Children's Services Act

Office of
Children's Services
Empowering communities to serve youth

Performance Measures / Outcome Indicators Report FY2020

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Introduction

Virginia Code, §2.2-2648.D.17. requires that the State Executive Council for Children's Services shall:

> *Oversee the development and implementation of a uniform set of performance measures for evaluating the Children's Services Act program, including, but not limited to, the number of youths served in their homes, schools and communities. Performance measures shall be based on information: (i) collected in the client-specific database referenced in subdivision 16, (ii) from the mandatory uniform assessment instrument referenced in subdivision 11, and (iii) from available and appropriate client outcome data that is not prohibited from being shared under federal law and is routinely collected by the state child-serving agencies that serve on the Council. If provided client-specific information, state child-serving agencies shall report available and appropriate outcome data in clause (iii) to the Office of Children's Services. Outcome data submitted to the Office of Children's Services shall be used solely for the administration of the Children's Services Act program. Applicable client outcome data shall include, but not be limited to: (a) permanency outcomes by the Virginia Department of Social Services, (b) recidivism outcomes by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, and (c) educational outcomes by the Virginia Department of Education. All client-specific information shall remain confidential and only non-identifying aggregate outcome information shall be made available to the public.*

Under the direction of the State Executive Council for Children's Services (SEC), the Office of Children's Services (OCS) has developed a set of performance/outcome measures to be used to evaluate the Children's Services Act (CSA) program. The seven indicators are:

1) The percent of youth who had a decrease in their score on the School Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS), the mandatory CSA assessment instrument, from a baseline assessment to the most recent re-assessment;

2) The percent of youth who had a decrease in their score on the Child Behavioral and Emotional Needs Domain of the CANS instrument from a baseline assessment to the most recent re-assessment;

3) The percent of youth who had a decrease in their score (indicating increased strengths) on the Child Strengths Domain of the CANS instrument from a baseline assessment to the most recent re-assessment;

4) The percent of youth receiving Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) services compared to all youth placed in residential settings;

5) The percent of youth receiving only Community-based Services (CBS) of all youth receiving CSA funded services[1];

6) The percent of children in foster care who are in family-based placements; and

7) The percent of children who exit from foster care to a permanent living arrangement.

In addition to individually reporting on the performance on each measure, a locality-based comparison score is generated. On each of the first five measures, each locality is scored on a scale of 1 through 4 based on the degree of variation from the state average. Localities more than one standard deviation above the state average receive a score of 4, those between the state average and one standard deviation above that average receive a score of 3, those between the state average and one standard deviation below that average receive a score of 2, and localities scoring greater than one standard deviation below the state average receive a score of 1 on that measure. For the last two measures, each locality is scored on a scale of 2 through 4 based on their proximity to targets established by the Virginia Department of Social Services. On these two indicators, localities score 4 when the target was met or exceeded. A score of 3 is assigned if the locality was below, but within five percent of the target. A score of 2 is assigned if the performance was more than five percent below the target. For all seven measures, 4 is the highest score. An overall composite measure of all seven performance indicators has been constructed. The composite measure represents the average of all the comparison scores for which a valid result could be determined.

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[1] In FY2019, foster care was reclassified as a Community-based Service (CBS). Therefore, the CBS performance measure in this report is not comparable to previous CBS performance measures. Data from previous years has been recalculated to reflect the new classification.

Percent of Youth with a Decrease in the School Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Score

The CANS is the mandatory uniform assessment instrument for all children receiving CSA-funded services. It is administered at the time of service initiation and periodic intervals throughout the duration of services. The re-assessment interval varies depending on the type of service provided (typically, children receiving more intensive services are re-assessed more frequently) and local practice. The School Domain of the CANS assessment tool has been established as a key indicator, and scores would be expected to <u>decrease</u> (as needs decrease) if interventions have the desired impact.

