

TEXAS FAMILY COMMUNITIES ACT

A Complete Structural Reform of Texas Foster Care

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SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas is strongest when its children are safe. But today, too many Texas children are not protected. The foster care system has struggled for decades with instability, abuse, constant placement changes, and a lack of oversight that leaves children feeling forgotten. Families see this, and it has created a deep fear of what happens when a child enters state care. Many Texans believe the system is more likely to traumatize a child than to protect them. That is not acceptable for a state built on responsibility, honor, and the belief that every life has value.

The Texas Family Communities Act creates a new path. Instead of large institutions, emergency hotel placements, office stays, or high turnover foster homes, Texas will build small, stable family communities. Each community is designed with 10 to 50 homes, creating a safe environment where children can grow, learn, and heal with consistent caregivers. These communities follow the same neighborhood structure that keeps Texas families strong. Kids will go to nearby public schools, make friends, join teams, and grow up in a place that feels like a real Texas neighborhood.

This initiative does not rebuild foster care around bureaucracy. It rebuilds it around dignity. That means stable homes, trauma informed caregiving, strong oversight, and a clear commitment that no child will age out into homelessness or poverty. Kids will finally have the structure, support, and steady adults they need from childhood into early adulthood, not just until the paperwork ends. Texas will use the modular small home system established in the Texas Affordable Housing and Construction Reform Initiative to support rapid and cost efficient community development. This allows the state to focus on children rather than construction complications.

The Texas Family Communities Act also answers a deeper problem. Many mothers do not trust the current foster system. They fear that if they cannot raise a child, the state will not keep that child safe. This initiative rebuilds that trust by creating safe, accountable communities where every child is protected. It gives parents confidence that if a child enters care, the child will be safe and supported.

Texas has the authority, the workforce, the land, and the responsibility to fix this system. The state can redirect current spending from emergency placements and lawsuits into stable communities that work. The Governor can set standards, drive oversight, and demand transparency from every agency involved.

No child in Texas should ever feel lost, unheard, or unprotected. The Texas Family Communities Act sets a clear standard. Every child deserves safety. Every child

deserves stability. Every child deserves a home and a future they can count on. Texas will build that future and protect those who cannot protect themselves.

SECTION 2 - CONTEXT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

2.1 The collapse of the Texas foster care system

Texas foster care has broken down across every level. Children experience instability, abuse, and constant moves. Caseworkers are overwhelmed. Families see the failures every day.

Broken conditions include:

- office stays and hotel placements
- high turnover in caregivers
- emergency-only decision making
- children falling through gaps
- a statewide loss of trust

2.2 Why incremental fixes have failed

Reforms have been slow, scattered, and reactive. Texas has changed rules, added regulations, and shifted contractors, but the structure itself remains unstable.

The state still faces:

- inconsistent regional performance
- providers replacing providers
- repeated lawsuits
- growing placement shortages
- an overwhelmed frontline workforce

2.3 Community Based Care weaknesses

CBC works in some areas but collapses in others. Oversight is inconsistent. Standards change by region. Success depends on contractors rather than a stable system.

Breakdown points include:

- gaps between DFPS and regional providers
- different expectations across counties

- inconsistent training and supervision
- unstable provider networks
- weak accountability

2.4 Moral and financial cost of instability

Instability harms both children and taxpayers. Each placement move sets a child back in school, mental health, and trust. Those setbacks later show up in crime, homelessness, and emergency care.

Texas pays for instability through:

- increased CPS investigations
- emergency housing
- healthcare and behavioral crises
- higher incarceration rates
- long term poverty

2.5 Why mothers fear the system

Many mothers want their child safe, even if they cannot raise them. Today they fear the system will traumatize that child. This fear affects life decisions and pushes families away from seeking help.

Reasons for fear include:

- stories of abuse and neglect
- children sleeping in offices
- lack of stability
- lack of transparency
- inconsistent caregiver quality

2.6 Long term risk if Texas does nothing

If the system stays the same, Texas will face growing numbers of homeless youth, higher crime, and rising costs. Aging out into poverty will continue to break lives and strain communities.

Consequences include:

- higher homelessness among former foster youth
- more exploitation and trafficking
- increased strain on schools and hospitals

- long term financial pressure on the state
- generational cycles of instability

SECTION 3 - EXPLANATION OF THE CORE PROBLEM

3.1 Instability: constant moves and broken placements

Children in Texas foster care are moved too often. Many experience multiple placements in a single year, sometimes five or more. Some bounce between group homes, offices, hotels, and temporary facilities. When a child gets moved over and over, they stop trusting the system and the adults in it. It leaves marks that follow them for years.

