



# **ADMINISTRATION OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN (AFC)**

## **Puerto Rico State Plan**

**2025-2029**

Updated septiembre 2024

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## **Institutional Background and Overview Current Initiatives**

The Puerto Rico Administration of Families and Children (AFC) is a comprehensive and responsible entity dedicated to the safety, protection, and well-being of children, families, and communities. Since its creation, AFC has expanded well beyond the protection of children to include the administration of a network of services and coordinated supports aimed at strengthening, preventing, and delivering resources to promote, stabilize, and develop the infrastructure needed to serve children and diverse families.

As of 2022, the Administration of Families and Children developed the Statewide Assessment. In 2023, a Federal Monitoring review was carried out, and the PIP was developed and submitted in 2024 with substantive and active involvement with Stakeholders.

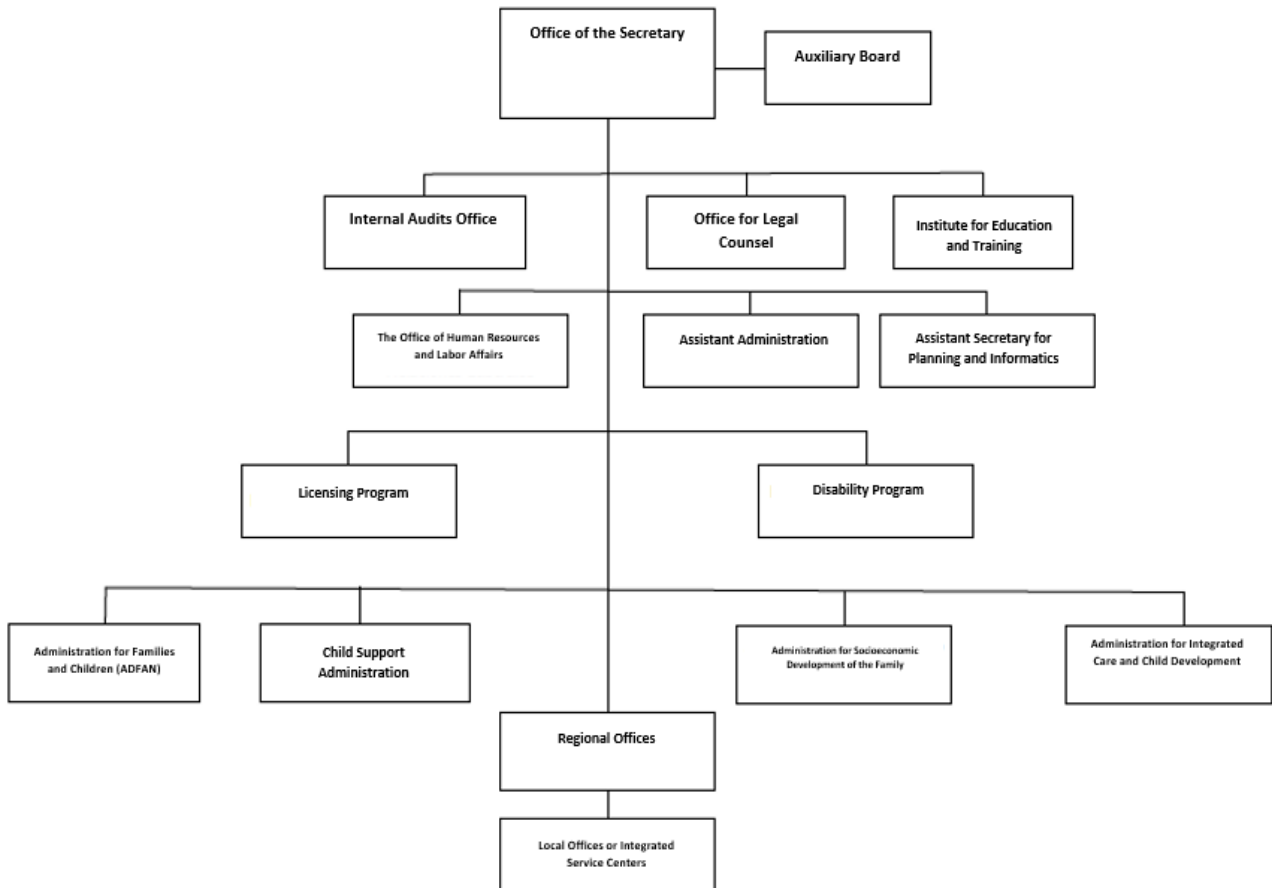
## **AFC Mission**

To protect and support children, adolescents, youth, families, older adults, and adults with special needs from the effects of family violence in all its forms through individual, group, and community services. To facilitate the delivery and promotion of social, remedial, and preventive services, fostering increased participation, equality, and social justice.

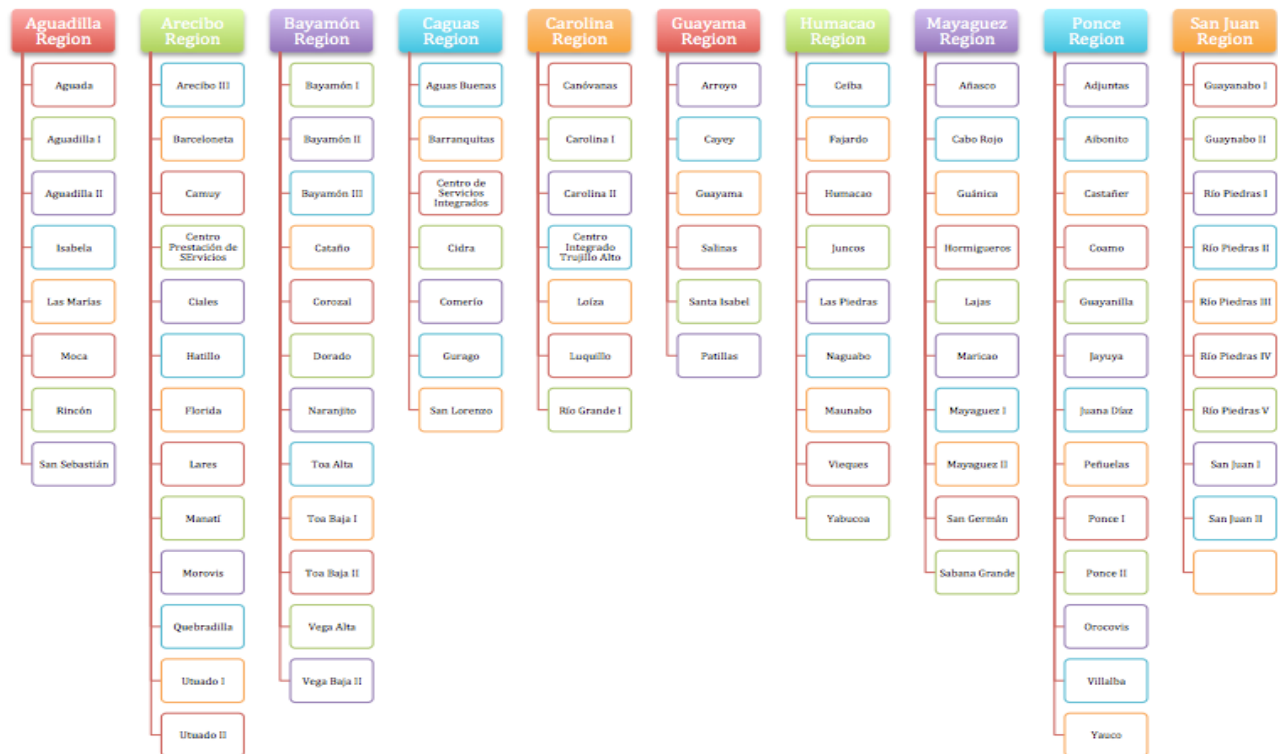
## **Public Policy**

AFC is the government entity responsible for programs to protect children and youth, family social work, and intervention in cases of adoption, abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and others. It also oversees the protection and care of older adults and adults with physical disabilities. AFC develops community work with an emphasis on guidance, education, and primary prevention services aimed at facilitating the comprehensive development of individuals toward achieving self-sufficiency. Community work focuses on enhancing the capacities of individuals and families to attain self-sufficiency. The AFC Enabling Act also mandates the agency to promote collective projects that foster shared responsibility between the community and the government, empowering citizens to lead in addressing social issues.

## Department of the Family Organizational Diagram



## Regional and Locals Offices:

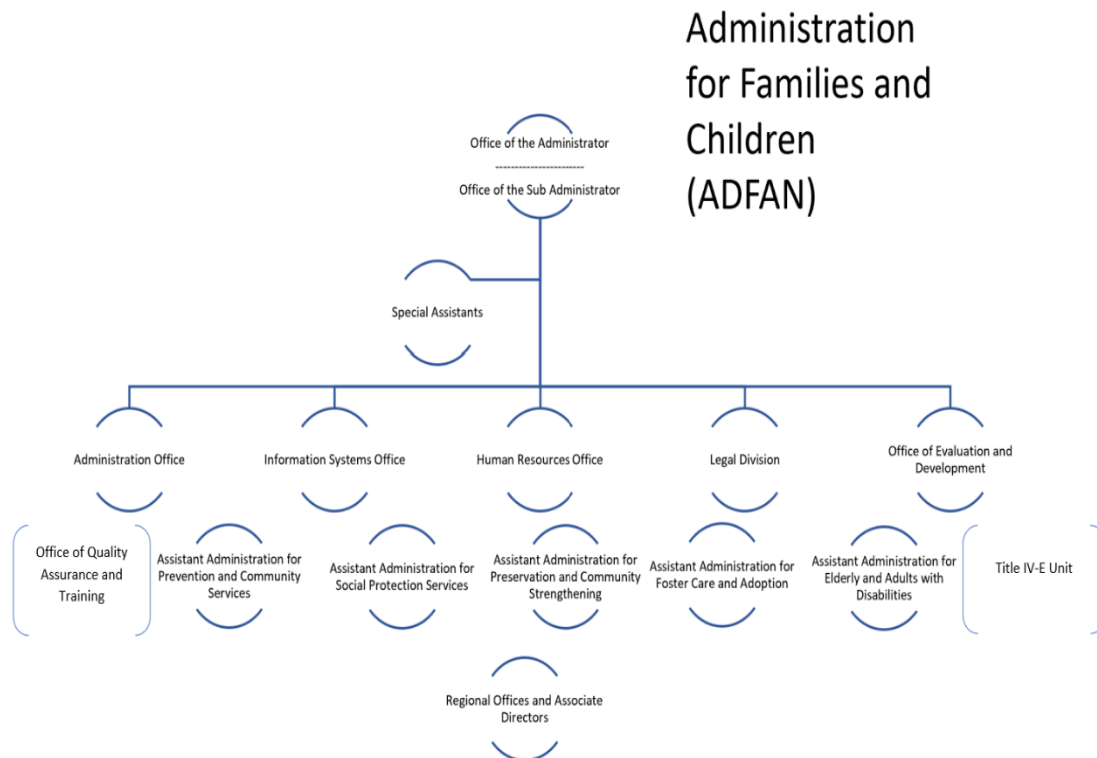


## Programmatic Structure

The programmatic structure of AFC (Table 1) consists of five Auxiliary Administrations, which are:

- Auxiliary Administration of Social Protection
- Auxiliary Administration of Family and Community Preservation and Strengthening
- Auxiliary Administration of Foster Care and Adoption
- Auxiliary Administration of Services for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities
- Auxiliary Administration of Community Prevention Services

Table 1. Programmatic structure of AFC.