Decrease in CANS School Domain Score

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
1	Less than 40.4%	52	
2	Between 40.4% and 44.7%	14	
3	Between 44.7% and 49.1%	11	
4	Greater than 49.1%	52	
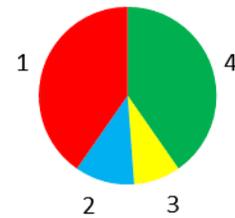
N = 129 localities; 3,620 youth; Mean = 44.7%; Standard Deviation = 4.4%[2]
<u>Note</u>: 1 of the 130 localities was not rated due to not having any youth meet the inclusion criteria in the FY 2020 entrance cohort (a baseline and a subsequent re-assessment by 12/31/20).

The CANS School Domain score is the average score of the three items that constitute the domain[3]. Each is ranked 0, 1, 2, or 3 with a lower score indicating the youth has less significant needs (or better functioning) in those areas. All children with a baseline (initial) assessment in FY 2020 (and who did not have any assessments in previous fiscal years) are assigned to the FY 2020 cohort. Only youth who have had at least one subsequent re-assessment (as of December 31, 2020) are included in this report (as time elapses and additional youth in the FY 2020 cohort receive re-assessments, the number in the cohort will grow and the outcomes recalculated)[4]. The baseline assessment score is compared to the most recent assessment. For each locality, the percent of youth with a decreased average score on these items is calculated. The average time between assessments was 243 days. Statewide, this indicator showed that 44.7 percent of the FY 2020 cohort had a decrease (or improvement) in their CANS School Domain score. Sixty-three localities (49%) scored at or above the mean and 66 localities (51%) scored below the

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[2] The standard deviation measures the average distance between the mean and the values in a set of data. A relatively low standard deviation indicates that most of the values are near the mean. A relatively high standard deviation reflects a data set of values that are more spread out.
[3] The items are: School Behavior, School Achievement and School Attendance.
[4] FY 2020 and updated data from prior year's cohorts at the local level is reported in the "State and Local CSA Performance Measures" application found on the CSA website.

mean on this measure. In comparison, about 48 percent of the FY 2019 cohort decreased their CANS School Domain score. However, the average time between assessments for the FY 2019 cohort is 410 days. Improvement in CANS scores is expected to increase as time passes. This consideration should be taken into account when comparing differences between the current and prior years' cohorts.

Percent of Youth with a Decrease in Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Score

In addition to the School Domain, the Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain of the CANS assessment tool has been established as a key indicator. Similar to the School Domain, scores in this domain would be expected to <u>decrease</u> (as needs decrease) if interventions are having the desired impact.

Decrease in CANS Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain Score

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
1	Less than 40.7%	50	
2	Between 40.7% and 45.1%	13	
3	Between 45.1% and 49.5%	10	
4	Greater than 49.5%	56	

N = 129 localities; 3,624 youth; Mean = 45.1%; Standard Deviation = 4.4%
<u>Note</u>: 1 of the 130 localities was not rated due to not having any youth meet the inclusion criteria in the FY 2020 cohort (a baseline and a subsequent re-assessment by 12/31/20).

The CANS Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain score is the average score of the 10 items that constitute the domain. [5] Each is ranked 0, 1, 2, or 3 with a lower score indicating the youth has less significant needs (or better functioning) in those areas. All children with a baseline (initial) assessment in FY 2020 and who did not have any assessments in previous fiscal years have been assigned to the FY 2020 cohort. Only youth who have had at least one subsequent re-assessment (as of December 31, 2020) have been included in this report (as time elapses and additional youth in the FY 2020 cohort receive re-assessments, the number in the cohort will grow and the outcomes recalculated). The baseline assessment score was compared to the most recent assessment. For each locality, the percent of youth with a decrease in this difference was calculated. The average time between assessments was 243 days. Statewide, this indicator showed that 45.1 percent of the FY 2020 cohort had a decrease (or improvement) in their CANS Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain score. Sixty-six localities (51%) scored at or above the mean and 63 localities (49%) scored below the mean on this measure.