Instability causes:

- loss of school progress
- separation from siblings
- fear of forming bonds
- higher behavioral struggles
- long term trauma that follows them into adulthood

3.2 Abuse and neglect inside the system

Reports of abuse, neglect, and unsafe living conditions continue across multiple regions. Children have been harmed in licensed facilities, unvetted homes, and temporary placements. Oversight varies from county to county, leaving major gaps in protection.

Key failure points include:

- inconsistent caregiver training
- weak supervision in high-risk homes
- unreliable reporting channels
- children afraid to speak up
- slow response to complaints

3.3 Children aging out into homelessness and exploitation

A large share of Texas foster youth age out at eighteen with no stable home, no income, and no adult support. Many are at high risk of homelessness soon after leaving care. Others fall into trafficking, exploitation, or low wage cycles that trap them in poverty.

Long term outcomes include:

- high risk of homelessness
- increased arrest and incarceration rates
- higher vulnerability to trafficking
- unstable work and education patterns
- long term dependency on local services

3.4 Fragmented oversight and inconsistent standards

Foster care oversight varies widely between DFPS, regional providers, and private contractors. Standards shift by region. Caseworker caseloads remain too high. Kids aren't getting the same level of protection from one county to the next, and that's a problem.

System failures come from:

- uneven contractor performance
- limited accountability tools
- lack of real time data sharing
- overloaded caseworkers
- weak follow up after placement changes

3.5 Why children do not trust CPS

Children in the system often lose faith in CPS because their lived experiences do not match the promises they are given. They see moves, instability, confusion, and adults who rotate out faster than they can form relationships.

Children report:

- fear of speaking up
- lack of consistent adults
- unclear rules or expectations
- broken promises about where they will live
- feelings of being lost or ignored

3.6 The gap between what the law requires and what children live

Texas has strong laws on paper. Those laws promise safety, stability, and protection. But the reality for many children does not match the legal standard. The structure of the system cannot deliver what the law requires because it relies on temporary homes, temporary caregivers, and overwhelmed agencies.

This gap includes:

- legal standards that cannot be enforced in unstable placements
- protections that fail without constant oversight
- rights that cannot be defended in temporary environments
- rules that depend on caregivers who may lack proper training
- expectations that break down under high caseloads

Texas needs a new model that matches the law with real world practice. A model built on structure, stability, and daily protection.

SECTION 4 - DEEP BREAKDOWN OF THE MAIN SOLUTION

4.1 The Texas Family Communities model

We will replace unstable foster placements with small, stable family communities. Each community is built to function like a real neighborhood where children live in safe homes with consistent caregivers. Our goal is straightforward. Keep kids safe, keep them steady, and rebuild the trust this system has lost.

Core elements:

- small neighborhoods designed for safety and visibility
- trained caregivers serving as long term anchors
- structured routines that mirror normal family life
- on site support for mental health and daily needs
- real eyes on the ground and accountability that actually means something

4.2 Small community pods of 10 to 50 homes

Large institutional settings create risk. Small pods create stability. Each pod will include between 10 and 50 homes, depending on regional need. Smaller communities protect children from being lost in large systems.

Benefits of pod size:

- easier supervision
- strong community bonds
- real neighborhood feel
- consistent caregiving
- faster response to concerns

4.3 Family style caregiving instead of institutions

Children will live in regular homes with trained guardians instead of large facilities. This restores normal routines and removes the cold, institutional feel that traumatizes children.

Key features:

- homes that function like real families
- clear house expectations and structure
- consistent adult presence
- stable routines and meal schedules
- community events and activities

4.4 Placement stability and age band grouping

Children thrive when placed with peers who share similar developmental stages. Each community pod will group children by age bands to support healthy development and reduce conflict.

Age band benefits:

- better emotional support
- more appropriate activities
- reduced behavioral issues
- stronger peer connections
- safer environments for younger children

4.5 Keeping siblings together whenever safe

Texas will prioritize keeping siblings together unless safety concerns prevent it. Sibling separation creates long term emotional damage and increases trauma. Family Communities offer enough space and structure to keep sibling groups intact.

Sibling placement priorities:

- keep siblings in the same home when possible
- if not, keep them in the same pod
- shared meals, activities, and support
- unified case planning
- consistent sibling visitation built into routine

4.6 Trauma informed caregiving and mental health support

Caregivers will be trained in trauma awareness, child development, and crisis response. Every pod will have access to behavioral and mental health professionals who can intervene early and prevent deeper harm.