<b>Auxiliary Administration for Social Protection</b>	<b>Auxiliary Administration for Family and Community Preservation and Strengthening</b>	<b>Auxiliary Administration for Foster Care and Adoption</b>	<b>Auxiliary Administration for Services for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities</b>	<b>Auxiliary Administration for Community Prevention Services</b>
<p>Receives and addresses referrals for Child Abuse, family functioning issues, domestic violence, neglect, abuse situations involving adults with disabilities, elderly adults, and other social situations 24 hours a day, seven days a week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special Investigations Units in each of the Department's regions (10)</li> <li>- State Center for Child Protection</li> <li>- Central Registry of Protection Cases</li> <li>- Hotline for Abuse Situations, Institutional Abuse, Neglect, Institutional Neglect</li> <li>- Family Guidance and Support Hotline</li> </ul>	<p>Provides family preservation and strengthening services. Develops family service plans to prevent the recurrence of abuse and the removal of children from the home. Additionally, it offers follow-up services to families who have regained custody of children to prevent abuse from happening again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Services for Child Abuse Victims remaining in their homes</li> <li>- Institutional Abuse Service</li> <li>- Family Guidance Services</li> <li>- Intensive Home Preservation Services</li> <li>- Post-Reunification Family Services</li> </ul>	<p>Establishes the Permanency Plan for children removed from the home for their protection and monitors the Service Plan developed to strengthen the protective capacities of the parent, guardian, or responsible person. Supervises facilities providing care for children under the custody of the Department of the Family. Responsible for certifying homes that can accommodate up to two children in their custody. Provides adoption services for children who have been legally released from parental custody by the courts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Foster Care:</li> <li>- Foster Home Services</li> <li>- Residential Services:</li> <li>- Institutions</li> <li>- Group Homes</li> <li>- Shelters</li> <li>- Adoption:</li> <li>- Subsidized Adoption</li> <li>- International Adoptions</li> <li>- Independent Living Services</li> <li>- Interagency Services with External Agencies</li> <li>- Title IV-E</li> </ul>	<p>Provides a continuum of community-based services to prevent abuse, minimize social issues affecting them, and improve the quality of life for individuals aged sixty (60) years and older, as well as adults aged 18 to 59 with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult Services Program:</li> <li>- Information and Referral</li> <li>- Guidance and Counseling</li> <li>- Protection Services</li> <li>- Institutional Abuse Service</li> <li>- Multiple Activities Centers for Older Adults (CAMPEA)</li> <li>- Home Helpers Service</li> <li>- Home Helpers Proposal in Public Residences</li> <li>- Foster Home Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offers domestic violence prevention services and child abuse prevention services. Additionally, it evaluates and grants service proposals to combat and reduce domestic violence.</li> <li>- Schools for Coexistence and Parenting</li> <li>- Schools for Family Life</li> <li>- Project Encounter</li> <li>- Social Services through NGOs:</li> <li>- Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)</li> <li>- Support Services and Domestic Violence Prevention</li> <li>- Safe Nest</li> </ul>

These programs offer Prevention, Protection, Preservation, Foster Care, Home Assistance, Family Reunification, adoption of children, and services for elderly individuals and adults with physical disabilities. Additionally, they promote the safety and well-being of victims of domestic or institutional abuse.

## **Collaboration:**

ADFAN have develop throughout the years meaningful collaboration with the NGO's, Department of Education, Department of Health, the Judicial System, the Courts among others. The collaborations follow and are describe by services areas. We are also including the list of collaborators and partners involved in the development of the PIP, in the APSR (pages 5-9) and in SWA report (pages 2-25). Continue collaborations with diverse services areas are also included:

### **Auxiliary Administration for Family and Community Preservation and Strengthening**

**Healthy Families:** The collaborative agreement between Health and Family, established in 2022 and valid until 2025, aims to provide prevention services, conduct interventions to improve family health, reduce the number of intentional injuries, increase school attendance, enhance self-sufficiency, and decrease domestic violence. Currently, meetings are held between agencies to continue the agreement.

- **Impact PR, Lift Program:** Thirteen employees assigned to provide prevention services were trained in March 2024 to facilitate the implementation of the Lift module. This service is offered to adolescents aged 13-17. The workshops consist of 2 modules, each lasting 4 hours. The goal is to strengthen family relationships to improve communication, prevent pregnancies, and promote responsible parenting.

- **Safety and Child Development Education:** Since 2023, prevention staff have been providing educational talks to students from elementary to higher grades on topics such as bullying, dating violence prevention, leadership, and emotional management. The Department of Education identifies the schools and coordinates the groups, while prevention staff deliver the talks.

- **Safety and Team for Our Youth:** Since 2024, a multi-agency agreement has been established to address high school students, providing a safe and educational environment through workshops. The participating agencies are the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Family, the Department of Education, AMSCA, and the Department of Recreation and Sports. At the end of the workshop cycle, students receive a certificate for 40 community service hours. Topics covered include leadership, emotional management, and empowerment.

The Department of Public Safety identifies the schools, as it leads the project, and coordinates which agency will offer the workshops.

- **Project T4:** The Administration of Courts and Carlos Albizu University, through the Justice for Children Project, continues to provide psychosocial interventions for families participating in the Schools for Family Life and the School for Living and Parenting. The T4 Collaborative Agreement is an ADFAN project with the Justice for Children Project (Courts) and Carlos Albizu University, offering brief psychosocial interventions in a four-step approach: Identify your alarm, Focus, Recognize stress factors, and Define your goal. These interventions are designed to regulate stress reactions and think clearly before acting and will be delivered by students from this University. The workshops are voluntary and do not replace services offered at the Schools for Living and Parenting and Family Life Schools. This project is expected to be implemented in the regions of Arecibo, Bayamón, Mayagüez, Ponce, and San Juan, impacting parents, family resources, and cases in Community, Preservation, SIPH, Substitute Care, and Adoption, among others. Orientation meetings about this project have been held with Central Level staff and Regional Associate Directors and Supervisors from these five regions. It is in the process of updating its development and evaluating the implementation process.

- Suicide Prevention Commission of the Department of Health: Continued collaboration with this commission to create initiatives and activities for suicide prevention. Participation continues in activities commemorating Suicide Prevention Month, held annually from August 10 to September 10.

### **Auxiliary Administration for Social Protection:**

In December 2023, an inter-agency collaboration between the Puerto Rico Department of Education (DEPR) and the Department of Family (DF), through ADFAN, created a unit to address cases of neglect in the school environment from a multi-level support perspective. The project is implemented in the seven (7) Regional Educational Offices of the Department of Education. The goal of this initiative is to establish a specialized working team composed of social workers from the Department of Education and the Department of Family, to assess situations of possible neglect in the school environment that have the potential to be referred to the Family Department's maltreatment line. This

effort aims for a more agile and rapid intervention in such situations and to focus the agency's resources on investigating referrals that require initial contact according to the assigned priority (section 1 safety).

### **WRMA, Inc., a TriMetrix Company**

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Systems (NCANDS) has required analysis and technical assistance to improve data. WRMA is a company that builds and maintains robust computing solutions to enhance communication, data collection, data file sharing, and data analysis capabilities. It serves as a link with each state/territory, fostering relationships through technical assistance and facilitating communication between ACYF and the state/territory. Through the contract, Puerto Rico receives technical assistance throughout the fiscal year. During this period, we received technical assistance from WRMA in a support call on September 23, 2023, where we discussed data discrepancies from the previous year and other questions related to clarifying agency policies and procedures, as well as future plans to improve data quality. The results in terms of data in the NCANDS file have been significant, as each year we encounter fewer errors, and the file has not discarded records due to errors.

### **Healthy Families Program of the Department of Health:**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) provides equitable healthcare to the most underserved communities in the country. Our programs support low-income individuals, people with HIV, pregnant women, children, parents, rural communities, transplant patients, and healthcare workers. Report on data to be included in the HRSA Annual Report, where one of the measures to report is the number of children participating in the program who had an active or closed case from October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

The report was sent on October 31, 2023, to the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Division, Puerto Rico Department of Health.

## **Operations/ PR POLICE**

Working in coordination with both state and federal security agencies fulfills our duty to immediately protect minors, ensuring the safety of children who are part of impacted families. This type of intervention is accompanied by social assistance for the benefit of families, thus complying with safety requirement section 1 for the required intervention. This teamwork allows for greater effectiveness and fosters collaboration among agencies. The interventions were carried out on the following dates:

- April 12, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI) Municipalities San German and Hormigueros
- May 18, 2023 – State Operation (Puerto Rico Police) Municipalities Arecibo, Caguas, Humacao, San Juan
- June 6, 2023 – Statewide Operation (Puerto Rico Police) Municipality Carolina
- June 14, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI) Municipalities San Juan and Guaynabo
- August 3, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI) San Juan, Carolina, Caguas, Humacao, and Guayama
- August 30, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI) Municipality Aguadilla
- September 15, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI) Municipalities Humacao, Manatí
- September 22, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality Arecibo
- September 30, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality Aguadilla
- October 11, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipalities Isabela, Quebradillas, Hatillo, Vega Baja, Lares, Manatí, and Dorado
- October 18, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality of Coamo, Ponce
- October 6, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Salinas Municipality
- December 1, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipalities of Hormigueros, Isabela, Quebradillas, Hatillo, Lares, Manatí
- December 7, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipalities of Cidra, San Juan, Bayamón

- December 11, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality Mayagüez
- December 14, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipalities of San Juan and Caguas
- December 18, 2023 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality of Guaynabo
- January 28, 2024 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality Bayamón
- March 4, 2024 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality Carolina
- March 14, 2024 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality Canóvanas
- March 18, 2024 – Federal Operation (FBI), Municipality of Naguabo

### **Allied Help Lines Group:**

The Auxiliary Protection Administration began to participate in the Allied Lines Help Group. This Group resulted from a call by the Puerto Rico Department of Health to unite representatives from various helplines that provide emergency assistance to the public.

The purpose of the meetings is to:

- Understand the services of each line for proper coordination.
- Discuss cases to channel the offerings of services appropriately.
- Provide support for the activities of the represented agencies.

Meetings occur every two months. During the reporting period, a total of four meetings were held. The participation of the Auxiliary Protection Administration took place on the following dates and locations:

- August 31, 2023 – Rape Victims Help Center
- October 26, 2023 – Rape Victims Help Center
- January 25, 2024 – San Patricio State Forest (social event)

### **Stakeholders Involved in the PIP Process**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Elsa Rodríguez	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Hilda Rodríguez	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Lisa Agosto	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Pedro Cartagena	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel

Name	Role	Affiliation
Hayrines Calderón	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Lourdes Rivera	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Marisel Bocanegra	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Veronica Torres	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Iris Rosa	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Yahaira Santiago	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Brenda Rodríguez	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Laysa Paravisini	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	Lawyer, representation from judicial partners
Brenda Garcia	Assigned to Safety Outcomes	Lawyer, representation from judicial partners
Sandra Rosario	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Yaritza Gómez	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Nancy Martínez	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Glorimary Jiménez	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Katiria Mas	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Melvin López	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Evelyn Velázquez	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Rebeca Ramos	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Wilmary Class	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Milliam Román	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Dayra Sanchez	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Jadeyra Rivera	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Elba Rosario	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Amanda Baerga	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	Judicial representation
Sixsfrido Steidel	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	Judicial representation
Dalila Aviles	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	Mother, family/children representation
Lily Serrano	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	Foster home, family/children representation
Mary Janer	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	Lawyer, representation from judicial partners
Janette Torres	Assigned to Permanency Outcomes	Lawyer, representation from judicial partners

Name	Role	Affiliation
Wilma Ortiz	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Helga Nazario	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Mariel Collazo	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Mariam Garay	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Idelmarie Santiago	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Omayra Mora	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Jose Crespo	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Ana Ramos	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Brenda Lozada	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Gilberto Marrero	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Norma Pérez	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	ADFAN personnel
Janette Pabón	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	Mother, family/children representation
Migdalia Noboa	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	Hogar Fernandez, representation from foster care partnering organizations
Rodolfo Vega	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	Hogar Fernandez, representation from foster care partnering organizations
Roberto Montanez	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	School Director, representation from educational partners
Jorge Ortiz	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	Casa Tuscany, representation from partnering organizations
Mariela Santini	Assigned to Well-being Outcomes	Lawyer, representation from judicial partners
Yashira Gali	Assigned to Measurement Plan	ADFAN personnel
Wanda Quinones	Assigned to Measurement Plan	ADFAN personnel
Melvin López	Assigned to Measurement Plan	ADFAN personnel
Enid López	Assigned to Measurement Plan	ADFAN personnel
Keyla Garcia	Assigned to Measurement Plan	ADFAN personnel
Dayra Sánchez	Assigned to Measurement Plan	ADFAN personnel
Liz Sanó	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel
Vanesa Santana	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel
Roxanne Diaz	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel
Leila Pablos	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel
Delma Bernier	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel



Name	Role	Affiliation
Yashira Rodríguez	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel
Tania Muñoz	Assigned to Systemic Factors	ADFAN personnel
Gloria Molina	Additional stakeholders	AFANA
Iris Colón	Additional stakeholders	ADFAN personnel

### **Assessment of Current Performance in Improving Outcomes**

As part of the preparations for federal monitoring/CFSR and a federal requirement, ADFAN/PR conducted a self-assessment of services/Statewide Assessment (SWA) in 2022. The report was submitted to the federal level on March 6, 2023, to begin discussions of findings prior to the monitoring conducted in May 2023. (see SWA report submitted)

Goals, strategies, and activities were established in response to the findings of the monitoring/CFSR and were reconciled with other federal plans (FFPSA Prevention, APSR, and CFSP) to maximize resources and ensure consistency. Some results from the CFSR highlight the need for improvement: (see results report provided by the Children's Bureau on August 11, 2023).

