



Friday, January 19, 2024

To: DFPSLARSuggestions@dfps.texas.gov
Subject: TPEA comments for agency LAR to be submitted 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to offer input on the Department of Family and Protective Services' upcoming Legislative Appropriations Request due August 2024. As you may know, the Texas Public Employees Association (TPEA) has since its inception in 1947 been a non-partisan, non-union organization advocating for both state employees and retirees. TPEA has paid close attention to the unique challenges that DFPS has had to contend with and will continue to convey your agency's critical needs to the Legislature.

We urge you to make employee compensation your highest priority. The Legislature has acted to address the higher-than-average turnover in certain job categories at DFPS, with predictably positive results. However, high inflation and the booming Texas labor market mean that more must be done to attract and retain quality employees. This is especially apropos for those in critical caseworker positions, who are crucial to carrying out your agency's mission to protect our state's most vulnerable citizens.

TPEA recommends that DFPS include in your LAR as Exceptional Item Requests, additional funding for both across the board raises for your whole workforce as well as targeted raises for those positions that have proven so difficult to keep filled, e.g. your caseworkers. TPEA saw that most of those agencies that asked for such pay increases in their respective LARs in 2022 did indeed receive all or most of the raises they requested from the Legislature. Again, the erosion of employee paychecks in purchasing power continues and will inevitably create another crisis in retention, especially in key positions.

Thank you for your careful consideration of our comments. Please know that TPEA will testify at every budget hearing, all through the appropriations process, on behalf of both across the board and targeted employee pay raises.

Sincerely,

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