Trauma informed features:

- de escalation training
- predictable routines
- safe communication channels for children
- on site or nearby mental health teams
- consistent follow up after incidents

4.7 Integration with local public schools and normal routines

Children will attend local public schools rather than isolated campuses. School stability increases academic success and reduces trauma. Daily routines will mirror typical family life.

School based benefits:

- stable classrooms
- access to sports, clubs, and activities
- social development with peers
- reduced stigma
- stronger ties to the community

4.8 Stable communities so no child ages out alone

No child in a Family Community will be cut off at eighteen. Youth will have continued support through high school graduation and into early adulthood when needed. Texas will ensure that young adults have a stable path forward.

Support includes:

- optional housing through age twenty one
- job training support
- life skills guidance
- connections to mentors and community adults
- stability during the transition to independence

4.9 Why this model rebuilds trust for parents and mothers considering voluntary placement

Many parents fear the current foster system because they believe their child will be harmed. Family Communities offer a clear, visible alternative that restores trust. When parents see real homes, trained caregivers, and stable routines, they know their child will be safe.

This model builds trust through:

- transparent oversight
- real neighborhoods instead of institutions
- strong caregiver training
- consistent stability
- dignity and protection for every child

SECTION 5 - ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY, AND SYSTEM DESIGN

5.1 Safe, code compliant small homes within each community

Family Communities use small homes that follow all Texas building codes. These homes are designed to feel like real family environments instead of institutional placements. Each home provides stable routines, safe sleeping arrangements, and clear visibility for caregivers.

Home standards include:

- compliance with Texas building codes
- simple layouts for easy supervision
- private bedrooms or shared rooms based on age and needs
- monitored common areas
- safe outdoor spaces within the pod

5.2 Support from the Texas Affordable Housing and Construction Reform Initiative

The Family Communities Act does not recreate the construction system from scratch. Under my broader housing plan, Texas would build a modular small-home network through the Texas Affordable Housing and Construction Reform Initiative. The Family Communities Act is designed to plug directly into that system so construction stays fast and predictable.

Key advantages:

- ready to use small home designs
- existing Texas based construction partners
- pre approved modular standards
- rapid deployment capability
- consistent quality across the state

This keeps the focus on children rather than construction projects.

5.3 Simple layouts designed for visibility and safety

Homes will use clear, open floor plans that allow caregivers to supervise children effectively. Safety is built into the layout so concerns can be identified early.

Layout principles:

- open kitchen and living spaces
- clear sightlines between rooms
- secure windows and doors
- safe bathroom design
- child safe storage areas

5.4 Neighborhood design that protects children and prevents abuse

Each pod is designed as a small, clearly defined neighborhood that supports safety, visibility, and supervision while maintaining a normal residential environment. Controlled access helps prevent unauthorized entry and reduces opportunities for harm without creating an institutional setting.

Neighborhood features:

- monitored entry points to the community
- safe pathways between homes
- centrally located support staff
- visible outdoor common areas
- community lighting and **limited perimeter or common-area cameras where appropriate**

5.5 Digital tools for safety, well being, and placement stability

Texas will use simple, practical digital tools to support **placement stability, safety oversight, and service coordination**. These tools help authorized caseworkers and caregivers identify concerns earlier, reduce administrative delays, and improve communication without intruding into a child's private life.

Digital support includes:

- placement stability dashboards
- school attendance coordination
- caregiver and caseworker communication tools
- incident reporting and follow up logs
- mental health and service coordination

These tools are used to monitor **system performance and placement outcomes**, not to track individual movement or conduct continuous surveillance of children.

5.6 All homes follow existing Texas building codes

This initiative does not change building codes or introduce new engineering requirements. All homes used in Family Communities will follow:

- Texas building codes
- local safety standards
- windstorm and fire safety requirements
- standard inspection processes

This keeps the system simple, safe, and aligned with statewide rules.

SECTION 6 - INTEGRATION WITH STATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGENCIES

6.1 Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and Community Based Care (CBC) alignment

The Family Communities Act aligns with existing DFPS authority and Community Based Care regions. Instead of replacing CBC entirely, this model gives each region a stable placement option that meets higher standards.

Integration includes:

- region based pod placement
- consistent statewide rules
- clear accountability for contractors
- standard training for caregivers
- better coordination with DFPS caseworkers

6.2 Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and mental health partners

Mental health support is critical. HHSC and local behavioral health providers will coordinate direct services for each pod. This reduces crisis placements and supports long term healing.

