

# Strength through Community

"Still we Rise." - 2021 Accomplishments  
An Update on Building a 21st Century DCBS

## Page 2

Commissioner's Message  
Division Stats

## Page 3

Pillar 1: Equity/Social and  
Economic Justice: Focus on  
Race and Poverty

## Page 3

Pillar 2: Trauma/Resilience  
and Engaged Healing

## Page 4-5

Pillar 3: Families & Children &  
Prevention

## Page 6

Pillar 4: Health: Mental &  
Behavioral/Opioid Crisis

## Page 7-9

Pillar 5: Operations/  
Implementation and Evaluation



# From the Commissioner

My Colleagues and Partners,

As we look back on 2021, we can remember it as a bittersweet chapter in our recent history. We were blessed to receive wide distribution of the life-saving COVID-19 vaccine, but many of us continue to feel the effects of the pandemic both personally and through our clients, neighbors and extended families. While we had long-awaited reunions with family and friends, many of us lost loved ones to COVID. We will forever honor them and their fight. We share a collective gratitude for all those of who have followed the recommended precautions and have taken the vaccines and boosters. Thank you for caring.

We, as usual, certainly met the moment once again, when we needed to step up and make a difference: The moment of need; the moment of opportunity; and the moment of service, the moment of hope. The Department for Community Based Services team of staff and partners made that commitment, and it was fully demonstrated through the numerous accomplishments and outcomes detailed in this report.

Many of you have heard me say that “community” is the heart of our name and defines our impact. We know that DCBS is not the sole solution to social services. We serve alongside our partners and customers. Our common vision comes together and gives hope to the Commonwealth. Our agency is embracing equity and working to dismantle poverty, disparities and disproportionality in order to thrive and achieve the highest human potential possible. We are building a resilient organization and modernizing the way we do business, with ourselves, our consumers and our partners.

As Gov. Andy Beshear recently said in his 2022 Commonwealth Budget address, “Our future is now, not right, not left but forward”. A visionary leader, Gov. Beshear knows that in this effort toward change, we each must adopt a leadership approach to make progress and move forward in our service of vulnerable children, adults and families. By incorporating our talent with our common Kentucky values, we meet the future with a spirit of service, trust and optimism. It’s how we will get through this together, and how we will maintain that hope for the next generation.

I am so humbled and honored to share ours/your accomplishments of 2021. All of this work reinforces the pillars of support in our Building a 21st Century DCBS as we sustain and expand efforts to ensure that Kentucky families today and tomorrow get the comprehensive, high-touch support they need and ALL of our staff matters, that your voice and input is crucial to our organizational transformation, that you are not only essential but valued. Without healthy, well-supported staff, we cannot ensure that we are giving our consumers the dedication and innovation they deserve. Thank you for your contributions of the past year and your commitment to creating a better tomorrow. I am grateful for all you’ve done as our rebuilding continues. As ever, I am in awe of you and your capabilities and compassion. I continue to fall madly in love with DCBS. To paraphrase Maya Angelou: “Still we Rise.”

With Gratitude,

*Marta*

DCBS Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub





# Pillar 1: Equity/Social and Economic Justice: Focus on Race and Poverty

- Establishment of the DCBS Core Racial Equity Team representing all divisions and service regions.
- Division of Service Regions implemented Race Community Child Welfare (RCCW) meetings in every service region to identify racial disparities and disproportionalities within child welfare, court, and community as whole.
- In conjunction with START, we established a national race equity group.
- Panel presentations hosted on race and poverty:
  - DCBS engaged Dr. Trinidad Jackson, Senior Advisor on Equity; and
  - Dr. Brandy Kelly Pryor joined DCBS as Health Equity Advisor to provide capacity and expertise to staff on assessing equity. Analysis of their evaluation will influence the continued work of Pillar 1.

# Pillar 2: Trauma/Resilience and Engaged Healing

- Executive Advisor Jennifer Warren appointed to lead the implementation of a community of practice and infuse trauma-informed care language in our work with staff.
- Continued and strengthened partnership with DBHDID for the System of Care V Grant. Second cohort launched in The Lakes and Salt River Trail service regions.
- Established Regional Debriefing groups following a critical incident and established a Critical Incident Task Force to develop a protocol for responding to critical incidents.
- Created professional development and self-care plans to be used with staff beginning in 2022.
- Foundational workshops provided by the commissioner to staff on identifying, addressing and managing secondary trauma, build personal, team and organizational resilience.