Similarly, about 49 percent of the FY 2019 cohort decreased their CANS Child Behavioral/ Emotional Needs Domain score. The average time between assessments for the FY 2019 cohort was 410 days

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[5] The items are: Psychosis, Impulsivity/Hyperactivity, Depression, Anxiety, Oppositional, Conduct, Adjustment to Trauma, Anger Control, Substance Use and Eating Disturbance.

Percent of Youth with a Decrease in Child Strengths Domain of the
Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Score

Along with the School Domain and the Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domain of the CANS assessment tool, the scores in the Child Strengths Domain are included in this report. Children with notable strengths tend to function better even if significant needs are present. Like the School and Child Behavioral/Emotional Needs Domains, scores in this domain should decrease (as strengths increase) if interventions have the desired impact.

Decrease in CANS Child Strengths Domain Score

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
1	Less than 53.2%	41	
2	Between 53.2% and 57.5%	16	
3	Between 57.5% and 61.9%	16	
4	Greater than 61.9%	56	

N = 129 localities; 3,624 youth; Mean = 57.5%; Standard Deviation = 4.4%
Note: 1 of the 130 localities was not rated due to not having any youth meet the inclusion criteria in the FY 2020 cohort (a baseline and a subsequent re-assessment by 12/31/20).

The CANS Child Strengths Domain score is the average score of the 11 items that constitute the domain.[6] Each is ranked 0, 1, 2, or 3 with a lower score indicating the youth has more significant strengths (or better functioning) in those areas. All children with a baseline (initial) assessment in FY 2020 and who did not have any assessments in previous fiscal years have been assigned to the FY 2020 cohort. Only youth who have had at least one subsequent re-assessment (as of December 31, 2019) have been included in this report (as time elapses and additional youth in the FY 2020 cohort receive re-assessments, the number in the cohort will grow and the outcomes recalculated). The baseline assessment score was compared to the most recent assessment. For each locality, the percent of youth with a decrease in this difference was calculated. The average time between assessments was 243 days. Statewide, this indicator showed that 57.5 percent of the FY 2020 cohort had a decrease (or improvement) in their CANS Child Strengths Domain score. Seventy-two localities (56%) scored at or above, the mean and 57 localities (44%) scored below the mean on this measure. Correspondingly, about 60 percent of the FY 2019 cohort decreased their CANS Child Strengths Domain score. The average time between assessments for the FY 2019 cohort was 410 days.

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[6] The items are: Family, Interpersonal, Optimism, Educational, Vocational, Talents/Interests, Spiritual/Religious, Community Life, Relationship Permanence, Child Involvement with Care, and Natural Supports.

**Percent of Youth Receiving Intensive Care Coordination Services Against
All Youth Placed in Residential Settings**

Intensive Care Coordination (ICC) is an evidence-informed service (also known as High Fidelity Wraparound) defined by the SEC as appropriate for children at risk of entering or placed in residential care. The intent of ICC is to prevent the need for residential placement, shorten the length of residential placements, strengthen discharge planning and community reintegration, and improve results for children at high risk for adverse outcomes. In 2014, the SEC identified a target for this indicator at 75 percent.

Utilization of ICC

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
1	Less than 43.1%	51	
2	Between 43.1% and 48.6%	0	
3	Between 48.6% and 54.1%	0	
4	Greater than 54.1%	31	
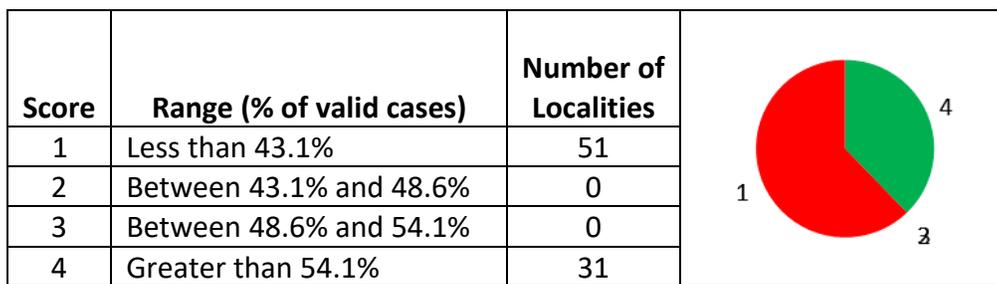
N = 82 localities; Mean = 48.6%; Standard Deviation = 5.5%
Note: 48 of the 130 localities were not rated due to low sample size. See footnote 7 below.