Support includes:

- on site or local mental health professionals
- trauma informed treatment plans
- crisis intervention protocols
- regular check ins with youth
- consistent communication with caregivers

6.3 Coordination with local ISDs for school stability

Children in foster care fall behind when they change schools. Family Communities reduce these disruptions by placing pods near public schools and creating strong partnerships with ISDs.

School coordination includes:

- stable school assignments
- transportation planning
- access to tutoring, sports, and clubs
- communication between ISDs and caregivers
- school counselors trained on foster care needs

6.4 Community medical, behavioral, and trauma support

Family Communities will connect with nearby clinics, hospitals, and behavioral health centers so children receive consistent healthcare. This avoids delays and reduces emergency room visits.

Healthcare support includes:

- routine medical checkups
- dental and vision care
- behavioral health assessments
- medication management
- clear referral pathways

6.5 Public private partnerships allowed under current law

Texas already allows partnerships between state agencies and private providers. This initiative uses those partnerships to improve stability and create consistent quality across pods.

Partnership benefits:

- flexible deployment
- strong quality control
- additional funding options
- access to specialized services
- support for high needs youth

6.6 Civilian oversight boards and community input

Each region will have a civilian oversight board that monitors Family Communities. These boards increase transparency, detect problems early, and ensure children have an independent place to report concerns.

Oversight board roles:

- review pod safety and performance

- monitor incident trends
- provide community feedback
- ensure accountability
- protect the voice of children

6.7 Statewide transparency dashboards

Transparency builds trust. Texas will create a public dashboard that reports **aggregate, de-identified system performance data** so families, lawmakers, and communities can see how each region performs without exposing private or protected information.

Dashboard metrics include:

- placement stability trends
- school attendance trends
- critical incident counts and response timelines
- caregiver turnover rates
- long term youth outcome trends

All public reporting is **aggregate and non-identifiable**. No child, caregiver, home, or household is individually identifiable through dashboard data.

6.8 How this initiative strengthens Texas as a whole

The Family Communities Act strengthens multiple statewide systems without adding complexity. It supports Texas long-term goals by linking children to stable schools, reliable housing, and long-term support.

Benefits to broader initiatives:

- stronger workforce outcomes through stable childhoods
- reduced homelessness and crime
- better educational achievement
- smoother access to healthcare
- predictable long term community impact

SECTION 7 - DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY AND PRIORITIZATION

7.1 Data driven regional need assessment

Texas will build Family Communities where they are needed most. Deployment begins with a statewide assessment of placement shortages, crisis regions, and counties with the highest instability. This makes sure we help the kids in the toughest situations before anyone else.

Assessment factors include:

- number of children sleeping in offices or hotels
- regional placement shortages
- high caseworker turnover
- reports of abuse or failed providers
- distance between current placements and home counties

7.2 Urban, suburban, and rural deployment phases

Texas will use a phased approach that builds pods in every type of community. Each region has different needs. The deployment model adjusts for population density, school access, land availability, and existing provider networks.

Phase focus:

- urban regions with high placement volumes
- suburban regions with growing populations
- rural regions with limited placements and long drive times

7.3 Siting criteria near schools, clinics, and community anchors

A Family Community should be close to local resources. Children benefit when home, school, and support services are close together. We'll choose sites with access to public schools and reliable medical care.

Site criteria include:

- nearby ISDs
- access to healthcare providers
- safe transportation routes
- low crime areas
- land suitable for small pod development

7.4 Phase by phase pod rollout

Texas will deploy pods in phases to maintain quality and avoid overwhelming the workforce. Each phase will be evaluated with clear performance benchmarks before expanding further.

Phased rollout:

- Phase 1: pilot pods in highest need regions
- Phase 2: expansion to remaining CBC regions
- Phase 3: statewide coverage across urban and rural areas
- Phase 4: replacement of unstable facilities with new pods

7.5 Intake and triage pathways for new cases

When a child enters state care, a clear intake path ensures stability from day one. Pods will receive children based on age, needs, and safety assessments. This avoids rushed decisions and last minute placements.

Intake priorities:

- placement stability
- age band matching
- mental health needs
- sibling grouping
- proximity to home county

7.6 Specialized care pods for high needs youth

Some children require additional support due to trauma, behavioral needs, or medical conditions. Texas will develop specialized pods with increased staffing and trained professionals to provide higher levels of care.

