Goal: Redesign child welfare to safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home care, improve permanency, improve transitions to adulthood and take maximum advantage of federal funding.

Objectives:

1. Extend title IV-E waiver for five years to September 30, 2016
   a. Propose extension of current waiver by five years with the current terms and conditions. This would include fixed funding for foster care with 3% annual increase and matching federal funds for adoption assistance subject to an aggregate cap with the annual increase in the cap percentage of 15% for a ten year aggregate federal total of $ x,xxx million. Prepare a letter to ACF making formal request.
   b. Be prepared to respond to counterproposals from ACF.
   c. Examine logical next steps in evaluation.
   d. Propose understanding outside the waiver terms and conditions that state can get federal matching funds outside of the waiver for extension of foster care beyond the age of 18 since this option did not exist at the time of the waiver approval.
   e. Propose understanding outside the waiver terms and condition that Florida may receive Guardianship Assistance Program matching federal funds and that such funds will not count towards the aggregate adoption assistance cap. The Guardianship Assistance Program did not exist at the time of the waiver approval.

2. Extend foster care to age 21.
   a. Consistent with the recommendations of the Independent Living Redesign work group, propose extension of foster care to age 21. State funding would come from redirection of current unmatched state funds used in the Independent Living program.
   b. Prepare state legislation to authorize expansion of foster care to age 21.
   c. Examine fiscal impact of incremental implementation compared to full implementation.
   d. Prepare Legislative Budget Request to restructure resources for implementations of proposed state legislation.
   e. Prepare state IV-B and IV-E State Plan amendment to obtain federal approval for expansion consistent with proposed state legislation.
   f. Build appropriate contingencies into legislative proposal, LBR proposal and State Plan Amendment(s).

3. Implement a Guardianship Assistance Program and transition from the current Relative Caregiver Program to the new program.
   a. Prepare state legislative proposal to create a Guardianship Assistance Program and provide for coordination of the phase-in of new program with phase-out of current Relative Caregiver Program.
   b. Prepare state legislative proposal to rewrite state licensing statutes to facilitate implementation of Guardianship Assistance Program. The proposed licensure legislation would create a tiered licensing structure to provide for child safety based on needs of children, the type of setting and the intensity of services. This proposal must be consistent with federal licensing requirements to assure eligibility for IV-E federal funds.
   c. Prepare a Legislative Budget Request for Guardianship Assistance and Relative Caregiver funds consistent with legislative proposals.
d. Prepare analysis of impact change on TANF budget, TANF MOE, IV-E waiver saving provisions and use of current general revenue.

e. Prepare application for federal approval of Guardianship Assistance Program consistent with proposed legislation with appropriate contingencies.

4. Prepare comprehensive briefing materials for EOG, OPB, Legislative Staff (substantive and appropriations), Legislators, stakeholders, etc. to explain the proposal and the rationale.

5. Submit application for federal grant opportunity to reduce long term foster care.
   a. Work with stakeholders to identify most viable proposals. Ensure coordination with partners such as Casey and Eckerd Family Foundation.
   b. Ensure consistency of proposed projects (s) with strategic Department goals.

6. Submit applications for federal grant opportunity related to Diligent Recruitment of Families for Children in the Foster Care System.
   a. Look for opportunity to further initiatives in recruitment and retention of foster parents including transitioning to resource family/foster parent mentoring models.
   b. Ensure consistency of proposal projects with strategic Department goals.