This performance measure weighs a locality's utilization of ICC services relative to the number of youth placed in a residential care setting during the year. Statewide, the average was 48.6 percent in FY 2020, up from 45.5 percent in FY 2019, and marks the fourth straight fiscal year that this measure has increased. Thirty-one localities met or exceeded the state average, while 51 localities were below the state average.[7] A majority of localities (51 or 62%) received a score of one on this measure, indicating performance more than one standard deviation below the state average. Twenty-four of the 82 localities (29%) met or exceeded the 75 percent target. This percentage is about three percent more than FY 2019 (26%) when 23 of 88 localities met or exceeded the target.

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[7] Localities with no youth receiving ICC and six or fewer youth place in residential care were excluded from the calculations and not ranked to avoid misrepresentation due to low sample size.

Percent of Youth Receiving Only Community Based Services of
All Youth Receiving CSA Funded Services

The CSA has long-supported the principle of serving youth in their homes and home communities as a centerpiece of the system of care approach. This measure is one indicator of the extent to which this goal is realized. Youth who, in FY 2020, received only community-based services through CSA (no residential or congregate care) are counted from the entire population served. In FY 2020, 84.8 percent of all CSA youth receiving only community-based services, up slightly from 84.5 percent in FY 2019. This is the sixth straight year this indicator has increased.

Community-Based Services

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
1	Less than 81.6%	45	
2	Between 81.6% and 84.8%	28	
3	Between 84.8% and 88.0%	13	
4	Greater than 88.0%	44	
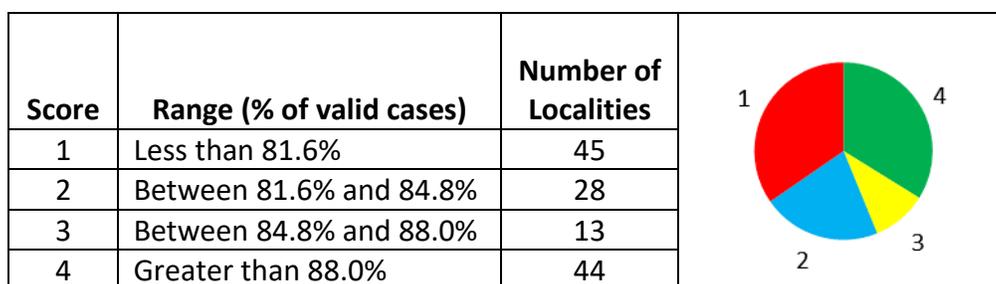
N = 130 localities; Mean = 84.8%; Standard Deviation = 3.2%

This performance measure considers the proportion of those receiving only community-based services to all youth served through the CSA. Fifty-seven localities (44%) scored above the state average, and 73 localities (56%) scored lower than the average. In all 130 localities, at least half of the CSA youth received only community-based services.

Outcomes Related to Foster Care[8]

A majority (54 percent) of children served through the CSA in FY 2020 were referred due to involvement in Virginia's child welfare system through local departments of social services. The state Department of Social Services (VDSS) has established multiple indicators for children in the foster care system. The CSA has adopted two of these indicators in its performance measurement model.

Percent of Children in Foster Care in Family-Based Placements

Best practices in child welfare suggest that children removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or other reasons do best in family-based foster care settings. These are family, and family-like settings with a limited number of children instead of group homes or other larger congregate care settings. The VDSS has established a target that 85 percent of the children in foster care are placed in a family-based placement.

