Chair Gossage, Vice Chair Concannon, Ranking Member Faust-Goudeau and Members of the Committee, my name is Jeanette Owens, and I am the Chief Child Welfare Officer at DCCCA. DCCCA has served Kansas communities, families, and children for the past 48 years. We provide child welfare programs including family preservation and child placing agency services. Additionally, we provide mental health and substance use disorder treatment, traffic safety, prevention, and research services. Thank you for the opportunity to share about our services today.

**Child Placing Agency (CPA) Services**

DCCCA provides child placing agency services which includes recruitment, training, licensing, and support service for foster families. We currently serve 396 foster homes and have 469 children in placement. We have 58 total child placing agency staff. DCCCA worked with 852 families in FY2023.

DCCCA Child Placing Agency continues to provide a continuum of service options to foster parents in effort to support their current strengths and needs. Programs supported include:

- **Traditional Family Foster Care**
  - Care for children under state custody and legal guardianship
    - Child in Need of Care placement
    - Respite
    - Emergency care
    - Therapeutic Foster Care

- **Serious Emotional Disturbance (respite)**
  - Care for children receiving SED waiver services through Mental Health Centers (MHCs) who need short-term respite

- **Professional Resource Family Care**
  - Care for children receiving SED waiver services through MHCs, generally for 30-60 days

- **Police Protective Custody (PPC)**
  - Care for children that are temporarily placed under the custody of law enforcement while pending a decision from the court
• Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)
  o Short- or long-term care for children that are receiving I/DD waiver services through the local Community Developmental Disability Organization (CDDO)
• Family Preservation Respite
  o Care provided to prevent children from being placed into foster care when there is an urgent safety concern or when parents need a scheduled break
• Post-Adoption Respite
  o Care provided to prevent re-entry into foster care for children that have been adopted
• Relative Care
  o Care provided when a child cannot remain safely in their home and are placed with kin

**Project Updates:**

**Foster Family Appreciation Card**
- Allows foster families to receive discounts and benefits throughout the state of Kansas. The card provides access to a list of retailers and service providers that offer discounts for foster parents.

**Foster Family Portal App**
- This app utilizes optical character recognition technology to summarize child matching information for foster parents to have enhanced options for placement matching decisions.

Kansas has 2,353 foster families statewide. The highest number of foster homes in the last four years was in May of 2020 with 2,935 families. The lowest number of foster families in the past four years was in April of this year at 2345 foster families.

**We Kan Drive**
We Kan Drive is a program that helps to remove the barriers youth in foster care and independent living face when working towards obtaining their drivers license. Getting a drivers license is a critical piece to help youth transition into adulthood, and typically parents help support their child learn how to drive and log driving hours. For youth in foster care this can be more challenging. DCCCA provides educational and financial support to help teens and young adults.

Since November 2021, We Kan Drive has provided services for over 250 youth in the East region of Kansas. Last fiscal year, We Kan Drive enrolled 121 youth in Driver’s Education courses, purchased auto insurance policies for 31 youth, and supported 64 youth in obtaining some form of licensure. We Kan Drive aims to continue to exceed program goals each year.
**Family Preservation Services**
DCCCA provides family preservation services for the five counties in the Kansas City region and 10 counties in the Wichita region. Our Family Preservation services focus specifically on providing voluntary in-home supports for families with a child at risk of entering out of home placement.

DCCCA utilizes the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) an evidenced based practice that focuses on improving safety, permanency, well-being and recovery outcomes for children, parents, and families in which parental substance use is a primary influencing factor with the child welfare concerns. START utilizes a dyad approach involving both a case manager and family mentor. Family mentors have lived experience in substance use recovery and the child welfare system.

DCCCA currently has 211 active family preservation families in our services with 515 children in those families. We have 75 family preservation staff including therapists, case managers, support workers and administration staff. Our current average caseload for Tier 1 is 5 families. Our Tier 2 current average caseloads are 10 families in both regions. It is important to note that caseloads sizes vary based on referrals received as well as open staff positions.

**Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)**
DCCCA began START services in 7 additional counties as of July 1, 2023. DCCCA serves four counties in the Southeast region (Crawford, Cherokee, Neosho, and Labette) and three counties in the Northeast region (Shawnee, Jackson, Jefferson). We anticipate providing in-home services for 104 families annually.

Thank you for your time. We appreciate the invitation to join today’s conversation and we appreciate the commitment to improving the lives of Kansas children.

Respectfully submitted,

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Questions may also be directed to:
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