Among the actions needed to satisfy meaningful collaborations we will implement:

- Safety Outcome: Timely completion of maltreatment investigations, documentation in the SIMCa system, and provision of services according to family needs.
- Permanency Outcome: Adherence to permanency plans within the established timeframe and involvement of parents and children in developing these plans (services and permanency).
- Well-being Outcome: Timely and ongoing service provision, documentation of reasonable efforts in cases in the SIMCa system, and promotion of parent and child involvement in service planning.

**The Systemic factors also require improvement in:**

- Keeping the **information system** (SIMCa) updated and functional,
- Continuous **case reviews** with stakeholder involvement,
- **QA** must consistently meet case review/reading requirements,
- Training must align with QA review results,
- A **variety of services** available to families and children, based on identified needs, requires service identification and dissemination,
- **Response to Community Federal Program Coordination** requires evaluation of provided services and dissemination of available services,
- Recruitment, Licensing, and Retention of homes require support training for operators to assist children and families.

**Furthermore, we include were in the PIP we will deal with these challenges:**

- Safety Outcome 1 and 2/ CFSR (pages A1-A2) PIP (pages 10-21)
- Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2/ CFSR (pages A-2, A-3,) PIP (pages 22-29)
- Wellbeing Outcomes 1, 2, and 3/ CFSR (pages. A-4) PIP (pages. 10-21)
- Information System/s CFSR (pages. A-5) PIP (pages. 22 -29 & 30-35)
- Case Review System/ CFSR (pages. A-5) PIP (pages. 22-29 & 30 -35)
- Quality Assurance System/CFSR (pages. A-5) PIP (pages. 10-21)
- Staff Training/ CFSR (pages. A-5) PIP (pages. 10-21)
- Service Array/ CFSR (A-6) PIP (pages. 30-35)
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community/CFSR (pages. A-6) PIP (pages 30-35)
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, (pgs. A-6) PIP (pages 10-21)

**Implementation & Program Supports - Discuss technical assistance and support provided by (and received from) Capacity Building Center for States**

Technical assistance and training are received from the federal level/CB and also through Capacity Building (monthly virtual meetings and planned visits):

- The 1st CB visit/presential training by the federal level occurred from September 26-28, 2023, at Hotel Verdanza.
- The 2nd visit/presential training took place from February 21-23, 2024, at Universidad Universal in Hato Rey.
- On May 7-8, 2024, Children's Bureau staff visited to endorse the Prevention Plan with the Governor of PR and highlight ADFAN's work regarding plans, PIP, and CFSP, which will be approved soon.
- For meetings with the federal level, ADFAN has the translation services of Mr. Guillermo Cordero to facilitate communication.
- The support received from Capacity Building has been efficient and facilitated the planning process, particularly the reconciliation of established strategies.

**Summarize any evaluation and research activities with which ADFAN was involved or participated in and how they supported the goals and objectives in the plan.**

During the SWA and CFSR processes, interviews with stakeholders through focus groups facilitated the collection of relevant data for designing goals and strategies to optimize service delivery. Participants included judicial representatives (attorneys, guardians, and judges), service providers (foster care operators and NGO representatives), and ADFAN service users and workforce members as well. (see SWA listing, pp. 2-15)

Progress Made to Improve Outcomes is included in the table on pages 43-53 of the APSR;

**The relevant data supporting progress toward meeting each goal and objective. This data is included in the CFSR Final Report, pages A-1 – A-6.**

We have adopted CQI, providing periodic data for process interventions aimed at improving outcomes. We are currently enhancing continuous review practices. In response to the CFSR, efforts focused on developing the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) using the CQI model. Administration prioritized establishing policies for implementing the new FFPSA law and strengthening organizational structure.

**Focused actions implemented to improve outcomes:**

- Safety: Reinforced workforce and contracted companies for maltreatment referrals.

1. Hired 80 social workers in July 2023 for the 10 investigation units.

2. Initiated hiring support staff for investigation units, including drivers and service assistants.

3. Continued specialized training on investigation and child safety for direct service staff and supervision.

4. Maintained private corporation contracts for overdue referrals, with one corporation handling 2024 referrals to avoid end-of-year backlog.

5. Authorized a project among regional employees to address overdue referrals, the Task Force, focusing on physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

6. Continued monitoring of direct line services to streamline the screening process and decision-making for cases requiring social investigation.

7. Contracted companies: PIES, Telemedik, and Professional Consulting. Also the Task Force with ADFAN's workforce was destacated.

- Permanency: Began planning and training for implementing roundtable strategies to ensure timely compliance with permanency plans.

- Well-being: Promoted in-home caseworker visits through hiring specific staff and reinforced service delivery through evidence-based practices.

### **In the PIP development process:**

1. A working committee involving all stakeholders was appointed and divided into subgroups by compliance outcome (safety, permanency, and well-being).

2. Proposed regions for PIP implementation: San Juan, Guayama, Ponce, and Arecibo.

3. Contracted Dr. Maria Ortiz for final PIP drafting and translation.

4. Stakeholder participation included legal and judicial community, government agencies, service providers, and service users.

5. Cross-cutting strategies in PIP development:

- Strengthen supervision and leadership to involve participants in service and permanency planning.
- Establish uniform service evaluation tools and satisfaction assessments.
- Increase service accessibility and address family/community needs.
- Provide continuous training to promote best practices in assessment and planning.
- Enhance the information system and report generation.
- Improve Quality Assurance and Training validation across ADFAN.

6. Received federal comments on the PIP were received in December 2023; technical assistance from Capacity Building in February 2024; and submitted additional drafts on March 25, May 24, and July 22, 2024.

### **Plan for Enacting the State's Vision**

Staff Training, Technical Assistance and Evaluation – Cite where this information is located in the Targeted Plan and/or include it in the narrative portion of the plan. The Training is including as exhibit 3.

The agency responds to Staff Training through Item 27 of the SWA: Ongoing service training - This program addresses the needs identified in program outcomes and staff performance. Participants are selected based by groups on identified needs, among Supervisors and Caseworkers from specific units, or (Program Specialists/Directors, among others).

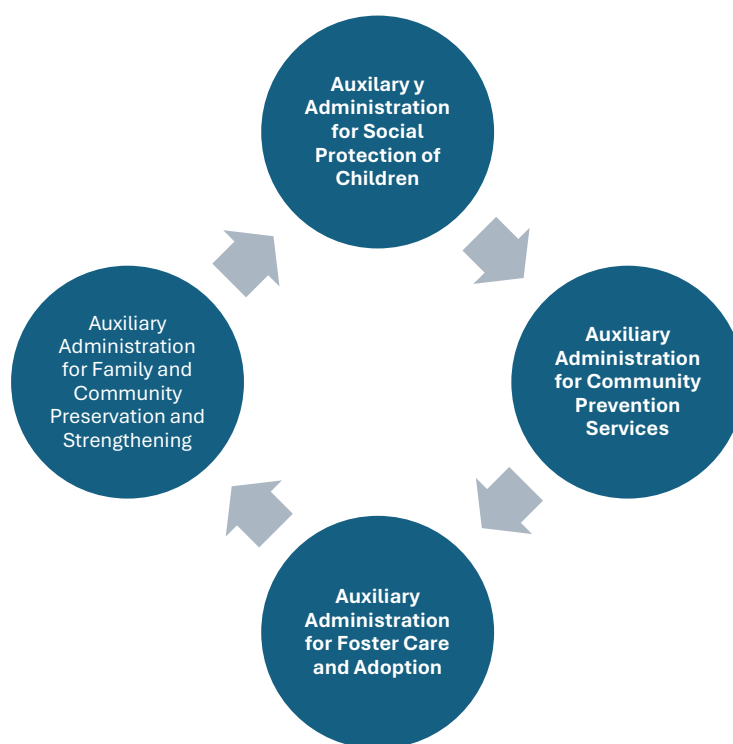
- 1.1 Ongoing training for direct service staff in Social Protection, Family Preservation & Support Services
- 1.2 Ongoing training for Supervisors
- 1.3 Ongoing training for Lawyers

Implementation Supports if needed additional support will be solicited through technical assistance to implement, achieve, and sustain each goal and objective.

The following areas of concern were identified:

- promote stakeholder full engagement to evaluate results achieved throughout the plan's lifespan
- technical assistance from capacity building, Casey family, and from other educational and social entities like universities, colleges and social community base organization.

## **Services**



These programs offer Prevention, Protection, Preservation, Foster Care, Home Assistance, Family Reunification, adoption of children, and services for elderly individuals and adults with physical disabilities. Additionally, they promote the safety and well-being of victims of domestic or institutional abuse. Priorities for the next five years:

- Focus efforts on initiating investigations according to established

response priorities.

- Complete investigation file documentation within 24 hours or 111 less from initial contact or task performed.
- Implement action plans with units to enhance practices in investigating referrals for child abuse.
- Continuously monitor calls to meet metrics and improve information intake for child abuse referrals and assignment of responses.
- Provide ongoing personnel training.
- Evaluate, expedite, investigate, and follow up on cases of school neglect in each Regional Educational Office (ORE) to protect the rights and well-being of students and their families.
- Reduce the number of cases referred to the Department of the Family (DF) through a screening process to prevent punitive actions against parents and intervene preventively.
- Establish support networks by identifying community resources and external agencies to strengthen the intervention of school social workers and interdisciplinary teams located in schools.
- Provide prevention services to students and their families to prevent educational neglect in the school environment.
- Develop and implement new processes and systems to improve the Department of Education (DEPR) and DF's efforts and responses in providing support services to students with chronic absenteeism or other issues related to school neglect.
- Coordinate inter-agency responses to ensure that the needs of students and their families are comprehensively addressed.
- Establish mechanisms for coordinating joint actions and efforts between the Department of Education and the Department of the Family to ensure children's and youth's well-being.
- Conduct educational outreach through educational sessions, promote materials on social media, and conduct educational talks, among other activities.

- Complete the creation of a guide and regulated process for the evaluation of proposals.
- Communication was initiated with the Nexos Group for the creation of the evaluation instrument.
- Complete collaborative agreement with the Office of the Women's Ombudsman to train Prevention.
- Office of the Women's Advocate to train Prevention Administration staff on the issue of gender-based violence and the trauma it leaves in families, in order to impact more communities.
- Continue to train agency staff on inclusive topics that promote equality, including issues that promote equality, such as the eradication of racism and affirmation of Afro-descendants, human trafficking, among others.
- Continue with the evaluation and contracting of entities that offer prevention services to communities.
- Complete the review and creation of a comprehensive and reliable instrument for the collection of statistical data.

#### **Title IV-E Unit:**

##### **Reasonable efforts has focused on the following areas:**

- Increase claims, both Foster Care and Subsidized Adoptions.
- Continue to train Department of the Family's Social Workers and Family Service Technicians, Court Attorneys and Judges on the importance of the Minutes containing the vocabulary required by the Federal level to properly file Title IV-E claims.
- Refine areas with the Courts, ASUME, Department of Justice and other Ancillary Administrations within ADFAN that prevent the scope of more claims.
- Continue working with ASUME to harmonize the universe of children receiving child support with the children claimed by the Title IV-E Unit, since the existing gap between these two groups represents revenue losses to ADFAN.



- The Title IV-E Unit continues to work to comply with federal standards and ensure quality in the handling of its cases.
- Bringing all institutions into compliance with fingerprinting all employees as part of the systemic safety factor, 45 CFR §1356.71.
- Currently, in conjunction with the Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Administration, nine of the ten regions that make up the Department of the Family have been impacted in the process of training them on the importance of all childcare providers being aware of the statutory requirements for fingerprinting and the certification and licensing processes.
- The Fingerprinting Protocol was completed and disseminate in all regions. It include a committee related to fingerprinting with a positive result.
- ADFAN is in the process of financing scholarships that will benefit 205 students at the bachelor's and master's level in agreement with the University of Puerto Rico in order to strengthen the labor force, specifically in the area of social work. This entails an investment of approximately \$2.5 million dollars per year financed by the Title IV-E program.

### **Projections:**

- The Title IV-E Unit will be subject to monitoring by the Federal Level by the year 2025, with the sample corresponding to the year 2024. The agency is currently outlining preparations for this eventuality, with the goal of achieving 100% error and finding free.
- Increase claims in all reported areas.
- Conclude the Interagency Agreement between ADFAN and ASUME, establishing the information exchange process between the agencies, in accordance with the new Guidelines applicable to Title IV-E agencies to change the referral procedures for the assignment of child support payments for children in foster care with a permanency plan for family reunification.
- Continue to train the Department's Caseworkers and Family Service Technicians on the importance of Federal standards and compliance with them.

- Continue to review the policies and procedures in place to expedite applications for Title IV-E reimbursement, including those related to Foster Care and Subsidized Adoption services.
- After making and submitting amendments to the "Cost Allocation", Puerto Rico is awaiting approval of the amendments submitted (Legal Representation & Training Plan).
- Work will begin with the PIP regarding how cases will be handled under cases that are classified under Human Trafficking.
- We continue to work with the process of implementing claims under the new federal and state standards under the Family First Act.