Children in Foster Care in Family-Based Placements

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
2	Less than 80.0%	47	
3	Between 80.0% and 84.9%	18	
4	Greater than or equal to 85.0%	60	

N = 125; Mean = 83.8%; Target = 85.0%

Note: 5 of the 130 localities were not rated due to not having any youth meet the inclusion criteria.

Statewide performance on this indicator was about 84 percent, or one percent below the VDSS established target, at the end of FY 2020. This year's indicator is more than two percentage points greater than in FY 2019 and nearly three percentage points greater than in FY 2018 (81.3% in FY 2019 and 80.9% in FY 2018). Localities received a score of 4 when the target was met or exceeded, a score of 3 if performance was below but within five percent of the target, and a score of 2 if performance was more than five percent below the target. About 62 percent of localities (60) either met or exceeded or were within five percent of the target (18). This result is comparable to FY 2019, when about 60 percent of localities (47 out of 129) either met,

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[8] The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) is comprised of 120 local agencies, with some covering multiple jurisdictions. The VDSS reports foster care outcomes at the agency level. In this report, each locality within a multiple jurisdiction agency was assigned the overall DSS jurisdictions' percentage.

exceeded, or were within five percent of the target (31). Forty-seven localities (38%) were more than five percent below the target. This is four fewer localities than FY 2019, where 51 localities (40%) were more than five percent below the target.

Percent of Children Who Exit from Foster Care to a Permanent Living Arrangement

Children who "exit" or "age out" of the foster care system without establishing a permanent family connection (typically through adoption, reunification with their biological family, or placement with a relative) are known to have considerably poorer life outcomes. Achieving permanency is a critical indicator of performance for the child welfare system. The VDSS has established a target that 86 percent of the children in foster care "exit" to a permanent living arrangement before "aging out."

Children Who Exit from Foster Care to a Permanent Living Arrangement

Score	Range (% of valid cases)	Number of Localities	
2	Less than 81.0%	73	
3	Between 81.0% and 85.9%	16	
4	Greater than or equal to 86.0%	29	
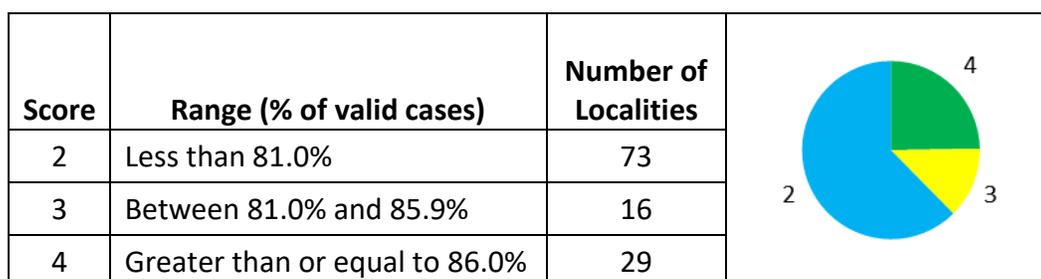
N = 118; Mean = 75.6%; Target = 86.0%

Note: 12 of the 130 localities were not rated due to not having any youth meet the inclusion criteria.

For FY 2020, the percent who exited to permanency statewide was 75.6 percent or about ten percent below the target. Similarly, about 76 percent exited to a permanent living situation in FY 2019. The majority of jurisdictions (73 or 62%) were more than five percent below this target, an increase of 10 (9%) localities over FY 2019 (63 out of 120 or 53%)[9]. About 25 percent (29) of localities met or exceeded the target compared to 37 percent (44) in FY 2019. It appears the COVID-19 pandemic likely hindered local efforts to place children in permanent homes.

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[9] Localities with no youth exiting foster care to a permanent living arrangement and having six or fewer total youth exiting from foster care were excluded from the calculations and not ranked to avoid misrepresentation due to low sample size.