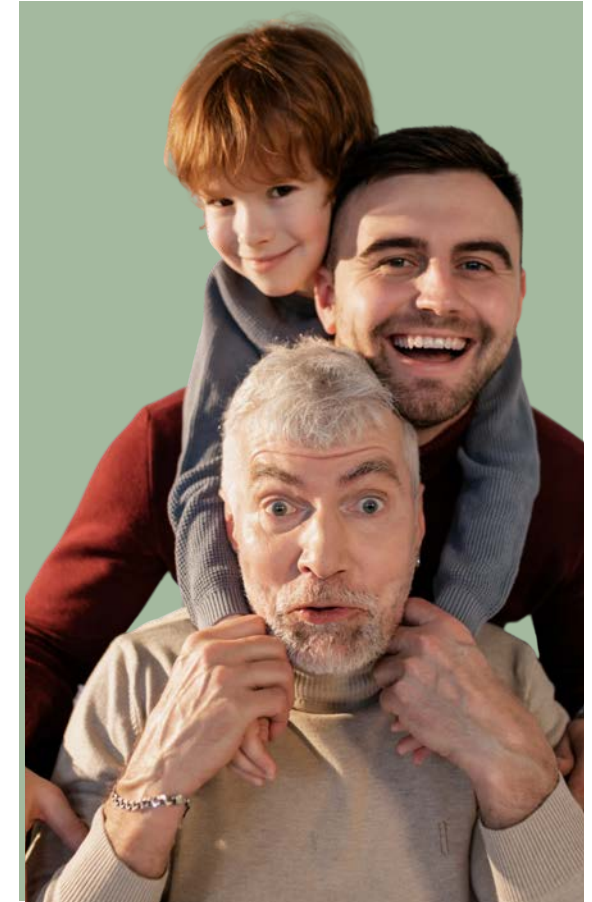




## Pillar 3: Families & Children & Prevention

### Prevention and Permanency

- Selected as Thriving Families, Safer Children Round 2 jurisdiction expanding prevention efforts.
- Launched a Statewide Prevention Collaborative, which includes more than 100 community partners and those with lived experience.
- Launched multiple three Multi-Systemic Therapy pilots to decrease out of home care and increase community wrap around services.
- Family First Prevention services expanded in order to serve more families include High Fidelity Wraparound and Motivational Interviewing across DCBS staff.
- Awarded one of eight federal grants nationally and we will serve as a demonstration site for the development of robust community based primary prevention supports. These efforts in primary prevention are intended to be a model for replication across the state and nation.
- Launched Upstream Learning Café – reading and discussing the book “Upstream” by Dan Heath, providing a learning opportunity to increase staff’s ability to think about prevention across all programs. Trainer of trainers completed. The Cafés will be rolled out across the state in 2022.
- The Adoption Branch launched the Kentucky Adoption Profile Exchange (KAPE) partner site with Adoptuskids (AUK).
- DCBS partnered with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) on a series of cross training learning webinars to promote partnership between DCBS staff, judges and court personnel.
- Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) QRTP was launched as part of Family First
- The department expanded many steps to expand prevention services in 2021 including expanding the Kentucky Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (KSTEP) program in one region, the execution of Multisystemic Therapy contracts with two partners, the beginning of a new partnership with Volunteers of America (VOA) for quick access to substance abuse services, and the issuing of a Request for Proposals (RFP) to expand Family Preservation and Reunification Program services by 25%. Additionally, the Kentucky five-year IV-E Prevention Services Plan amendment was approved by the Children’s Bureau to add additional evidence-based practices.





# Pillar 3: Families & Children & Prevention

## Child Care

- Establishment of Kentucky's Family Child Care Network to recruit and support family child care providers.
- Increased CCAP reimbursement from the 40th percentile to the 80th percentile for eligible families.
- Completed the first year of Training of Trainers focused specifically on supporting children with disabilities in quality child care programs.
- Covered the cost of family co-pays for subsidy families during the 2021 calendar year.
- Implemented another round of Kentucky's preschool partnership grants between state-funded preschool classrooms and high quality child care programs.





## Pillar 4: Health: Mental & Behavioral/ Opioid Crisis

- Increased capacity and impact for psychotropic medication oversight and review of quality of health care lead by DCBS Medical Director Dr. David Lohr.
- Activation of Aetna SKY, the single MCO for children in foster care, and increased collaboration to meet health care needs of youth.
- Formation of a CHFS Medical Staff to collaborate and address Cabinetwide initiatives
- Launched Family Recovery Program Pilots in partnership with Volunteers of America in Clay, Lincoln and Hardin counties.