## **Auxiliary y Administration for Social Protection of Children**

The Auxiliary Administration of Social Protection provides services to the entire community when the safety of children, older adults, and adults with disabilities is threatened. These services focus primarily on addressing and managing referrals related to abuse and neglect involving vulnerable families facing a crisis, which, if escalated to an emergency, requires immediate professional intervention. The cases handled by this Auxiliary Administration are of significant magnitude, and failure to intervene promptly could jeopardize the lives, safety, and well-being of children under 18, older adults, individuals with disabilities, or entire families. Delayed responses could have severe implications for these individuals' lives. This administration offers protection services through the State Center for Child Protection and Special Investigations Units (UIE).

## **The State Center for Child Protection**

The Center manages the citizen service call lines (Hotline for Abuse Situations and the Family Guidance and Support Hotline). Similarly, it must maintain a Central Registry of Protection Cases aimed at keeping an information system of referrals and cases of child abuse in Puerto Rico.

### **Abuse Situations Hotline (1-800-981-8333)**

The Department operates a special toll-free communication system affiliated with the State Center for Child Protection called the “Abuse Situations Hotline, Institutional Abuse, Neglect, and Institutional Neglect.” Through this hotline, individuals can report instances of abuse, institutional abuse, neglect, or institutional neglect involving minors twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week. All referrals for abuse, institutional abuse, neglect, or institutional neglect are investigated around the clock. The Abuse Situations Hotline received 32,375 calls from July to December 2023 (Table 2).

**Table 2. Number of calls received and answered (July 1, 2023, to March 30, 2024).**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Calls received</b>	<b>Calls answered</b>
<b>2023</b>	36,125	32,375
<b>2024</b>	20,620	15,692
<b>Total</b>	56,745	48,067

### **Family Guidance and Support Hotline (787-977-8022)**

The department provides this communication service free of charge and is affiliated with the State Center for Child Protection, offering professional guidance to any individual or family requesting the service (Table 3).

**Table 3. Guidance Offered in 2023-2024.**

<b>July</b>	1,470
<b>August</b>	1,735
<b>September</b>	1,148
<b>October</b>	1,344
<b>November</b>	1,520
<b>December</b>	1,258
<b>January 2024</b>	1,248

February 2024	1,234
March 2024	1,225
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,182</b>

## **Central Registry of Social Protection Cases for Children**

The Central Registry (Table 4) is an integrated information system concerning all reported cases of abuse, institutional abuse, neglect, or institutional neglect of the Department. It is designed to identify prior referrals and previous protection cases, understand their status, and periodically analyze statistical data and other information to evaluate the effectiveness of service programs.

## **Special Investigations Units (SIUs)**

The Special Investigations Units (SIUs) are responsible for investigating referrals and, in emergencies, taking relevant protective measures for minors, older adults, and adults with disabilities. SIU services are available to the entire community when the safety of minors, adults with disabilities, and elderly individuals is threatened. These services focus primarily on addressing and managing referrals related to abuse and neglect involving vulnerable individuals and families facing crises. If a situation escalates into an emergency, immediate professional intervention is required.

**Table 4. Central Registry requests received and processed.**

<b>Central Registry</b>		
	Requests received	Requests processed
<b>July 2023</b>	1,125	1,029
<b>August 2023</b>	1,149	2,272
<b>September 2023</b>	1,536	1,442
<b>October 2023</b>	775	1,687
<b>November 2023</b>	829	1,488
<b>December 2023</b>	904	1,164
<b>January 2024</b>	601	950
<b>February 2024</b>	1,092	1,230
<b>March 2024</b>	1,147	1,262
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,158</b>	<b>12,524</b>

SIUs are distributed across the Department's ten (10) regions and consist of a team that includes social work supervisors, social workers, family service technicians, family service assistants, and drivers. This team covers all four daily shifts, including holidays and weekends. Supervisory staff remain available outside of regular working hours via their mobile phones to address inquiries that arise during investigations. All SIU personnel operate under extraordinary conditions, including working outside regular hours, on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and rotating shifts.

Supervisory roles include evaluating referrals received during shifts to decide on screening and priority assignments for each referral, assigning investigations to social workers and family service technicians, providing decision-making consultations, and approving completed work. Social workers and family service technicians conduct investigations into child protection referrals following the intervention protocol in the Safety Model. They also handle referrals involving adults with disabilities and elderly individuals, coordinating essential services for both populations and their families and requesting legal remedies to ensure their safety and well-being.

Family service assistants care for minors in hospitals and shelters, meet the basic needs of minors in emergency custody, and support investigators in high-risk situations. Drivers transport social workers and family service technicians to intervention sites and clients to hospitals, police stations, shelters, and other locations as needed.

This personnel works in the unit as the gateway to child and adult protection services. This service focuses on decision-making regarding hazardous situations that can cause serious harm (physical, mental, or emotional incapacitation), death, or near death to the most vulnerable populations in Puerto Rico. These employees typically work under hazardous conditions for their safety when intervening in high-crime areas, without any additional protection, at any time of day or night during weather emergencies or other incidents. They also follow rotating schedules to ensure 24/7 availability to meet service needs.

### **Response to Child Abuse Referrals**

As part of implementing the Safety Model, referrals are assigned based on established response priorities from the Hotline. The response priorities are as follows:

- Immediate Response to Present Danger:
  - 0-4 hours (immediate)
  - Same-day placement in a safe location - 8 hours
- Imminent Danger Response:
  - Within 24 hours
  - Within 48 hours (when specified that the child is with a responsible adult or in a safe place)
- Response to Allegation of Abuse (4 days)

Additionally, under the Safety Model, the investigation must be completed within 30 calendar days of receiving the referral. Special Investigations Units have faced significant delays in handling referrals in recent years. Actions have been taken to address uninvestigated referrals in the Investigation Units:

### **Current Referral Outcomes**

Updated data corresponding to the current calendar year, based on weekly statistical reports from the Investigation Units.

**Table 5. Referrals received per calendar year for Domestic Abuse of Children.**

Calendar Year	The number of referrals received
2019	15,064
2020	10,819
2021	15,147
2022	15,294
2023	14,514
2024	4,846

**Table 6. Substantiated referrals by calendar year**

Calendar Year	The number of substantiated referrals
2019	2,266
2020	2,221
2021	3,246
2022	2,749
2023	2,376
2024	462

**Deaths of Children**

According to data (Table 7) from the SIMCa mechanized system and monthly reports from the Special Investigations Units (UIE), children who have died due to abuse or neglect are reported for the calendar year.

**Table 7. Deaths of children per calendar year.**

Calendar Year	Deaths
2021	22
2022	15
2023	13
2024	5

**Table 8. Number of referrals handled by the Special Investigations Unit (UIE).**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>The number and percentage of referrals handled by the Special Investigations Unit.</b>	<b>% Handled</b>
<b>2019</b>	14,093	98%
<b>2020</b>	9,639	85%
<b>2021</b>	12,515	82%
<b>2022</b>	12,367	81%
<b>2023</b>	8,025	55%
<b>2024</b>	1,701	34%

**Table 9. Number of referrals handled by the Task Force.**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Number and percentage of referrals handled by the Task Force.</b>	<b>% Handled</b>
<b>2019</b>	5	0.003%
<b>2020</b>	23	0.21%
<b>2021</b>	1,572	10.37%
<b>2022</b>	1,368	8.94%
<b>2023</b>	258	5.32%

**Table 10. Number of referrals handled by private companies: Social & Community Concepts.**

<b>CONTRACT FOR 4,000 REFERRALS FOR SOCIAL &amp; COMMUNITY CONCEPTS</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>The number of referrals investigated by Social Community Concepts.</b>	<b>Number of referrals investigated by Social Community Concepts.</b>
<b>October</b>	146	325
<b>November</b>	257	325
<b>December</b>	301	325
<b>January 2024</b>	241	325
<b>February 2024</b>	233	325
<b>March 2024</b>	279	325



**Table 11. Number of referrals handled by private companies: Telemedik.**

<b>CONTRACT FOR 7,000 REFERRALS FOR TELEMEDIK INVESTIGATION</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>The number of referrals investigated by Telemedik.</b>	<b>The number of referrals according to the contract.</b>
September	22	
October	7	
November	15	

**Table 12. Number of referrals handled by private companies: Professional Consulting.**

<b>CONTRACT FOR 14,000 REFERRALS FOR PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING INVESTIGATION</b>		
<b>Month</b>	<b>The number of referrals investigated by Professional Consulting.</b>	<b>The number of referrals according to the contract.</b>
May	2	1,166
June	46	1,166
July	88	1,166
August	114	1,166
September	183	1,166
October	152	1,166
November	151	1,166
December	119	1,166
January – 2024	126	1,166
February – 2024	121	1,166
March – 2024	111	1,166

## Current Efforts

The Social Protection Administration has directed its efforts towards developing tools aimed at improving our response to cases of child abuse and neglect and social intervention practices. These actions require additional efforts, and as such, alternative strategies have been implemented in addition to efforts made by AFC. These include collaborative agreements, contracted projects for referral investigations, and additional social

workers from various AFC regions assigned specifically to investigate child abuse referrals, among others.

We continue our efforts to reduce delays in handling received referrals by contracting private providers to prioritize backlogged referrals, thereby allowing our internal resources to focus on new referrals. The Department of the Family has contracted services from private corporations such as Project PIES, which is currently investigating backlogged referrals. Professional Consulting is currently training its staff in investigation processes and the safety model adopted by the agency, while Telemedik is recruiting the required personnel. A Task Force of AFC social workers has also been created to investigate social protection referrals due to staffing shortages in investigation units.

In a collaboration between the Department of Education of Puerto Rico (DEPR) and the Department of the Family (DF) through AFC, an inter-agency effort has been established to address neglect cases within the school environment through a multi-level support approach. This initiative has led to the creation of the Specialized School Attendance Unit (UEAE). Based on regional needs, social work professionals have been stationed at the Division of Student, Family, and Community Services in the 7 Regional Educational Offices (OREs) since November 1, 2023.

Each ORE has two DEPR social workers (14 total) and an additional one in higher-incidence OREs (San Juan, Bayamón, and Humacao).

Additionally, each ORE has one DF social worker and an additional one in identified high-incidence OREs for each school year. The UEAE has 17 official vehicles to facilitate case management and investigation of potential neglect situations within the school environment, supporting visits to schools and students' homes.

This initiative aims to establish a specialized team comprising DEPR and DF social workers to assess potential neglect cases in the school environment that may warrant referrals to the Department of the Family's abuse hotline.

Furthermore, the Auxiliary Administration conceptualizes a dashboard to enhance accuracy and real-time monitoring of received referrals, their handling status, and ongoing investigations. This dashboard aims to improve decision-making efficiency within the administration.

Among the objectives are also to:

- Evaluate, expedite, investigate, and follow up on cases of school neglect in each Regional Educational Office (ORE) to protect the rights and well-being of students and their families.
- Reduce the number of cases referred to the Department of the Family (DF) through a screening process to prevent punitive actions against parents and intervene preventively.
- Establish support networks by identifying community resources and external agencies to strengthen the intervention of school social workers and interdisciplinary teams located in schools.
- Provide prevention services to students and their families to prevent educational neglect in the school environment.
- Develop and implement new processes and systems to improve the Department of Education (DEPR) and DF's efforts and responses in providing support services to students with chronic absenteeism or other issues related to school neglect.
- Coordinate inter-agency responses to ensure that the needs of students and their families are comprehensively addressed.
- Establish mechanisms for coordinating joint actions and efforts between the Department of Education and the Department of the Family to ensure children's and youth's well-being.
- Conduct educational outreach through educational sessions, promote materials on social media, and conduct educational talks, among other activities.

**Priorities:**

- Focus efforts on initiating investigations according to established response priorities.

- Complete investigation file documentation within 24 hours or less from initial contact or task performed.
- Implement action plans with units to enhance practices in investigating referrals for child abuse.
- Continuously monitor calls to meet metrics and improve information intake for child abuse referrals and assignment of responses.
- Provide ongoing personnel training.

## **Auxiliary Administration for Family and Community Preservation and Strengthening**

The Auxiliary Administration for Family and Community Preservation and Strengthening aims to provide services to families to ensure the development, safety, and well-being of children at home and to enhance parents' protective capacity to prevent the removal of children from the family unit. This administration works collaboratively with families, communities, service providers, and other public and private agencies to develop and implement integrated services. This ensures that our children grow up in a safe environment and that family unity is preserved, considering each family's diverse strengths.