Composite Performance Measure

A composite measure for each locality was derived, providing a summary of a locality's scores on as many of the seven performance indicators as possible. The composite performance measure score is calculated using the average of the seven[10] individual outcome indicators. Localities are assigned a composite score based on the average of their seven outcome measure scores: 1 is the lowest 25 percent of scores; 2 is the between 25 percent and the midpoint (50%), 3 is between the midpoint and 75 percent, and 4 is the highest group between 75 and 100 percent. Sixty-four localities received composite performance scores of either one (32) or two (32) and 66 localities received a score of either three (26) or four (40).

Composite Locality Scores

Score	Range	Number of Localities	
1	Less than 2.17	32	
2	Between 2.17 and 2.67	32	
3	Between 2.67 and 3.00	26	
4	Greater than 3.00	40	
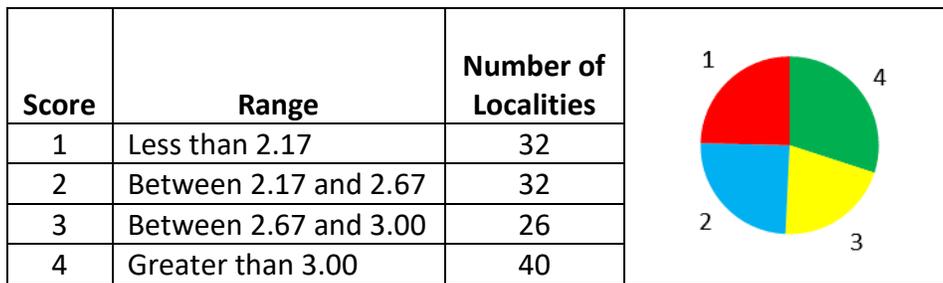
Differences in Performance Measures Based on Population Density, Geography, and Income

The effects of differences in population density, geographic region,[11] and income for the seven performance measures and the composite score are shown in Appendix 1. Localities classified as small population density (less than about 62.8 people per square mile), from the Eastern region, or with "medium" per capita incomes (between $26,600 and $32,996) had the highest composite scores. Localities with medium population density (between 62.8 and 376 people), from the Western region, or "Large" per capita incomes (higher than $32,996) had the lowest composite scores.

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[10] In cases where a locality did not receive a score for all outcome measures, the average was taken of only those outcome measures for which they do have scores.
[11] Geographic regions were aligned with the five VDSS defined regions.

Conclusion

Measuring the Children's Services Act's performance is a critical aspect in determining if CSA is achieving its stated goals and objectives. This report provides an update and additions to reporting completed in FY 2015-20. These performance benchmarks are treated with statistical analysis to provide information to CSA stakeholders and the State Executive Council about areas where there is a high level of performance and areas where improvement needs can be identified.

In addition to the state-level data summarized in this report, the Office of Children's Services has developed a web-based application allowing individual localities to view their performance on the seven measures and compare their outcomes to both the state average and other localities.[12] That application is available on the CSA website at www.csa.virginia.gov (see the Statistics and Publication > Reports and Publications menu). It is hoped that local CSA programs utilize this application to identify and build upon areas of strength and develop strategies to improve performance where appropriate.

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[12] See Appendix 2 of this report for the FY 2018 – FY 2020 statewide results displayed through the web-based application.