Specialized pods offer:

- trauma specific services
- behavioral support teams
- smaller caregiver to child ratios
- clear transition planning
- coordination with medical and mental health providers

7.7 Rapid deployment capability using existing modular infrastructure

Texas can deploy pods faster because the state already has a modular construction system through the Affordable Housing Initiative. This reduces cost and delays. Rapid deployment ensures children do not wait years for safe placements.

Rapid deployment advantages:

- pre approved home designs
- streamlined procurement
- predictable timelines
- Texas based manufacturing
- consistent statewide quality

SECTION 8 - WORKFORCE, LOGISTICS, AND IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Core staffing model and training

Family Communities rely on trained, consistent caregivers who understand trauma, child development, and daily structure. Each pod will have full time staff supported by regional specialists and mental health teams.

Staffing model includes:

- full time caregivers living or working within the pod
- trauma informed training for all staff
- regional support teams for oversight
- behavioral health specialists
- on site or local case management

8.2 Priority hiring for trusted professions

Texas will recruit stable, respected professionals to anchor these communities. Hiring will focus on Texans who already serve their communities and bring strong values to caregiving.

Priority hiring groups:

- teachers
- nurses and rural medical staff
- veterans
- first responders
- skilled tradespeople
- rural working families

These groups offer reliability, discipline, and community trust.

8.3 Daily life, structure, and community routines

Children thrive when life feels predictable and safe. Family Communities will follow stable routines that give children a sense of home. Having a steady routine cuts down on fights and helps kids feel grounded.

Daily routines include:

- morning and evening schedules
- regular mealtimes
- homework hours and tutoring
- after school activities
- consistent rules and expectations

8.4 Transportation to schools, activities, and services

Each pod will have a transportation plan that supports normal childhood experiences. Children will travel safely to public school, appointments, sports, and community events.

Transportation support includes:

- dedicated vehicles for pods
- trained drivers or caregivers
- school route coordination
- access to extracurricular activities
- safe transport for medical appointments

8.5 Keeping sibling groups and peer bonds intact

Maintaining family and peer connections is essential for healing. Pods provide space to keep siblings together or within walking distance. Peer relationships also protect mental health.

Sibling and peer support includes:

- shared home placement whenever safe and appropriate
- coordinated schedules
- shared meals and activities
- sibling contact built into routines
- priority reunification planning

8.6 Vendor partnerships with Texas businesses

Family Communities will support local economic growth by partnering with Texas vendors for food, services, and maintenance. This keeps spending inside Texas while ensuring pods remain well supplied.

Vendor partnerships include:

- local grocers and food suppliers
- Texas based maintenance companies
- nearby clinics and healthcare partners
- local recreation and sports programs
- community organizations and churches

8.7 Protecting stability during staff turnover

Even strong caregivers may change jobs. Pods will be structured so that turnover does not disrupt a child's entire world. A layered staffing model ensures stability even when one adult leaves.

Turnover stability includes:

- overlapping staff roles
- transition plans for caregivers
- familiar adults remaining on site
- mentorship from community volunteers
- regular check ins during staff changes

SECTION 9 - FINANCING MODEL AND LONG-TERM STABILITY

9.1 Current foster care spending and where money is wasted today

Texas already spends large amounts on emergency placements, hotel stays, office supervision, transportation, lawsuits, and high turnover. These costs drain the budget without improving outcomes.

Current waste includes:

- hotel and office placements that cost far more than stable homes
- frequent moves that increase casework hours and administrative costs
- litigation and settlements from unsafe facilities
- duplicated services across contractors
- emergency transport for children shifted between counties

Redirecting these funds into stable Family Communities reduces long term expenses.

9.2 Redirecting funds into stable communities

The Family Communities Act focuses on using existing dollars more effectively. Money spent on instability will be redirected into predictable, long term homes. This approach is designed to use existing foster care dollars more effectively, rather than relying on new taxes.

Funding priorities shift from:

- emergency shelters to stable pods
- temporary placements to long term homes
- crisis response to preventive care
- repeated service duplication to unified support
- expensive litigation to proactive oversight

9.3 Use of existing construction capacity from the Affordable Housing Initiative

This initiative is designed to use the modular small home pipeline proposed in the Texas Affordable Housing and Construction Reform Initiative. The Family Communities Act uses this system to lower costs and speed up deployment.

Financial advantages:

- reduced design and engineering expenses
- established partnerships with Texas manufacturers
- faster construction timelines
- consistent materials and quality
- less risk of cost overruns

This lets Texas focus its budget on caregiving, education, and oversight.