Essential services offered by this Auxiliary Administration include Positive Child Development Services, Family Counseling Services, Home-Based Child Preservation Services, and Intensive Family Preservation Services in the home. A strategic plan is being implemented to promote service delivery and intervention in family preservation and strengthening cases. Strategies are being designed to improve the handling of family preservation cases, including collaboration with the federal government on strategies for intervention and documentation in families where children are at risk of entering the foster care system.

Social Work Specialists and the Auxiliary Administrator began their work in January 2018 and have continued to visit regions to design strategies and work plans tailored to the specific needs of each regional and local office. A standardized format is being

developed to inventory active cases in each region. Monthly statistical reports track case movement, including closed cases and the ongoing assignment of pending cases.

### Family Preservation Service

Comparative table from 2019 to March 31, 2024 (Efforts Made):

- Desk cleaning in all locations and discussion of cases outside the established timeframe.
- Hiring personnel in some local offices dedicated exclusively to family preservation service.
- Federal monitoring is conducted in the Guayama, Mayagüez, and San Juan regions. The total number of Family Preservation cases is 4,052 (Table 13 & Table 14).

**Table 13. Movement of Cases in the Family Preservation and Strengthening Service: Active Cases from December 2019 to March 2024.**

Region	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	March 2024
Aguadilla	110	71	82	122	147	135
Arecibo	275	242	239	201	257	281
Bayamón	383	363	364	314	395	399
Caguas	203	197	241	213	221	236
Carolina	582	506	398	350	417	505
Guayama	284	240	211	182	213	210
Humacao	546	471	519	518	584	593
Mayagüez	579	470	526	443	510	535
Ponce	328	228	251	328	302	327
San Juan	1,536	1,436	1,542	894	829	831
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,826</b>	<b>4,224</b>	<b>4,373</b>	<b>3,565</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>4,052</b>

**Table 14. Movement of Cases in the Family Preservation and Strengthening Service: Unassigned Cases from December 2019 to March 2024.**

Region	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	March 2024
Aguadilla	0	0	5	0	0	0
Arecibo	13	6	1		36	10
Bayamón	13	8	35	30	51	94
Caguas	41	8	25	13	11	33
Carolina	35	55	119	101	145	208
Guayama	0	0	2	0	9	7
Humacao	85	54	67	156	245	201
Mayagüez	56	0	38	32	41	58
Ponce	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Juan	839	824	975	794	534	555
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>1,267</b>	<b>1,126</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>1,166</b>

### **Intensive Family Preservation Services in the Home (IFPS)**

The service is aimed at families in crisis, mainly when the imminent removal of the child from their home is a concern; services are provided to preserve family unity. The social worker promotes family empowerment. Flexible and focused services are based on family strengths and enhance caregivers' protective capacities.

The services are tailored to the family and aim to resolve the crisis that places the child at imminent risk of removal from their home under Act 57-2023.

**Table 15. Comparative Table as of March 31, 2024.**

PERIOD	FAMILIES	% CHANGE	# CHILDREN	% CHANGE
2019	195	+15.4%	381	+17.6%
2020	167	-14.4%	334	-12.34%
2021	148	-11.38%	298	-10.78%
2022	260	+75.7%	528	+77.2%
2023	288	+10.8%	570	+8.0%
2024	222	-22.9%	418	-26.7%

## **Panel Review of Child Deaths - Summary as of March 2024, efforts made.**

Efforts made:

- Signing of Confidentiality Agreements with new members.
- Monthly meetings.
- Training workshops for the Panel members to familiarize them with the processes and procedures of agencies involved in child death situations.
- Self-care training for Panel members.
- Resuming the participation of agency officials in factors contributing to child deaths.
- Outline a work plan for 2024 that aligns with the panel's objectives.

In May 2024, we will hold the First Summit Uniting Forces for the Protection and Prevention of Child Abuse, aimed at developing effective strategies for abuse prevention and fostering collaboration among agencies.

## **Institutional Abuse Unit (UMI) - comparative table from 2019 to March 31, 2024**

This service is tasked with investigating referrals of child abuse involving operators of foster homes or any employee or official of a public or private institution providing care services or having custody or control over such minors. Also aims to promote and maintain the safety and protection of children placed in foster homes, treatment facilities, rehabilitation and educational institutions, or other out-of-home care settings for 24 hours or part of the day by investigating referrals of institutional abuse and neglect. Institutional Abuse Units also investigate referrals of abuse in schools, Head Start programs, and childcare centers. This service is provided across all Regional Offices.

**Table 16. Institutional Abuse Unit (UMI) - comparative table from 2019 to March 31, 2024.**

<b>Institutional Abuse Unit (UMI)</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Referrals pending investigation during the year</b>	3,986	2923	1,921	1,609	2,580	1,689
<b>Investigations conducted during the year</b>	2,144	1,139	1,039	939	1436	376
<b>Referrals substantiated during the year</b>	132	109	89	84	71	32

### **Integrated Centers for Children Victims of Sexual Abuse (CIMVAS)**

The CIMVAS (Integrated Centers for Minors Victims of Sexual Abuse) was established under Act 158-2013, "Centers for Services to Minor Victims of Sexual Assault Act (CIMVAS)," to coordinate investigation and intervention services in cases of child sexual abuse. They bring together professionals and agencies as a multidisciplinary team focused on children and adolescents who are victims of sexual abuse.

The services provided are aligned with the service delivery model of Child Advocacy Centers developed in some jurisdictions in the United States. Currently, services for victims of sexual abuse are offered through three CIMVAS Centers established by the Department of the Family, located in San Juan, Ponce, and Camuy. These centers provide specialized services, including forensic assessment of allegations of sexual abuse, forensic interviews, psychological treatment for victims of sexual abuse and their non-offending family members, therapy for non-offending parents/guardians of child victims of sexual abuse, and medical-forensic evaluations.

From October 2019 to March 2024, 753 minors received services from CIMVAS. Among these, 522 minors received forensic assessment services for allegations of sexual



abuse, 231 received psychotherapy to address the traumatic effects of abuse, 9 received social work consultations, and 2 received medical-forensic services.

The AFC (Administration for Families and Children) continues to supervise the services provided through ongoing visits and meetings with Casa Albizu, the entity managing these centers, to address various service delivery and improvement aspects.

### Children that Received Services from the Center to Assist Victims of Social Abuse

**Table 17. Monthly Report of Referrals and Services at CIMVAS AS OCTOBER 2019 - MARCH 2024.**

Service							TOTAL
Forensic Evaluation/Interview							522
			146	33	106		
Psychotherapy	43	73		50		13 52	231
Social Work Consultation	0	0		0		0 9	9
Forensic Medical Examiner	0	0		0		0 2	2
Training sessions	75	104		71		35 104	389

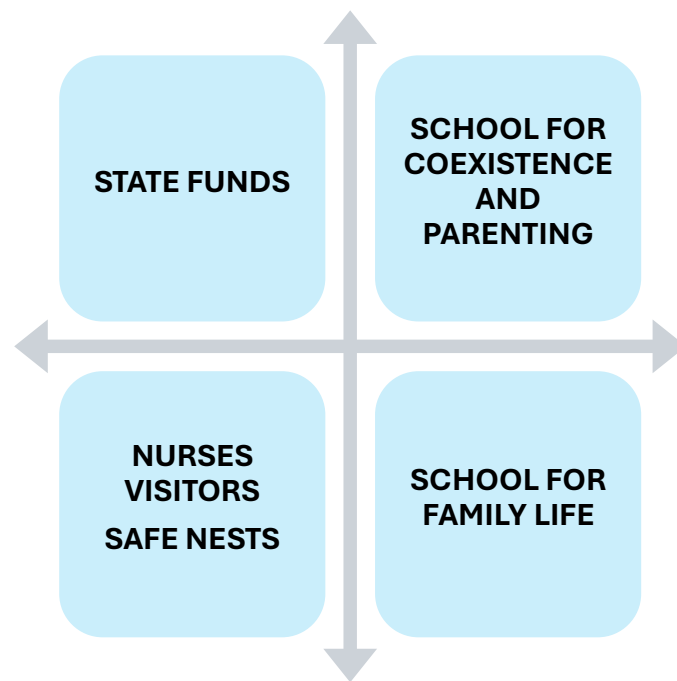
### Auxiliary Administration for Community Prevention Services

The Auxiliary Administration of Community Prevention Services provides services to prevent violence in families and communities by implementing various strategies (Figure 1). The targeted population includes sectors and communities facing economic, social, and educational disadvantages.

The services offered promote the prevention of abuse and violence within families, the development of community-based networks, self-sufficiency, self-management, and the establishment of a culture of peace within the community. These services are delivered through programs, projects, and the allocation of federal funds (Figure 2) to municipalities and organizations to develop prevention projects.

Violence prevention is categorized into three types. Primary prevention aims to create conditions that prevent stressors or risks and enhance protective factors.

Efforts in this area focus on community-wide education and guidance strategies, promoting responsible parenting, peaceful living, and violence-free lifestyles, among others. Secondary violence prevention refers to immediate measures addressing the effects of violence, such as emergency care, protection, and medical-social support services for victims of child abuse, sexual violence, and domestic violence. Tertiary prevention involves specialized care responses to reduce or prevent long-term harm. This level includes biopsychosocial care and treatment services to avoid re-victimization and severe psychopathology, along with services aimed at victim recovery.



**Figure 1. Administration for Community Prevention Services, Organizational Chart - State Funds.**



**Figure 2. Administration for Community Prevention Services, Organizational Chart – Federal Funds.**

Our Auxiliary Administration has a presence in all ten regions. Eighty-two employees work in prevention programs distributed between the Central Office and Regional Offices.

### **State Funds: School for Coexistence and Upbringing**

This project is about a group educational strategy aimed at universal prevention (primary) and selective prevention (secondary) levels, stemming from the duty and necessity to establish educational programs focused on fostering and reinforcing coexistence, upbringing, and discipline without violence. Similarly, this initiative promotes values of love, solidarity, and peace, respecting the human rights of all individuals. The school offers educational services that support families in their upbringing and coexistence without violence. Participation in this program is voluntary. The service is available at all ten Regional Offices of the Department.

Preventive activities and various educational talks have been conducted, covering the following topics: Act No. 57-2023, Child Abuse, Discipline, Self-esteem, Conflict

Management, Bullying, Cyberbullying, Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Dating Violence, and Domestic Violence.

Eight hundred seventy-one (871) groups benefited from these workshops in person, with 19,586 participants (Table 18). Additionally, these workshops were conducted remotely, impacting three groups with 35 participants. Through the modules offered by the School for Coexistence and Upbringing, 12,079 participants were reached across the ten regions.

In March 2023, regional staff training on evidence-based practice of Parenting Foundations began. This program, under the School for Coexistence and Upbringing, consists of 10 group workshops held once a week, lasting 2 hours each. The workshops are aimed at parents, mothers, and/or caregivers of minors aged 12 to 18. Staff from 8 regions have been trained and are now conducting workshops for parents in various communities. Only the regions of Arecibo and Aguadilla remain to complete their training. By early 2024, between January and June, it is expected to impact an additional 15 groups.

**Table 18. Impact of educational talks.**

Educational Talks			
Month/Year	(13) Topics	Number of groups	Number of participants
<b>Period: January 2023 to March 2024</b>	Act 246	58	1,881
	Child Abuse	75	2,370
	Discipline	23	1,466
	Self-esteem	105	2,462
	Conflict Management	22	1,421
	"Anger Management"	12	182
	"Bullying"	55	1,174
	"Cyberbullying"	38	1,051
	"Human Trafficking (Sexual Exploitation, Organ Trafficking)"	2	124
	"Domestic Violence and Child Abuse"	17	358

"Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse"	44	811
"Family in Your Community"	54	2,913
"Other Topics"	366	7,373
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>19,586</b>

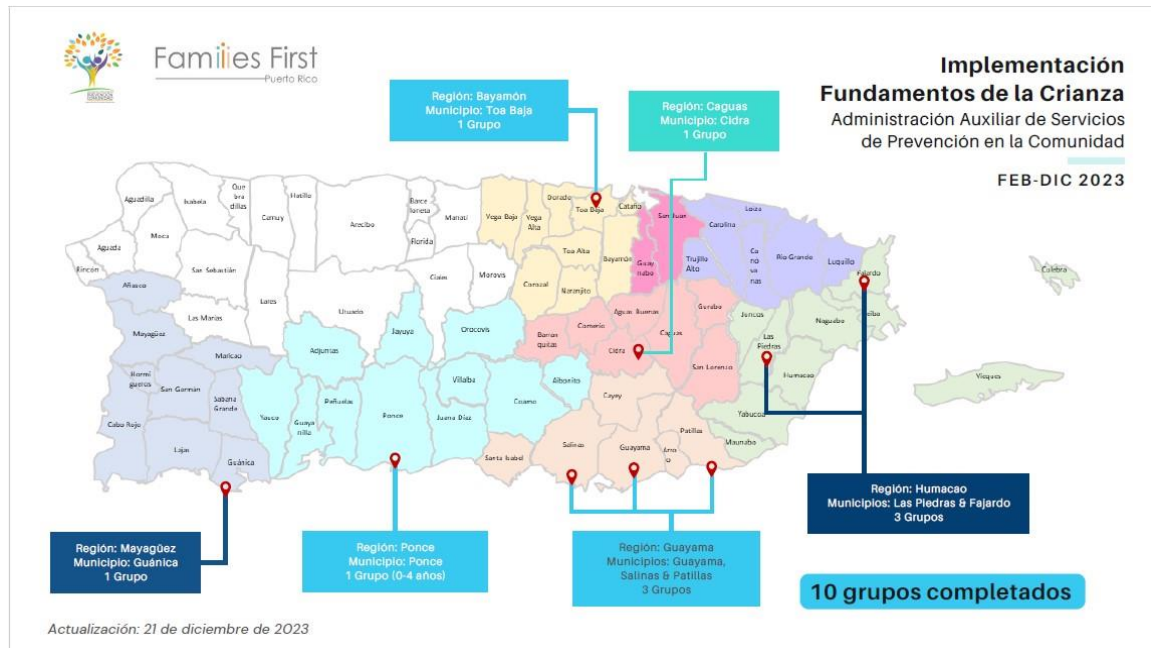


Figure 3. Implementation Fundamentals of Parenting, Feb-Dec 2023.

