and neglect as well as the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

- Hold seminars for the public and foster parents on parenting skills
- Arrange presentations on all phases of child abuse to school students.
- Furnish church bulletin inserts on foster parent recruitment and awareness of abuse and neglect.
- Furnish bank statement or utility company inserts on child abuse and neglect

Fund-raising Projects:

- Organize and sell tickets to events such as a pancake supper, hamburger fry, tennis tournament, talent show, community circus, street dance, style show, or musical show.
- Request United Way funding.
- Obtain contributions for participants in walk-a-thon, weight-a-than, or rock-a-thon
- Ask churches to make one Sunday collection day each year or each quarter, for the Rainbow Room

Appreciation Projects:

- Arrange foster parent appreciation and awards banquet
- Send letters of appreciation to County Commissioners and County Judge, Juvenile Judge, police, and other child agency personnel
- Host a luncheon for prospective donors such as businesses, community groups, individuals, and churches
- Host reception on adoption Day
- Host Luncheon for graduation Foster children

Holiday Projects:

- Obtain merchant and citizen donations for “empty stocking” Christmas programs
- Arrange Easter or Hanukkah baskets for foster children
- Invite civic, religious and school groups to purchase gifts for foster children

Miscellaneous Projects:

- Hold picnics to raise awareness and recruit board members
- Sponsor children at day camp or summer camp
- Send birthday cards and gifts to foster children
- Arrange Sunday School class projects, supporting the Rainbow Room

CHILD WELFARE BOARD MEETING NOTICE (EXAMPLE)

The _____ County Child Welfare Board will hold a regular meeting on the ___ day of _____, 20___, at ___ o'clock __.m. in the _____ Room of the _____ in _____, Texas

AGENDA

1. Call to order
2. Establishment of Quorum
3. Public Comment/Information from the Community
4. Approval of Minutes of the _____ meeting
5. Approval of Financials
6. Committee Reports
7. Officer Reports
8. Child Protective Services Report (closed session)
 - a. CPS Report on Conservatorship children
 - b. County cases, investigations, etc.

(Return to Open Session)

- Action required, if necessary, following Executive session
- c. CPS funding requests
9. Unfinished business (tabled items)
10. New Business

Adjourn

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify the above notice of meeting is a true and correct copy of said notice, and that said notice will be posted on the courthouse door of _____ County, _____,

Texas at ____ .m on the _____ day of _____, 20____ and said notice will remain posted for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said meeting.

REGIONAL CHILD WELFARE BOARD ADVISORY COUNCILS

Each Region has a regional child welfare board advisory council. The council is comprised of appointed delegates from the region's local child welfare boards.

The mission of the regional councils is to advocate for the welfare of children and assist local boards in achieving their goals. Regional councils provide training and information on regional and statewide issues. Presentations may include information from the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards, information about current CPS initiatives and CPS policies/procedures; legislative issues related to Child Protective Services and local regional issues impacting services to families and children.

The regional councils operate according to each region's needs and wishes. In most instances, each local board elects **one** or **two** delegates as their representative to the regional council.

Duties of regional delegates are:

*To serve as a liaison between the regional council and the local board by reporting the local board's activities and concerns and relaying information obtained at regional council meetings back to the local board.

*To educate oneself and one's local board on child abuse and neglect and resources available for prevention, intervention, and treatment.

*To attend regional meetings regularly and to actively participate in the regional council's committees and activities.

Each regional council elects **two to three** regional members to represent their council at the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards.

TEXAS COUNCIL OF CHILD WELFARE BOARDS

The Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards (TCCWB) represents local child welfare boards through its membership of approximately 30 representatives from all eleven **regional councils** in Texas.

TCCWB officers and members advocate for children through encouraging legislation to provide services to abused and neglected children and to prevent child abuse, working with CPS staff on programs that meet children's needs, and by networking with other agencies and organization to provide the best care for abused and neglected children, while at the same time, striving to prevent such abuse and neglect through public awareness and joint cooperation.

The TCCWB meets three times annually in Austin. Action on the Council is accomplished primarily through four areas: **Education, Advocacy, Awards, Resources, and Fostering Brighter Futures.**

***Education** – Texas Council seeks to keep local child welfare boards informed on ways to educate their community on child abuse and neglect.

***Advocacy** – Texas Council identifies and recommends legislative initiatives for support by the Council, Texas Council helps to educate local boards on effective interactions with local, state, and national officials.