9.4 Funding phases for pod construction

Pods will be built in phases that match statewide need. This prevents overspending and keeps the program flexible.

Construction phases include:

- Phase 1: highest need regions
- Phase 2: additional CBC regions
- Phase 3: statewide coverage
- Phase 4: replacement of failing facilities

Each phase evaluates outcomes before expanding further.

9.5 Operational savings from fewer moves, fewer lawsuits, and better outcomes

Family Communities will lower long term costs by reducing instability and improving child outcomes. Fewer emergency placements and fewer incidents will save taxpayer dollars.

Savings come from:

- fewer crisis responses
- reduced CPS staff turnover
- fewer legal claims
- improved education outcomes
- reduced homelessness in young adults

Stable children become stable adults. This reduces long term burdens on Texas communities.

9.6 Public private partnerships and long term contracts

Texas can partner with experienced organizations to support operations, mental health services, and staffing. Long term contracts increase predictability and reduce administrative waste.

Partnership options include:

- nonprofit providers
- faith based organizations
- local medical networks
- community colleges and workforce boards
- regional behavioral health authorities

9.7 Guardrails to promote continuity and stability

Consistency protects children. The Family Communities Act is designed to promote continuity across administrations by increasing transparency, accountability, and long term planning, while respecting the Legislature's constitutional authority over appropriations.

Stability measures include:

- multi year service contracts **where permitted by law**
- transparent public reporting
- annual briefings to the Legislature
- regional civilian oversight boards
- a public dashboard that reports aggregate outcomes

These measures are intended to **discourage disruptive policy reversals** and promote stable care for children, not to bind future legislatures or restrict lawful budget authority.

9.8 Making the system durable for decades

A stable system must survive leadership changes, budget cycles, and statewide emergencies. This initiative creates long term structures that keep children protected no matter who is in office.

Long term durability comes from:

- embedded statewide standards
- partnerships with local schools and health providers
- a fixed pod model that does not depend on single contractors
- consistent funding through redirected spending
- strong community involvement

SECTION 10 - SECONDARY BENEFITS AND LONG-TERM IMPACT

10.1 Reduced homelessness among former foster youth

Stable communities reduce the number of young adults aging out without support. When kids grow up in a steady place, they're better prepared for school, work, and real life.

Benefits include:

- fewer youth entering homelessness
- higher graduation rates
- stronger employment outcomes
- improved financial stability
- reduced reliance on local shelters and services

10.2 Reduced crime through stability and community visibility

Children who grow up in stable, supervised environments are less likely to engage in criminal activity. Community pods improve safety by providing visibility, structure, and strong adult presence.

Public safety gains:

- fewer behavioral issues
- lower juvenile crime rates
- reduced gang influence
- safer neighborhoods
- stronger community ties

10.3 Better education outcomes and stronger school performance

Kids do better in school when they aren't bouncing from place to place. Family Communities support healthy development and consistent academic progress.

Education improvements:

- fewer school changes
- stronger attendance
- higher graduation rates
- more access to extracurriculars
- improved social development

10.4 Lower CPS caseworker turnover

Stability for children reduces burnout for CPS staff. When placements are predictable and incidents decrease, caseworkers can focus on quality rather than crisis management.

Workforce benefits:

- reduced turnover
- more effective case planning
- better monitoring
- improved job satisfaction
- stronger communication with caregivers

10.5 Restoring public trust in the system

For decades, families and communities have lost confidence in foster care. By building safe, transparent pods with clear oversight, Texas restores trust and encourages parents to seek help without fear.

Trust is rebuilt through:

- visible safety standards
- consistent caregiver quality
- transparent reporting
- strong oversight boards
- predictable support for youth

10.6 Providing a safe option for mothers who fear the current system

Mothers who cannot raise a child often feel trapped by the fear that foster care will harm their child. Family Communities offer a clear and safe alternative.

Supportive outcomes:

- reduced fear about state care
- safer voluntary placements
- more stable options for infants
- improved family planning confidence
- reassurance that a child will be protected

10.7 Stronger Texas communities statewide

Family Communities anchor local stability. They create jobs, support schools, and reduce long term social costs. This helps towns, cities, and rural areas stay strong.

Community benefits:

- local employment growth
- stronger partnerships between agencies and schools
- better health outcomes

- reduced strain on emergency services
- more resilient families statewide

10.8 A national model for child safety and dignity

If we do this right, Texas can show the whole country what real child protection looks like. If we get this right, Texas can set the bar for how a state takes care of its kids.