#### Datos de Impacto a Participantes: Fundamentos de la Crianza, Unidad de Prevención, ADFAN FEB-DIC 2023

Grupo & Región	Participantes alcanzadxs	Participantes graduadxs
<b>Primera ronda: FEB-JUN 2023</b>		
Guayama, Región Guayama	8	4
Las Piedras, Región Humacao	8	7
<b>Primera ronda: AGO-DIC 2023</b>		
Cidra, Región Caguas	8	5
Fajardo, Región Humacao (Marlyn)	7	4
Fajardo, Región Humacao (Ernesto)	10	8
Guánica, Región Mayagüez	18	18
Patillas, Región Guayama	8	7
Salinas, Región Guayama	9	8
Ponce, Región Ponce (0-4)	9	8
Toa Baja, Región Bayamón	8	6
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>75</b>

¡80% de retención!

Figure 4. Impact Data for Participants: Fundamentals of Parenting, Prevention Unit, ADFAN, Feb-Dec 2023.



Families First  
Puerto Rico

**Implementación**  
**Fundamentos de la Crianza**  
Administración Auxiliar de Servicios  
de Prevención en la Comunidad  
**PROYECCION ENERO A JUNIO 2024**

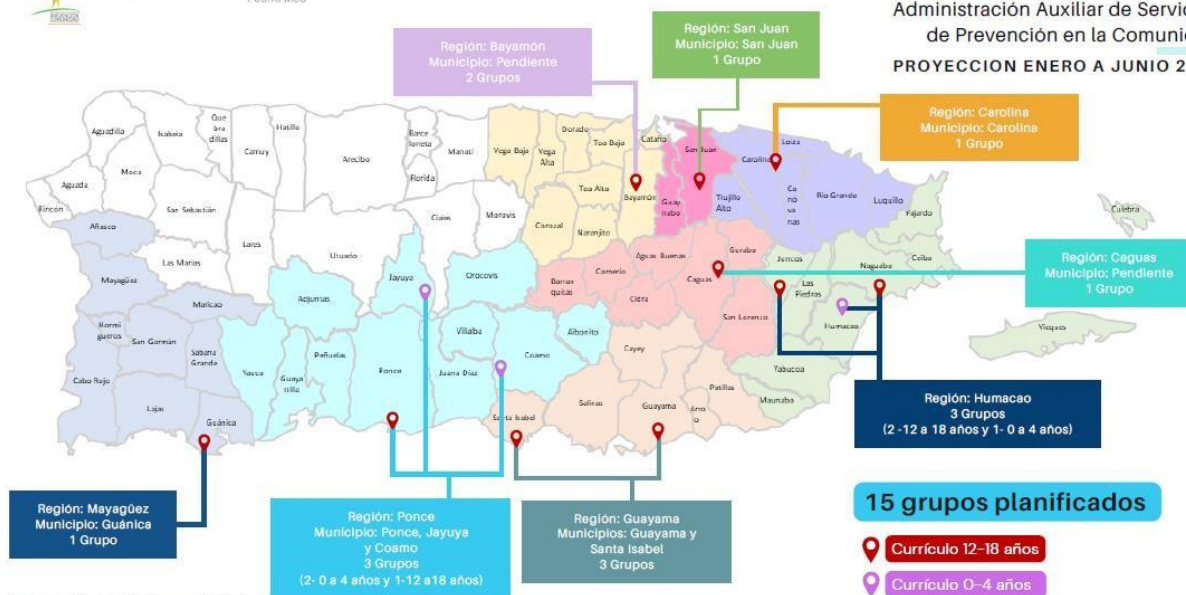


Figure 5. Implementation Fundamentals of Parenting, Projection January to June 2024.

Table 19. Comparative tables of workshops over the past five years: 2019 and 2020.

Workshops	2019		2020	
	Groups	Participants	Groups	Participants
Act 246	2	39	1	8
Child Abuse	5	224	3	104
Discipline	1	22	1	12
Self-esteem	11	148	5	94
Conflict Management	1	22	1	19
Anger Management	4	102	2	9
Bullying	1	19	2	47
Human Trafficking (Sexual Exploitation, Organ Trafficking)	2	147	2	35
Domestic Violence and Child Abuse	3	78	1	26
Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse	0	0	1	18
Family in Your Community	6	526	2	62
Other Topics	229	13,102	24	1,526

**Table 20. Comparative tables of workshops over the past five years: 2021 to 2023.**

Workshops	2021		2022		2023	
	Groups	Participants	Groups	Participants	Groups	Participants
Act 246	33	911	50	2,052	47	1,501
Child Abuse	9	103	44	704	73	2,236
Discipline	8	52	33	466	26	1,300
Self-esteem	36	391	0	0	98	2,127
Conflict Management	21	236	120	1,649	17	562
Anger Management	13	111	40	701	51	1,020
Bullying	15	194	2	123	1	23
Human Trafficking (Sexual Exploitation, Organ Trafficking)	11	135	15	452	13	273
Domestic Violence and Child Abuse	8	103	31	554	27	621
Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse	55	285	68	3,203	50	2,650
Other Topics	242	8,563	342	15,809	863	18,123

### **School for Family Life (SFL)**

The Family Life School is a tertiary prevention program aimed at parents whose children receive home protection services or have been placed in foster care. Parents attend a total of 16 workshops covering topics such as child development, promoting a healthy childhood, parent-child relationships, stress and anger management, and other subjects related to preventing child abandonment and abuse.

The service is offered to families referred to by local AFC offices and courts. Act 246 and Act 57 support these services. The program has impacted 2,935 Preservation participants and 1,103 Foster Care participants.

### **Visiting nurses' Programs "Safe Nests"**

AFC, in its effort to improve the quality of life for early childhood and their families, offers this service aimed at reducing risk factors for pregnant youth in state custody and youth

in communities. Through home visits, the program provides support, guidance, education, and coordination of necessary services during pregnancy, childbirth, and up to 24 months of the infant's age.

Visits are conducted to the homes of participants who voluntarily accept the service. Adolescent mothers develop parenting skills and appropriate supervision of their infants. The regions offering the Safe Nests service are Humacao and Ponce. Among the workshops offered are Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Family Planning, Pregnancy Prevention, Pre-post Natal Care, and Shaken Baby Syndrome. These workshops are offered to participants, high school students, and temporary home providers.

In 2023, visiting nurses were trained in the evidence-based practice of Parenting Foundations, focusing on the 0-4 years module. The Ponce region has successfully impacted two groups of parents with this model, and soon nurses from the Arecibo region will be starting a group.

During the past year, 125 participants, including pregnant women and mothers of infants, were impacted.

### **Allocation of Federal Funding: Encounter Project**

The Encounter Project has been operating since 1998 with federal funding from the Access and Visitation Program, which the Administration for Child Support Enforcement (ASUME) requested through a proposal. ASUME delegates the establishment and administration of the program to the Administration of Families and Children (AFC).

The primary purpose is to support, facilitate, and encourage access to visitation for non-custodial parents with their minor children in a safe and impartial environment, especially in situations of conflict or domestic violence between custodial and non-custodial parents of children. The project serves families with children aged 2 to 17, prioritizing residents of the towns within the regions of Bayamón and San Juan.



During the 2023-2024 period, project funds were used to provide services as proposed, including continuing mediation services. Additionally, there were purchases of materials and supplies. Currently, the project team consists of 2 Social Workers, 1 Supervisor, 1 Security Guard, and 1 Mediator.

## **Funds Allocated to Municipalities and Non-Governmental Organizations for Prevention Projects**

### **Gender Violence Prevention**

This prevention service is provided through federal funds under "The Family Violence Prevention and Services Act" (FVPSA), Title III of Public Law 98-457, amended and authorized by Public Law 102-295, Title III of the Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Adoption, and Family Services Act of 1992, and Public Law 103-222 of September 13, 1994, the Violence Against Women Act. These funds are delegated to nonprofit private organizations and municipalities to promote programs and services aimed at preventing gender violence, improving the quality of life for survivor victims and their children, reducing the incidence of gender violence deaths, and raising community awareness about family violence issues. From 2023 to 2024, \$1,631,450 was allocated and distributed among 27 organizations. These 27 organizations include 19 nonprofit and municipal projects providing direct support services and eight offering shelter services for women, children, and men victims of gender violence.

Shelters Capromuni I and II have programs specifically for male victims of gender violence (as required by the federal government). These programs provide safe housing, individual or group counseling, and other support services. The AFANA and Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences University projects have programs that work with perpetrators. Gender violence is increasing among women aged 18-24. A total of 151 perpetrators were served. The population served in these shelters includes 396 women, 463 children, and one man who benefited from the services.

### **Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP)**

These services are provided through federal funds under Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), delegated to nonprofit organizations and municipalities to develop, operate, and expand community-based networks and activities to strengthen and support all type of families and communities, including the LGBTQIA+, people of color and all people that have been historically excluded due to \_\_\_\_ inequity and any other type of exclusion. The purpose is to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect. These funds target both primary and secondary prevention of child maltreatment.

They emphasize leadership development among parents, including families with children with special needs. The program aims to achieve children's safety, permanency, and well-being. The funds were allocated among six institutions for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

With the allocation of these funds, eligible entities provided services to 1,914 families and 497 minors. The services offered included support, guidance, home visits, respite programs, care for children with special needs, and individual and group counseling for parents.

### **Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program (title IV-B, subpart 1)**

We will continue using these funds to support the payroll of some employees of the different administrations, except for the elderly. Also to provide services like:

Central Registry: work unit that receives and records all child abuse investigations conducted in Puerto Rico, performs search history of abuse as requested, processes applications to expunge files and maintains a file of reports and investigations of institutional abuse.

Orientation line: special communications system, free of charge, attached to State Center for Child Protection Guidance Line which receives calls and offer professional guidance to any individual or family who requests it.

This service is used to provide general guidance and social services required, and it is a tool used to divert situations which do not represent a situation of abuse, and that do not meet the CAN criteria and are referred to social counseling services.

Hot Line: A special communication system for Child Protection Services called "Child Abuse, Institutional Abuse, Neglect and Institutional Neglect Hotline", used by all citizens to report situations of abuse, institutional abuse, neglect and / or institutional neglect of children, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.

Investigation Units: a special program for intervention in situations of child abuse on a 24/7 schedule. There is a unit in each of the 10 ADFAN regions to cover the entire island. Its overall purpose is the investigation of child protection reports (0-17) and situations pertaining children ward of the state. UIE also investigates social emergencies of elderly, adults with disabilities and situations of institutional abuse, out of business hours.

These funds are also delegated to nonprofit private organizations and municipalities to promote programs and services aimed at preventing gender violence, improving the quality of life for survivor victims and their children, reducing the incidence of gender violence deaths, and raising community awareness about family violence issues.

### **Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries**

Specific services for children adopted from other countries will include the development of them cultural competence through the adoption support process from ADFAN.

Training on cultural competence and socio emotional skills will be part of the trainings offered to adoptive parents and extended families.

### **Services for Children Under the Age of Five**

To address the vulnerability of the children under the age of five, the agency will support adoptive parents on parenting skills with an MOU with Earle Childhood division of the Dept. of Education and ACUDEN (Division of the agency). Psychological support will be coordinate within local and regional services offices.