Appendix 1

Performance Measure by Population Density, Regions and Per Capita Income

	CANS School	CANS Behavior	CANS Strengths	ICC	CBS	Foster Care Family-Based	Foster Care Permanency	Composite Score
Population Density (2019)[1]								
Small (Less than 62.8 people/sq. mile)	41.77%	45.70%	59.63%	34.31%	84.30%	85.57%	75.06%	2.71
Medium (Between 62.8 and 375.9 people/sq. mile)	42.74%	47.87%	58.41%	42.06%	82.73%	82.44%	77.67%	2.54
Large (Greater than 375.9 people/sq. mile)	46.47%	43.52%	56.52%	53.77%	85.90%	83.96%	74.47%	2.59
Regions[2]								
Central	43.17%	46.02%	58.49%	44.67%	84.07%	84.05%	75.70%	2.62
Eastern	44.17%	45.25%	57.90%	49.22%	84.64%	84.05%	75.61%	2.84
Northern	44.24%	45.87%	57.71%	46.50%	84.19%	83.32%	76.12%	2.47
Piedmont	43.81%	45.35%	58.15%	46.72%	84.57%	84.24%	75.70%	2.61
Western	42.93%	45.99%	58.68%	40.52%	84.09%	84.28%	75.78%	2.52
Per Capita Income (2019)[3]								
Small (Less than $26,600)	43.59%	45.34%	58.32%	45.27%	84.57%	84.42%	75.42%	2.59
Medium (Between $26,600 and $32,996)	43.17%	45.95%	58.51%	43.42%	84.13%	84.14%	76.05%	2.70
Large (Greater than $32,996)	44.30%	45.75%	57.69%	47.85%	84.28%	83.40%	75.90%	2.54

[1] The county population density was calculated by dividing population by square miles of land. The area and estimated population data are from the US Census Bureau. The counties were grouped in to small, medium and large based on the lower, middle and upper thirds of the county density data.

[2] The regions were defined as those utilized by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

[3] Per capita income data is estimated by the US Census Bureau via the American Community Survey. To estimate the two combined geographic areas of Fairfax County/Fairfax City/Falls Church and Greensville/Emporia, the individual counties' per capita income was multiplied by 2019 county population estimates to obtain total county income. For the two combined geographic areas, the sum of individual total county incomes was divided by the sum of the individual county populations. The counties were grouped in to small, medium and large based on the lower, middle and upper thirds of the county per capita income.

Appendix 2

CSA Performance Measures - FY2018-2020

	Percent of Youth with a Decrease in CANS Child School Domain[1]			Percent of Youth with a Decrease in CANS Child Behavior/Emotional Needs Domain[1]			Percent of Youth with a Decrease in CANS Child Strengths Domain[1]			Percent of Youth Receiving ICC Against Those in Residential[2] (Target=75%)			Percent of Youth Receiving CBS Out of All CSA Youth			Percent of Foster Care Children in Family-based Placements (Target=85%)			Percent of Children Who Exit from Foster Care to a Permanent Living Arrangement (Target = 86%)			Composite Performance Measure[3]		
Locality	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020	2018	2019	2020
Statewide	50.9%	48.2%	44.7%	51.9%	48.6%	45.1%	61.3%	59.5%	57.5%	41.2%	45.5%	48.6%	83.7%	84.5%	84.8%	80.9%	81.3%	83.7%	77.1%	76.3%	75.6%	2.55	2.65	2.61