National impact includes:

- clear policy leadership
- modernized placement systems
- improved national outcomes
- recognition for Texas innovation
- long term positive influence across the country

SECTION 11 - CONCLUSION: A TEXAS FIRST PATH FORWARD

11.1 What changes on day one

On day one, Texas sets a new standard for the protection of children. The state commits to stable homes, trained caregivers, and clear oversight. No more children sleeping in offices. No more constant moves. No more uncertainty about safety.

Immediate actions include:

- launching the first regional pilot pods
- establishing oversight boards
- setting statewide standards for pod operations
- redirecting emergency spending into stable placements
- coordinating with local ISDs and medical partners

11.2 What changes over the first decade

Over the next decade, Family Communities replace unstable placements with safe, predictable homes. Children grow up in real neighborhoods instead of temporary facilities. Teens transition into adulthood with support instead of being left on their own.

Long term changes include:

- statewide coverage of pod communities
- strong partnerships between schools and caregivers
- reduced homelessness among former foster youth
- fewer incidents of abuse
- more consistent caseworker performance
- healthier long term outcomes for children and communities

11.3 A clear standard: Texas protects its children, period

This initiative sets a simple expectation. If a child enters state care, Texas will give them a safe home, a stable community, and a path to a better future. Every child deserves protection, dignity, and stability. When the state becomes responsible for a child, that responsibility must be honored without excuses.

Core commitments:

- protect every child
- prevent instability
- provide consistent oversight
- support children into adulthood
- build communities that reflect Texas values

Texas becomes stronger when its children are safe. The Family Communities Act ensures that no child is forgotten and no child is left behind. It is a promise to rebuild foster care so that every child in Texas has a future they can count on.

SECTION 12 - FAQ SECTION

12.1 Will this increase crime or lower safety in neighborhoods?

No. Family Communities are small, supervised pods with trained caregivers and strong visibility. These communities reduce crime by keeping children stable and supported.

Key safety points:

- monitored entry points
- clear sightlines in pod design
- trauma informed caregiving
- consistent adult supervision
- fewer unstructured placements

12.2 Will this hurt property values?

No. Small pod communities are low impact, residential in layout, and designed to blend into neighborhoods. They look like normal homes and follow local safety standards.

Why values stay stable:

- pods are small, not large facilities
- no high traffic or disruptive activity
- homes match surrounding design standards
- caregivers maintain stable environments
- oversight prevents deterioration

12.3 What is a small community pod?

A pod is a small neighborhood of 10 to 50 homes designed for supervised, stable care. A pod is a small neighborhood of homes where kids can live in a real community, not an institution.

Pod features:

- safe home layouts
- consistent caregiving
- clear visibility
- quiet streets and walking paths
- strong community routines

12.4 How big are the homes?

Homes are full size small homes based on the modular standards established in the Affordable Housing Initiative. They are built for stability and comfort, not institutional living.

Size range:

- 600 to 1,400 square feet
- 2 to 4 bedrooms depending on need
- open layout for supervision
- built to Texas codes

12.5 Why not use traditional foster homes?

Many foster homes are safe and effective, but the statewide system lacks predictable quality and enough stable placements. Pods do not replace good foster parents. They replace unsafe or unstable placements.

Benefits of pods:

- consistent caregiver training
- long term stability
- clear oversight
- reduced caseworker burden
- better outcomes for children

12.6 Does this replace foster parents?

No. Foster parents remain an essential part of the system. Pods provide a reliable alternative when foster homes are unavailable, unsafe, or unable to keep siblings together.

Pod role:

- backup for critical shortages
- stable placement option
- safe home for high need cases
- support for regional capacity

12.7 How is the housing built?

The homes are built using the same modular approach outlined in my Texas Affordable Housing and Construction Reform Initiative. Using a shared system keeps costs low and makes construction faster and more consistent.

Key advantages:

- lower cost
- faster deployment
- Texas based labor
- predictable timelines
- compliance with state codes

12.8 Why use the Affordable Housing Initiative instead of building from scratch?

By pairing this with a modular housing network, Texas can save money and time. The focus stays on protecting children, not reinventing construction.

Reasons for reuse:

- existing Texas factories
- proven designs
- faster delivery
- reduced overhead
- consistent statewide standards

12.9 Who qualifies as caregivers?

Caregivers will be selected from trusted Texas professions and trained to work with children who have experienced trauma.

Preferred candidates:

- teachers
- nurses
- veterans
- first responders
- skilled tradespeople
- rural working families

12.10 How will oversight prevent abuse?

Oversight is built into every part of the program. Civilian boards, state dashboards, and consistent inspections ensure issues are identified early.