Also, these plans submitted contain goals and objectives for addressing the services for children adopted from other countries and the services for children under the age of five:

The Recruitment Plan (Adoption Plan)

The Training Plan for upgrading the competencies of the caseworker and supervisors

Prevention Plan for the implementation of FFPSA

Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

### **Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF)**

In looking forward to promoting safe and stable families we have projected the followings strategics actions:

- Complete a collaborative agreement with the Office of the Women's Advocate to train Prevention Administration staff on the issue of gender-based violence and the trauma it leaves in families, in order to impact more communities with a high incidence of violence.
- Continue training agency personnel on inclusive issues that promote equity, such as the eradication of racism and affirmation of Afro-descendants, human trafficking, among others.
- Hold meetings with the Prevention component in all regions to establish work plans, train them in different topics and have spaces for self-care.
- Offer talks and services in collaboration with the municipalities as part of the efforts to prevent abuse and violence within the communities. This is also part of the goal established in the Strategic Plan.

- Continue with the evaluation and contracting of entities that offer prevention services to the communities.
- Complete the review and creation of a comprehensive and reliable instrument for the collection of statistical data, which will allow for more effective compliance with the metrics established in the Strategic Plan.
- Hire supervisory staff and a mediator for the Encuentro Project.
- Achieve the allocation of more fiscal resources for the purchase of materials for workshops and community interventions that support the prevention of abuse and violence.
- Supply the Family Life, and Coexistence and Parenting Schools with the necessary equipment to care for the participants. This projection would result in an increase in the number of participants receiving services from the schools, as established in the Strategic Plan.
- Complete the review of the booklets by the communications personnel in order to have uniform and updated educational material. This project has not yet been completed, although the booklets have been submitted to the communications area for review.
- Strengthen the area of federal funding for violence and abuse prevention with the hiring of another executive officer. This projection would meet the Strategic Plan performance goal of obligating the funds and completing the hiring process in a timely manner.
- This initiative aims to establish a specialized team comprising DEPR and DF social workers to assess potential neglect cases in the school environment that may warrant referrals to the Department of the Family's abuse hotline.

### **Service Decision Making Process for Family Support Services**

**The Department of the Family, ADFAN, will appoint a specialize Committee with competence in educational, financial and social leadership to advice in the allocation of federal funds on a merit selection system for addressing special needs of these populations.**

### **Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment.**

We plan to continue offering priority to referrals of children between 4 and 7 years of age since they represent a vulnerable sector. Also, to families who have multiple referrals and those of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse. Bayamon, San Juan, Ponce and Caguas regional offices.

### **Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grants and Standards for Caseworker Visits**

The Administrator appointed a special Committee to enhance the formal process for face-to-face caseworker visits. A working plan should be carried out for piloting in December 2024.

## **Strategic Planning**

As Puerto Rico began to develop the CFSP, specifically the strategic plan portion of the CFSP, the ACF wanted to ensure that the process was intentional, inclusive, data-driven, and aligned with current initiatives and requirements. ACF leadership wanted to ensure that the focus is on outcomes, aligning work and new legislative requirements, and using the PIP root-cause analysis and problem identification as a starting point to create consistency, support alignment, and avoid duplication.

Another recommendation included ensuring that ACF focuses on joint accountability to outcomes, meaning that all of us, stakeholders, regional offices, local offices, and partners are accountable for improving outcomes for children. This would be accomplished by building the CFSP Strategic Plan, which is based on identifying strategies to address the items identified in the root cause developed as part of the PIP. To ensure outcomes are met, ACF intentionally supported an integrated alignment approach to include current initiatives, Family First, and PIP, among others. This

integration allows focus and attention to outcomes, avoids duplication, and ensures that strategies address items identified in the root-cause analysis.

## **Alignment Process**

Puerto Rico took a multi-pronged approach to stakeholders' engagement in the development of the CFSP Strategic Plan, which included the state and local leadership and the meaningful engagement of stakeholders across the Island.

We strongly believe that strong partnerships lead to better outcomes, and how we do the work is as important as the work itself. This holds not only for our direct services practice with children and families but also for the work we do across agencies and commitments throughout the commonwealth. Collaboration is key to ensuring that all interest groups and communities dedicated to serving children and families share their passion and expertise to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Many government agencies intersect regularly with those involved with the child welfare system. The Puerto Rico Administration for Families and Children recognizes the importance of jointly cooperating with other state agency partners to develop joint policies and guidance that positively affect children and families. The P.R. Department of Education also recognizes the importance of working cooperatively with our agency in relevant subject matter areas to jointly develop policies and procedures to achieve the intended outcomes for children served by both agencies.

In March 2024, the AFC leadership team participated in a two-day session to build the foundation of the Strategic Plan for the 2025-2029 cycle. This effort entails understanding this team's day-to-day work and categorizing that work in the strategic plan's goals and objectives.

Upon completion of these leadership meetings, the framework of the Strategic Plan was developed and shared with input from various stakeholder groups. During these meetings, a brief presentation of progress thus far was made. Then, the group had an

opportunity to participate in an open dialogue with feedback collected and feedforward recommendations. These facilitated sessions were done with the larger group and/or breakout groups, depending on the size of the groups. An open-ended instrument was sent to all participants. Additionally, focus interviews were conducted with foster parents and specialized services providers.

The strategic plan has been shared with the participants in previous meetings through the development process. The vital inclusion of stakeholders' engagement and collaboration in the PIP-root-cause analysis led to an ongoing inclusion process throughout the development of the CFSP. This engagement was critical and a meaningful key component of the CFSP strategic plan, particularly as the focus of continual collaboration feedback loops takes place.

As mentioned, a systemic root-cause analysis was conducted across the regional offices. Although this process was initiated to support the PIP process, the analysis yields critical information and some creative solutions to be implemented that build on the strengths and needs of the people working together.

The Puerto Rico Strategic Team also includes members from the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Department of Health, and local health care and social services providers. The task force aims to study and develop recommendations regarding the most effective way of improving the quality and scope of child protective and preventive services provided or supported by local and federal resources. The task force completed the statewide Assessment. Over fifty stakeholders, including some parents and caregivers, community advocates, providers, and public and private partners, engaged in the assessment process.

#### Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations

- Key areas of concern
- Inadequate assessment of safety and risk for children
- A lack of services provision for children and families
- Foster families who can provide for the identified needs of the child
- Improve efforts to include parents and family members in case planning



- Placing children with relatives while in foster care
- Moving children from foster care to permanency
- Achieving permanency in a timely manner

There were other challenges and themes for improvement:

- High rate of caseworker turnover
- Inconsistent practice and performance throughout the Island
- Lack of continuous quality assurance system.

Puerto Rico worked closely with the Capacity Building Center to review CFSR and SWA results. This involved problem identification and root-cause analysis with local staff and stakeholders to identify goals and potential strategies for the development of the CFSP (2024-25).

**The major components of this plan are:**

- **Outreach and Engagement** - Increase coordination across the child, youth, and family-serving system, ensuring meaningful family and youth involvement and strong participation from the central and local levels.
- **Use evidence-based and/or evidence-informed programs and best practices** -Developing and supporting long-term implementation strategies such as training, coaching, informed practices, and data-driven implementation, through CQI.
- **Infrastructure and Resources** - Develop and create funding for prevention and preservation services and programs.
- **Provision of services** - Focus on children and families, increase awareness of prevention messages, and connect families with specialized services and support around the island.

The ACF endorsed these recommendations and dismissed these initiatives with the stakeholders along with opportunities available for child welfare, following the passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and the AFC version for child welfare. The focus groups, with the engagement of the stakeholders, depend on the dialogue and furnished responses to do everything possible to strengthen struggling families, prevent childhood trauma, and keep children not just physically safe but well.

**The most frequent responses gathered from the constituents and stakeholders underscored the following:**

- the need for better collaboration between the central administration and the regional and local offices.
- to offer multipurpose and diverse services to families that include health care providers, nursing, housing support, increased communication, listening more to families, and increased prevention.
- build collaboration and relationships, use research evidence-based services, educate and train staff members, advocate for families, and increase prevention.
- include children and families in case reviews, build relationships, set realistic expectations, strengthen kinship foster homes, and advocate for families.
- implement a robust CQI infrastructure and develop a reporting structure to inform service improvements.

The findings suggest that a consistent set of challenges is impacting families served in the child welfare system, but these challenges were more likely to be co-occurring in families in which children are placed out of home. The findings also showed that families with complex inter-related needs must be provided with services that are not necessarily provided on time. Therefore, substantial adjustments to service delivery are needed to be effective.

Some lessons learned from the planning process show that some challenges are still persistent:

- If children are separated from their families, we need to find a way to keep them in another family they already know – a relative or family resource.
- Placement in foster care needs to be temporary, and a safe transition to a permanent family needs to be ensured through reunification.
- Services to families should be procured on time and effectively to ensure it ends on a safe transition to reunification, adoption, or guardianship.

## **The Structure Plan**

The focus on serving and engaging families is a key priority in the CFSP strategic plan, along with the PIP. Improving key aspects of practices includes child abuse, investigation, case management, and service delivery.

The goals, objectives, and strategies related to the CFSP strategic plan demonstrate the engagement of families and communities. The objectives of the CFSP framework include the priority areas of protection, prevention, permanency, CQI, and full implementation of FFPSA.

The objectives considered the recommendations of the overall stakeholder groups and aligned with the current initiations and priorities in the Agency, including the CFSR/PIP. The focus on workforce and CQI allows for overarching categorical approaches to those broad topic areas necessary for success in the priority areas of protection, prevention, and permanency. The well-being of families and children is also a priority for Puerto Rico, as stated in our vision.

## **Vision**

Transform the Child and Family Welfare System in Puerto Rico through Continuing Quality Improvement (CQI) and the provision of effective support and services through family engagement and kinship care so that fewer families require child protection interventions.

All strategies align with priority areas of the 2024 CFSR/PIP, FFSA, CAPTA, and other priorities and have been mapped to the specific priority of alignment to ensure that the overarching vision and goals align with the continued implementation of the CFSP strategic plan over the next five years.

As part of the strategic planning process, AFC developed benchmarks and time frames for interim targets to ensure progress not only in the two-year PIP implementation but

also in the five-year CFSP implementation. The 2025-2029 CFSP strategic plan will be a data-driven process that will focus on measurable outcomes.

**A list of Strategic Plan Alignments is included (Table 21).**

**Table 21. Strategic Plan Alignment Key.**

Strategic plan alignments	Acronym	Description
Administration of Children and Families	ACF	Puerto Rico Administration for Children and Families
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	CAPTA	The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act outlines the need for prevention services in the field. It highlights the need for coordination in serving those in need of child abuse prevention and treatment.
Court Improvement Program Strategic Plan	CIP	The Court Improvement Program Strategic Plan outlines the activities and strategies of the Court Improvement Program throughout the year.
Evidence-based services – FFPSA	EBS	Family First Prevention and Services Act strategies focused on evidence-based services.
Family First Prevention Services Act	FFPSA	Family First Prevention Services Act was signed into federal law in 2018.
Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program	KinGap	Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program to provide formal funding and support to kin.
Prevention Services	PS	Services focused on prevention.
Program Improvement Plan	PIP	A program improvement plan resulting from the CFSR.
Recommendation-FFPSA	R	Overall recommendations of Families First Prevention Services Act.