Locality Performance Measures with Rankings
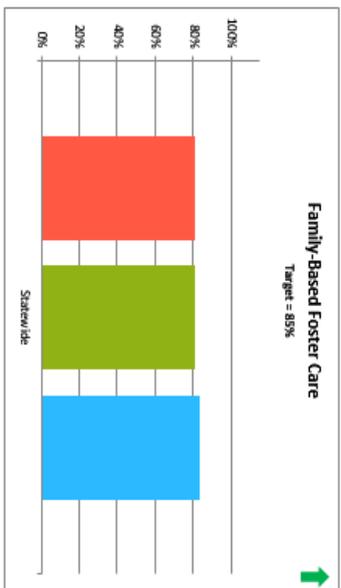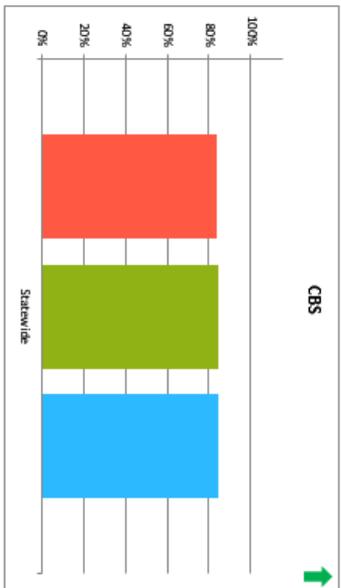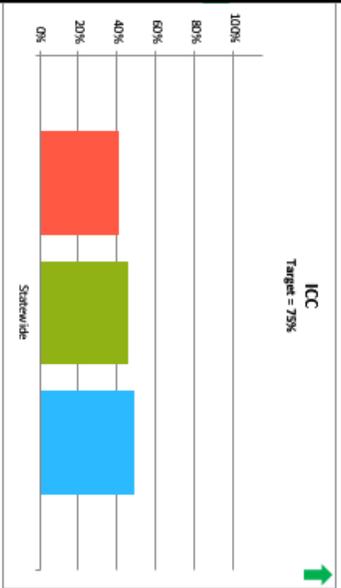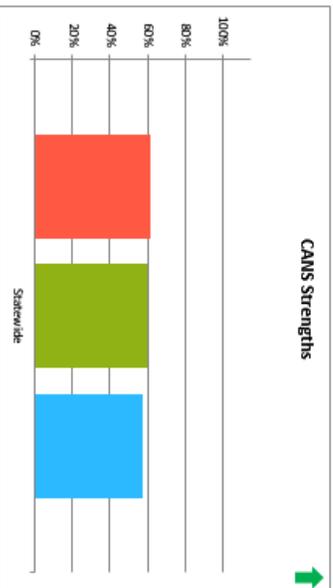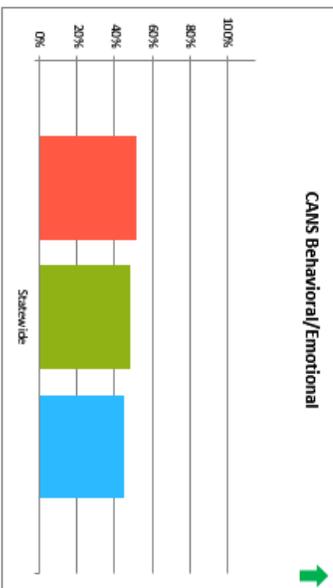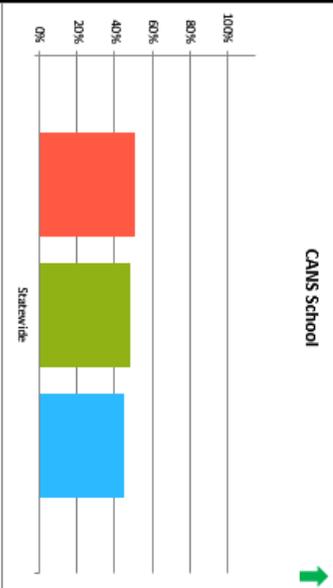
CANS School

CANS Behavioral/Emotional

CANS Strengths
Target = 85%

ICC
Target = 75%

CBS

Family-Based Foster Care
Target = 85%

Permanency
Target = 86%

Composite Performance Measure

Office of Children's Services
Empowering communities to serve youth

[1]Decreases in CANS scores are generally indicative of improved functioning. CANS performance measures are updated periodically with the youth's latest scores. Scores are expected to decrease as time passes and more services are provided. The average number of days between the youth's initial and latest scores is 543 days for FY 2018, 410 days for FY 2019 and 243 days for FY 2020. As such, CANS scores are not directly comparable across fiscal years.

[2]For the percent of youth receiving ICC, the average is taken for non-zero values only.

[3]For each of the five outcome measures, localities are assigned a score relative to their proximity to either the statewide average or targets set by the Commonwealth. The composite outcome measure score is calculated using the average of the six outcome measure scores, with 4 being the highest possible score.