Oversight tools:

- regular safety audits
- unannounced visits
- mental health check ins
- direct child communication channels
- public reporting

12.11 What is the timeline for rollout?

Texas will use phased deployment. Pods will be built first in high need regions, then expanded statewide.

Timeline overview:

- Year 1: pilot pods
- Year 2 to 4: regional expansion
- Year 5 and beyond: statewide coverage

12.12 How is this funded long term?

Texas will redirect current foster care spending into stable communities. The program reduces costly emergency placements and lawsuits.

Funding sources:

- existing foster care budget
- redirected emergency funds
- public private partnerships
- predictable long term contracts

12.13 What about rural areas?

Rural regions often have the fewest safe placements. Pods will be built in these regions to reduce long travel distances and keep children closer to home.

Rural benefits:

- more local placements
- reduced transport time
- partnership with rural ISDs
- local employment opportunities
- stronger community support

12.14 Will this protect siblings from being separated?

Yes. Keeping siblings together is a core priority of the program.

Protection measures:

- shared home placement when safe
- same pod if not the same home
- coordinated schedules
- routine sibling time
- joint case planning

12.15 How does this model help mothers who fear the current system?

Family Communities give mothers confidence that if a child enters care, they will be safe. This addresses a major fear that pushes families away from seeking help.

Supportive factors:

- transparent oversight
- safe homes instead of facilities
- trained caregivers
- strong community support
- predictable routines

12.16 Does this reduce the number of children aging out?

Yes. Children who grow up in stable pods have long term support and do not face sudden cutoff at eighteen.

Support into adulthood:

- optional housing through age twenty one

- life skills and job support
- school and training pathways
- mentorship and guidance
- safe transition into independence

12.17 Is this a state run orphanage system?

No. Family Communities are small neighborhoods with normal homes and trained caregivers. They are nothing like old institutional orphanages or dorm style facilities. Children live in real homes, attend local schools, and grow up in a community environment that feels familiar and safe.

12.18 Does this change removal laws or parental rights?

No. This initiative does not change who can remove a child, when removal happens, or how parental rights are handled. All current Texas laws stay the same. Family Communities only provide safer placements **after** a court has already made its decision.

12.19 Will these pods only be built in low income or rural areas?

No. Site selection is based on data, safety, school access, and regional need, not income level. Texas will place pods in urban, suburban, and rural regions so children can stay close to their home communities whenever appropriate.

12.20 Will caregivers or staff be able to force treatment or medication?

No. All medical and mental health care follows existing Texas laws and parental rights protections. Caregivers cannot force treatment. Licensed professionals follow the same rules they follow today.

12.21 Will this increase my taxes?

No. This initiative is designed to use existing foster care spending more effectively, redirecting money currently wasted on emergency hotel stays, lawsuits, and instability into stable communities.

SECTION 13 - MESSAGE FROM STEPHEN

Texas is at its best when we protect those who cannot protect themselves. When a child enters state care, that child is placing their entire future in our hands. They are trusting Texas to give them safety, stability, and hope. Today, too many children are left with instability, fear, and uncertainty. That is not the Texas I believe in and not the Texas we should accept. We owe these children more than temporary fixes and empty promises. We owe them a real home, a real community, and adults they can count on.

The Texas Family Communities Act is built on a simple belief. Children deserve stability. They deserve a home where they feel safe. They deserve adults who stay and communities that support them. Stability is the foundation for everything a child becomes. Without it, school becomes harder, trust becomes fragile, and the future feels out of reach. With it, children grow, heal, and rebuild their lives. Stability gives a child the chance to imagine tomorrow instead of surviving today.

This plan gives us a better path than what we have now. It replaces the chaos of the current system with structure and care. It gives caregivers the training they need. It restores trust for families who fear what will happen if their child enters state care. It creates real neighborhoods designed for healing, not institutions that create more harm. It ensures no child in Texas grows up feeling forgotten. It ensures no child ages out into homelessness or poverty. It ensures our state stands up to protect those who depend on us most.

My commitment is simple. Texas will protect its children. Texas will create safe communities where children can grow and succeed. Texas will show the nation what real child protection looks like. This is not just a policy. It is a promise. A promise that every child matters. A promise that responsibility will guide our actions. A promise that we will build a foster care system worthy of the children we serve.

Texas should lead with strength and purpose, but also with heart. Our kids deserve nothing less. And if we stay focused and do this the right way, we can give every child a safer future.