## CFSP Strategic Plan 2025 to2029

**Goal 1. Ensure the safety of children/youth through accurate screening decisions, high-quality initial and ongoing safety assessment, ongoing safety monitoring, and strengthening family engagement practices.** (Safety 1,2 – Permanency, Wellbeing, Training, Foster and Adoptive Parents Licensing, Recruitment and Retention)

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
1.1. Improve key aspects of practices in child abuse, investigation, case management, and delivery services by implementing the supervision module.	<p>1.1.1. Implementation of the Supervision Model across the island.</p> <p>1.1.2. Develop and/or enhance workers' knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver consistent and gapless engagement practices.</p> <p>1.1.3. Develop and implement a Handbook -on Best Practices including aligned with the Prevention Plan of FFPSA</p> <p>1.1.4. Include referral intake and social emergencies in the Call Center Protocol, and use the Quality Circles approach to provide supervisors with training.</p> <p>1.1.5. Create a data plan that can be used to guide decision-making and enhance the operations of the State Hotline by identifying technological barriers</p>	<p>PIP implementation by 2026 (CAPTA I.E, II.E)</p> <p>2027-2029 implementation in all regions</p>	<p>All PIP outcomes will be implemented by 2026</p> <p>10% increase in CFSR items by April 2026</p> <p>The Call Center Protocol covers all referrals, social emergencies, and alerts.</p> <p>By June 2026, the Supervisor Module (S.M.) will be implemented in the 4 PIP regions. In 2029, the S.M. will be implemented in the other 6 regions.</p>	<p>10% annual change in F.F.PS.A by June 2029.</p> <p>The Best Practices Handbook will be revised and updated to include best practices in Case Management investigations, Preservation, and Permanence by 2025.</p>	<p>AFC will provide training and coaching activities to current hotline staff and workers.</p> <p>T.A. supports are provided to staff, IT staff, and management staff.</p>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Time frame and alignments</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Progress Measures</b>	<b>Implementation support/resources</b>
1.2. Improve the frequency and quality of the caseworker visits to families and the participation by families in the development and implementation of service plans directed at the well-being of children through trauma-informed interventions.	<p>1.2.1. Assess the practice of the Family Conferencing strategy in all regions.</p> <p>1.2.2. Engage all types of families in developing and implementing service plans.</p> <p>1.2.3. Measure stakeholders, participation in Family Conferencing and assess the quality and effectiveness of this strategy across regions.</p> <p>1.2.4 Develop the Formative Module to reinforce the best practices in the workforce across the 10 regions of the island.</p>	<p>2024-2026 PIP Region</p> <p>2027-2029 Ten regions</p>	Report on frequency and quality of case-workers visits (Bimonthly)	<p>% of increase in completed Service Plans</p> <p>Involvement of stakeholders and family participation</p>	<p>Socio-scientific partner</p> <p>Supervisors support</p> <p>Central Office oversee and support</p>

**Goal 2. Guarantee timely permanency of children by safeguarding their interests and guaranteeing their rights through a connection between the courts, community, services, agency processes, and participants.** (Safety, Permanency, Wellbeing, Case Review System)

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
2.1. Address and improve critical court processes impacting timely permanency through the ADFAN-CIP collaboration in the Strategic Permanency Central Committee comprised of social workers, Attorneys, Judges, and child advocates.	<p>2.1.1. Provide timely services to protect children in home or current placements.</p> <p>2.1.2. Establish case practices and protocols that ensure safety services are provided with consistency in decision-making regarding their permanency plans.</p> <p>2.1.3. Create a multidisciplinary workgroup to address the implementation of children and youth in the different stages of the judicial process under Act 57-2023.</p> <p>2.1.4 Offer cross training to address case management issues across the island.</p>	<p>PIP 2024-2026</p> <p>CAPTA</p> <p>CIP-ADFAN</p> <p>2027-2029 implemented in all 10 regions</p>	<p>Increase timely face-to-face response with identified victims and increase the use of individualized safety services early in the process.</p> <p>Annual maintaining of progress towards permanency plans completions.</p>	<p>10% increase in CFSR items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15 revenues by PIP completion in April 2025.</p> <p>Additional 10% increase between April 2025 and October 2026.</p>	<p>TA as needed</p> <p>CIP process will monitor and evaluate progress</p> <p>Assistant Administration Foster Care and Adoption</p>

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
2.2. Identify barriers to permanency for children and youth.	<p>2.2.1. Collaborate with partners to identify and decrease barriers to family engagement, current planning, and service provision to develop and implement prevention contracts.</p> <p>2.2.2. Increase efforts to find foster homes for youth under Act 88.</p> <p>2.2.3. Increase the number of foster homes for children with functional diversity (particularly for those in the autism spectrum) and those with placement challenges.</p> <p>2.2.4. Advance the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based trauma-informed services.</p> <p>2.2.5 Establish a protocol for searching parents or responsible persons through federal and local agencies.</p> <p>2.2.6 Ensure that the Permanence Plan Review Committee continues to operate in all regions so that permanence plans are documented in the system, and periodic reviews and notifications of hearings are carried out on time.</p> <p>2.2.7 Implement the integration of ADFAN with Interstate Agreement for the Placement of Minors (ICPC) to facilitate access to children in custody located outside of PR.</p> <p>2.2.8 Develop and implement an MOU with the PR Law Enforcement to help identify runaway youth.</p> <p>2.2.9 Review the internal policies for the case management to promote the accomplishment of the processes and procedures, aligned with FFPSA and permanency plans (adoption)</p>	<p>June 2026</p> <p>January 2027</p> <p>June 2028</p> <p>August 2029</p> <p>2025-2026</p>	Evidence-based practices identified for all areas and implemented	<p>Data with organizational components.</p> <p>Number of children and/or care agencies who received EBS through Family First Funding</p>	<p>Training and Coaching T.A. to monitor and evaluate progress</p> <p>Assistants Administrations ADFAN</p>



**Goal 3. Have a streamlined and efficient system for service delivery directed at preventing and addressing maltreatment and negligence situations, strengthening families, and promoting reunification or the search for permanent families for children who cannot return to their homes.** (Safety, Permanency, Wellbeing, Information System, Service Array)

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
3.1. Strengthen timely data entry into the information system.	<p>3.1.1. Strengthen the Information System capabilities to enhance staff field work-practices</p> <p>3.1.2. Increase timely face-to-face response with identified victims and increase the use of individualized safety services early in the process.</p>	<p>PIP 2026</p> <p>2027-2029 implemented in all 10 regions</p>	Full implementation of the information system upgrade to integrate FFPSA into the system and be able to document the services provided to children and families.	Annual % Changes	Training and coaching are built into the implementation plan

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
3.2. Advance implementation and sustainability of evidence-based trauma-informed service	<p>3.2.1. Create informed services that effectively improve child safety and promote child family well-being.</p> <p>3.2.2. Increase or enhance evidence-based services consistent with FFPSA focus.</p>	<p>PIP 2026</p> <p>CAPTA I.C</p>	<p>Full implementation of the information system upgrade to integrate into the system the FFPSA and be able to document the services provided to children and families.</p> <p>Evidence-based practices (EBS) are identified for all areas and implemented.</p> <p>Identification of EBS providers that receive Family First Funding.</p>	<p>Annual % Changes</p> <p>Organizational improvements on EBS documented</p>	<p>Training and coaching are built into the implementation plan</p>

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Time frame and alignments</b>	<b>Benchmarks</b>	<b>Progress Measures</b>	<b>Implementation support/resources</b>
3.3. Strengthen the supervision component to improve the practice of continuous and high-quality data entry to direct service personnel.	<p>3.3.1. Create a Child Welfare Leadership Academy for Staff Development.</p> <p>3.3.2. Provide more advanced training to support and enhance supervisory skills and coaching, and technological competencies.</p>	PIP 2025-2029	<p>Number of early participants</p> <p>Annual data on yearly trainings among regions to direct service personnel</p>	<p>CQI Reports</p> <p>Number of advance trainings provided</p> <p>Increased attendance</p> <p>Records on participation of service personnel</p>	External Resources and Evaluation Specialist to assist the CQI processes Training Office

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
3.4. Improve the mechanized system in required areas to facilitate data entry and the quality of data across all programmatic areas	<p>3.4.1. Upgrade the information System infrastructure and integrate the new services structure of the FFPSA Prevention Plan.</p> <p>3.4.2. Assess periodically the quality of data through CQI.</p> <p>3.4.3. Develop a comprehensive data plan across all programmatic areas</p> <p>3.4.4. Develop tools to assess organizational data readiness and provide comprehensive data-informed management training</p>	2025-2029	<p>Complete data plan finalized, and recommendations incorporated into daily operations.</p> <p>Completed Plan for data analysis and dissemination.</p> <p>Develop and implement dashboards.</p>	<p>% of PR-ADFAN and staff trained in data-driven management practices</p> <p>Upgrades made into the Information Systems</p>	<p>Training on new dashboards will be provided to PR-AFC and Regional Staff</p> <p>Auxiliarie Administrations</p>

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
3.5. Develop prevention workflow to include prevention and intervention services, including Planning, Case management, processes, practices, guidance, and training.	<p>3.5.1. Identify various levels of prevention services, funding streams, services availability, and gaps in services.</p> <p>3.5.2. Develop and implement in-home Policy Guidance Consistency for in-home cases.</p> <p>3.5.3. Fully implement and promote the project “Trauma Response Unit of Care (TRUC) to provide service for victims of disasters.</p>	<p>June 2025</p> <p>June 2026</p> <p>June 2027</p> <p>June 2028</p>	<p>Completed plan for identifying prevention services, funding streams, serviceability, and service gaps.</p> <p>Home policy guidance revised/completed.</p> <p>Approval and implementation</p>	<p>Annual % increase in families served by Kinship Program.</p> <p>Percent of staff that have received training in Kinship.</p> <p>Number of families served by location.</p>	<p>Staff will provide TA for project management implementation.</p> <p>CQI staff and prevention specialists will provide TA as needed, Capacity Building Implementation Support.</p> <p>Scientific Support</p>

**Goal 4. Develop and establish a Puerto Rico Child Welfare prevention program based on CQI infrastructure that targets resources and services to prevent abuse and neglect so that children and families can remain safely at home or with kin caregivers.** (All Outcomes, QA, Service Array, Community Response, Coordination Federal Programs)

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
4.1. Create a functional, data-driven, and outcome-focused CQI system to support the agency's overarching engagement and compliance strategy.	<p>4.1.1. Create written policies and procedures describing the functional structure of CQI activities.</p> <p>4.1.2. Establish the CQI dashboards operation.</p> <p>4.1.3. Train all staff levels on CQI operation and data consumption.</p> <p>4.1.4. Develop a reporting structure for data and program assessment connected to outcomes and inform service improvements.</p>	<p>Technical assistance is provided through 2026</p> <p>Statewide implementation plan completed</p> <p>CQI system across the regions through 2027</p>	<p>PIP Outcomes are developed and used to inform management decisions.</p> <p>Training was developed into staff development plans, and the administrative CQI system was implemented and operationalized.</p>	% of staff at (each level trained on CQI operation.	<p>Training on data-driven management decision-making.</p> <p>Assist leadership in CQI training via the CQI training academy.</p> <p>Technical assistance for designing and implementing a functional CQI structure.</p> <p>Hire an specialist in Dash Boards operation.</p>

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
4.2. Develop a designed evaluation model for Family First-funded services that is outcomes-based	<p>4.2.1. Establish clear goals, outcomes, and objectives for monitoring EBS.</p> <p>4.2.2. Establish a monitoring plan to maintain the fidelity of programs through EBS.</p>	2025-2029	<p>Defined implementation plan for EBS.</p> <p>Established goals, outcomes, and objectives of monitoring EBS vs. QA, family outcomes</p>	10% increase in CFSR items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15 reviews by PIP completion in 2026	<p>Seek external evaluation to assess the implementation and effectiveness</p> <p>Puerto Rico will incorporate all evaluation processes into the CQI as needed.</p> <p>Auxiliaries Administrations</p>

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
4.3 Promote collaboration between public agencies, non-government organizations, and private entities to increase the availability of resources at all regions.	4.3.1 Maintain an updated directory of services prepared through collaborative agreements with the agencies that offer such services.	2025-2026	An updated catalog of services for children and families throughout the Island (2025-29)	Services are provided on time to all types of families.	Puerto Rico will partner with all needed services providers such as:
	4.3.2 Evaluate the efficiency of the platform or method selected to design the service directory.	2025-2029	Evidence-based practices identified for all areas by (2025-26)	% increase in services to underserved populations	-T.A. supports via project management -Financial support -Universities -Private service providers
	4.3.3. Disseminate and promote the services offered by ADFAN in an agile and continuous manner, maximizing federal programs and the services offered by non-governmental organizations in the communities		Identification of EBS provides that receive Family First Funding	Number of children and/or caregivers who receive EBS through Family First Funding	Auxiliaries administrations
	4.3.4 Develop a process for assessing the needs of the community by establishing a uniform method that involves all sectors that are impacted by ADFAN.				
	4.3.5 Design a tool for evaluating services in temporary, therapeutic homes and residential establishments to be completed by ADFAN staff prior to the contracting period.				



**Goal 5. Children and families have stronger futures and improved well-being, safety, and permanency outcomes.** (Permanency, Recruitment residence placement and adoptive)

Objectives	Strategies	Time frame and alignments	Benchmarks	Progress Measures	Implementation support/resources
5.1. Increase the number of children in family-based settings by strengthening diligent recruitment of foster families	<p>5.1.1 Embedded Family Recruitment and retention through the length of the case life.</p> <p>5.1.2 Increasing the number of children placed in the care of relatives when removed from the home is necessary.</p> <p>5.1.3. Develop and implement a statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining foster parents and kinship guardian assistant program.</p> <p>5.1.4. Increase the number of foster homes to serve sibling groups.</p> <p>5.1.5. Implement principles of Positive Youth Development and Youth Engagement in training services for youth.</p> <p>5.1.6 Fully implement the rapid access to REVA through a user-friendly application to identify potential adoptive families and increased confidence in the process</p>	2025-2029	<p>% of new children placed with relatives.</p> <p>Annual progress reports on children, placement and training services.</p>	<p>10% yearly increase in retaining foster parents and kinship guardian.</p> <p>Data collected on quality of training services provided for youth.</p>	<p>Support Scientific Socio</p> <p>The state will provide TA Supports in Evidence-based Strategies.</p>