***Awards** – Texas Council holds an annual awards event recognizing outstanding volunteers, CPS staff, foster parents, foster children, legislators, and businesses that have championed CPS issues.

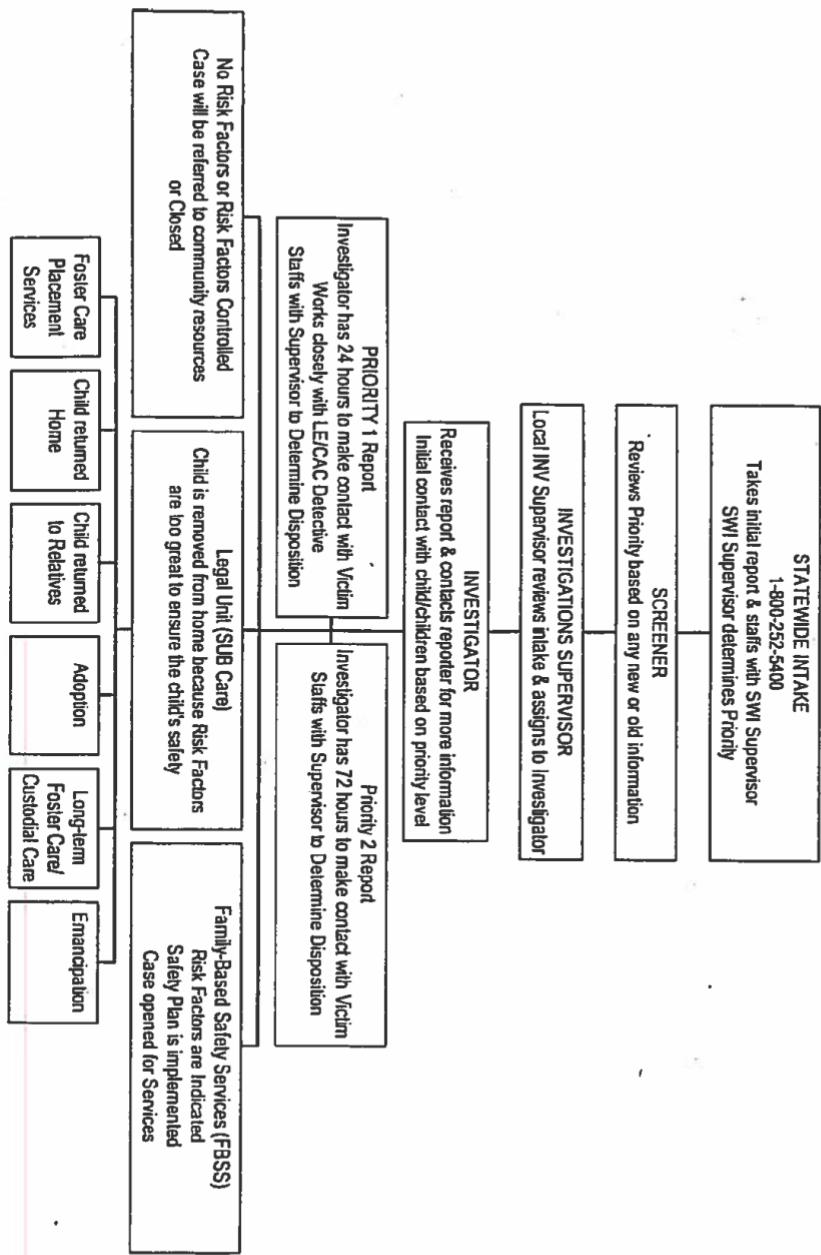
***Resources**- Texas council plans and coordinates for special projects, as well as identifies funds to meet identified objectives, and maintains a list of resources for local and regional boards. This committee stays current on applicable DFPS regulations.

***Fostering Brighter Futures**-Texas Council believes that public perception is strongly influenced by images in news, television, and movies, and that negative images stigmatize both foster children and foster parents. The FBF committee shares positive stories and statistics for children in foster care in order to improve the image of foster care in the state of Texas.

REGIONAL COUNCILS



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OTHER ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED:

- Glossary and Acronyms
- Copy of the Texas Family Code establishing County Child Welfare boards
- DFPS websites, hotlines, and information lines
- Sample contracts
- Updated Department information, legislative information

MOVE TO OPERATIONS MANUAL:

- Texas Child Welfare History
- Child protective Services Overview
- Child Abuse and Neglect

