Region 11

The Heart Galleries of Texas received funding in the 88th Legislative Session to improve permanency outcomes for youth who have experienced foster care. Over the past year, efforts have focused on expanding the Heart Galleries model across the state, increasing community collaboration, developing online trainings and resources, identifying the post-permanency needs of families, and conducting a Request for Applications (RFA) process to select qualified providers in each region to help meet the post-permanency needs of families.

About the Heart Gallery of South Texas

Heart Gallery Organization: Foster Angels of South Texas
Website: http://www.heartgallerystx.org/
Launch Event: March 26, 2024

The Heart Gallery of South Texas has a strong referral relationship with DFPS. At the beginning of the year, they had 33 youth featured on their website and since then, they have received 88 new referrals and featured 39 more youth. Fourteen youth featured this year were also adopted. In terms of community engagement, the gallery hosted a launch event in March 2024, organized 16 outreach events attended by a total of 8,725 community members, and held 18 collaborative stakeholder meetings, with 126 attendees total. On average, they hosted four Heart Gallery exhibits a month, displaying 86 portraits overall. In months where they have held weekly media segments, web traffic reached over 2,000 visits.

Needs Assessment of Post-Permanency Services in Region 11

In March of 2024, researchers from the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing and staff at the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies conducted a statewide post-permanency needs assessment, surveying caregivers and providers about services, needs and barriers for families after adoption or permanency legal conservatorship. In Region 11, **20 caregivers** and **10 providers** participated in the survey. A summary of findings is reported below.

Familiarity with Post-Permanency Services

- 40% of caregivers (*n* = 8) and 50% (*n* = 4) of providers were very or extremely familiar with post-permanency services.
- 14 caregivers reached out to their region's Post-Permanency Services Provider (70%).
- 13 caregivers reported being very or extremely satisfied with the assistance they received (93%).

Service Satisfaction by Service Sector

% of caregivers who were somewhat or very satisfied with:

- Medical services (94%, *n* = 17)
- Developmental services (80%, *n* = 12)
- Post-permanency services (68%, *n* = 13)
- School-based services (67%, *n* = 10)
- Respite (71%, *n* = 12)
- Childcare (53%, *n* = 8)
- Mental health services (35%, *n* = 6)

Note: Percentages are based on the number of people who answer each question. Please exercise caution when interpreting findings with small sample sizes. Small sample sizes can limit the generalizability of the results, as they may not accurately represent the broader population.

Most Needed Services and Supports

- **Mental health services** including play therapy, family therapy, and therapy that is adoption-competent and trauma-informed.
- **Increased legal support** including education on navigating the court system and assistance with completing forms to access resources such as income assistance and food stamps.
- **Financial assistance** to cover expenses such as respite care, camp, sports, registration fees, and day-to-day living expenses.
- **Support groups, parent education, and events specifically for teens.**
- **Post-permanency support** including respite care, as well as help navigating services and understanding children's benefits.
- 70% of caregivers also indicated they were interested in **Parents Night Out**, 60% were interested in having **family meet-ups or events**, and 50% were interested in having **family resource centers**.

Caregiver Barriers to Accessing Services

- Lack of services including developmental and mental health services, educational supports, legal guidance, childcare, respite, and extracurriculars.
- Financial barriers to obtaining services.
- Not knowing where to look for services and support.
- Lack of understanding from others regarding adoption-specific issues, as well as feeling isolated.

Provider Barriers to Supporting Families

- Lack of services for families including mental health services such as individual and family therapy.
- Lack of funding for services.
- Difficulties navigating the legal system.
- Need for more training and support for caregivers on how to meet the needs of children with histories of trauma.
- Lack of awareness and access to permanency care assistance for families (PCA).

Top services that caregivers needed but had difficulty accessing or were unable to get:

Childcare or afterschool care (non-specialized) • Therapeutic or specialized camp • Respite (overnight) • Individual therapy (non-specialized) • Behavior support services

To learn more about this needs assessment, go to: Needs Assessment of Post-permanency Services in Texas Dashboard. You can locate all the data specific to your region.

Looking Ahead

In Region 11, the permanency collaborative is strong and continues to progress. Several members of the collaborative have personal experience with adoption. Based on the needs assessment and RFA selection process, the following organizations were selected to provide services in Region 11:

- Foster Angels of South Texas: Expand services to post-permanency families to include support for basic needs and camps throughout the region.
- Sunny Glen: Offer mental health services to the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo.
- Distinctive Counseling and Consulting, PLLC: Provide EMDR and mental health services throughout the region.
- Arms Wide dba Spaulding: Therapeutic camps, respite services, and childcare.

The University of Texas at Austin
Moritz Center for Societal Impact
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

the center
TEXAS CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY STUDIES