# Pillar 5: Operations/Implementation and Evaluation

- 6-Month stabilization strategic plan completed.
- Design of 18-month innovation strategic plan completed with the inclusion of frontline staff, clients and community partners.
- Recruitment and inclusion of existing or alumni DCBS clients as Trusted Advisors. A Trusted Advisors Council will be formalized in early 2022.
- Approved Hybrid Workforce Model for staff across all regions.
- Continued virtual meetings with staff in all regions.
- Creation of workgroups to address staff concerns and suggestions, inclusive of all positions and regions.
- Shift premium approval for both Protection & Permanency and Family Support staff
- Salary increases and ongoing position adjustments and pay equity work for all positions within DCBS.
- Successful leadership and staff advocacy yielded adjustments for Social Workers and Family Support staff positions and for over 100 administrative support staff.
- Continued work with Personnel and Finance to ensure that ALL positions are lifted to an equitable level.
- Proposed raises of 5% for all staff in our biannual budget and included in the Governor's budget.
- Interim hiring process approved and implemented to bring staff on-board quickly.
- Healthy Return to Work Task Force – consolidated eight offices.
- Establishment of a worker safety task force with CHFS and DCBS leadership.
- Continuous assessment of staff needs for furniture and technology.
- Increased use of technology – moved many formats to include a virtual option with the use of MS TEAMS and ZOOM.
- Use of electronic process for signatures such as Adobe and DocuSign.
- Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Redesign accomplished two major milestones:
  - New state plan implemented aligned with agency pillars.
  - Evaluation plan developed to assess CQI goals.



# Pillar 5: Operations/Implementation and Evaluation

## Legislative

- 2021 Legislative Session – DCBS played a critical part in the passage of two pieces of legislation in the 2021 Regular Session. SB 148 and HB 497 both contained a section that had been a DCBS legislative proposal. Section 2 of SB 148 included that, by January 1, 2022, local governments shall name family child-care homes in their zoning regulations authorizing a board to separately consider the applications of these businesses for conditional use permits within residential zones. The result of this section is a much easier approval process to establish a family child-care home in a neighborhood than other typical types of businesses. Section 4 of HB 497 included a statewide exemption to the optional federal requirements prohibiting individuals who have been convicted of a drug felony from receiving public assistance.
- DCBS officially reviewed more than 50 unique pieces of legislation affecting the department and those served by the department and frequently worked with the cabinet and partners to amend, support, or stop these bills.
- Legislative Interim Presentations – The department presented to legislative committees more than 20 times on topics extremely important to the state, including staff recruitment, retention and secondary trauma, childcare, public assistance programs, federal block grants and many others.
- DCBS submitted approximately 25 statutorily required reports to the legislature in 2021. DCBS had 46 administrative regulations in the official reg process.







# Pillar 5: Operations/Implementation and Evaluation

## Communication

Increased internal communications and staff engagement

- Monthly publication of Vision newsletter
- Launched “Day in the Life” videos highlighting the roles and responsibilities and personal testimonials of staff
- Question of the Day messaging focusing on one area of departmental work
- Superhero nomination program including recognition certificates and newsletter/social media announcements

External communications through social media have increased

- Regular if not daily posts highlighting all program areas on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
- Facebook - Increase in number of followers from about 11,000 in January to 17,300 in December 2021.
- Twitter - also increasing; number of followers almost doubled this year; January - just under 1,000 and now - 1,825.
- Instagram – We have almost 1,000 followers on this visual communications platform.

Awards

- The Vision newsletter and the former DCBS logo won Kentucky Association of Government Communicators Awards of Excellence.

## Training

- Redesign of the P&P new worker training system which will roll out in February 2022. The new training will be focused on the skills and competencies that are needed to do the foundational work needed to work with children, families and adults.
- Updated the P&P Supervisor Training and developed new Family Support Supervisor Training.
- Regional Training Coordinators developed “Welcome to Community Based Services ” live Zoom training to help staff understand expectations of a DCBS professional.
- DCBS and UofL rollout of the training and data collection for the Field Training Specialist program pilot.
- Created a new Critical Incident Reporting (CIR) App, that allows state employees themselves to document and report safety occurrences they experience on the job.



# Pillar 5: Operations/Implementation and Evaluation

## Family Support

- Transition back to “normal” processing in SNAP after on/off COVID adjustments.
- Removal of the drug felon ban for SNAP and KTAP.
- Continued year-round LIHEAP to help with heating and cooling costs.
- Began a brand new household water/wastewater program.
- Issued PEBT benefits for school age and child care children for the remainder of the school year.
- Issued PEBT benefits for school age and child care children for summer months.
- Identified both policy and cultural changes needed in our TANF cash assistance program and created a roadmap for 2022.
- Continued issuance of SNAP Emergency Allotments throughout 2021.
- Continued with Notice Improvement Project; implemented changes based on input from external advocates.
- Operated two phases of Disaster SNAP.

## Records and Finance

All processes to now be electronic versus paper.

- Multiple updates to the Child Abuse Neglect online system to make it more user friendly.
- All foster/adoptive/relative/fictive kin background checks are now electronic.
- All Open Records requests are now being completed within the five-day regulatory timeline.
- The Records Management Branch is fully staffed.
- Implemented specialized teams for billing purposes that has resulted in more timely and accurate payment to our families and providers.
- Processes have been set up for children to continue their eligibility and receive their funds faster as they age out of foster care.
- Completed the biennium budget for the Governor/2022 General Assembly.