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## BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2021

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2020



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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

## Field Operations

### History and Purpose

The Field Operations appropriation to the Department of Human Services (DHS) provides funding for staff that directly and indirectly supports the delivery of protective services, case management services, eligibility determinations, basic support services, and support for providers. At the beginning of FY 2018, staffing levels were set at 1,233 employees located in 42 full-time county offices (a decrease of four employees compared to FY 2017) and 228 staff in centralized locations in Council Bluffs and Des Moines. The Department divides the Field Operations Unit into five service areas: Northern, Western, Eastern, Des Moines, and Cedar Rapids. In FY 2018, field staff consisted of social workers (22.0%), abuse assessors (14.0%), income maintenance workers (36.0%), supervisors (9.0%), managers (4.0%), and support staff (15.0%). Some of the frequent activities performed by staff members in these areas include:

- **Protective Services:** Specialized social workers perform child and dependent adult assessments when abuse is alleged. Generally, each worker has 12 to 14 new assessments each month. The assessments must be completed within 20 business days.
- **Child Welfare Case Management:** Social work case managers handle child welfare cases as well as adoptive placements, foster care licensure, and other related services. A case manager who handles only child welfare cases supports 29 to 34 children and/or families. For the other services, a case manager supports 114 children and/or families. Tasks include identifying child and parent needs, developing case plans, and connecting families with providers.
- **Eligibility Services:** Income maintenance staff performs eligibility activities for Medicaid, Food Assistance, and Family Investment Program recipients. Tasks include reviewing eligibility information for completeness; cross-checking citizenship, income, and other information in multiple databases; and other duties as necessary.
- **Centralized Services:** The Customer Call Center receives over 28,000 calls monthly from clients who need to report eligibility changes. The Facility Unit supports Medicaid coverage for nursing facilities. The Child Care Assistance Unit determines eligibility for assistance as well as provider payment support. The Integrated Claims Recovery Unit researches and recovers payments involving error or fraud. Other groups determine eligibility for federal funding and support child care facility licensing.
- **Customer Service and Help Desks:** These small groups have knowledge in social work and eligibility matters and provide statewide support for frontline staff. Other groups support training, constituent contacts, legislation analysis, and budgeting.

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### More Information

Department of Human Services Field Offices: [dhs.iowa.gov/dhs\\_office\\_locator](https://dhs.iowa.gov/dhs_office_locator)  
LSA Staff Contact: Kent Ohms (515.725.2200) [kenneth.ohms@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:kenneth.ohms@legis.iowa.gov)

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**Funding Sources**

Field Operations is funded by the State General Fund and a blend of federal funds. The FY 2018 total budget for Field Operations was \$134.3 million.

**State General Fund**

An annual appropriation for Field Operations is provided in the Health and Human Services Appropriations Act. The General Fund appropriation for FY 2018 was \$49.1 million.

**Federal Funds**

Federal funds support this appropriation through a number of sources, including Title IV-B, Title IV-E, Title XIX, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Child Care Development Fund, and the Social Services Block Grant. In FY 2018, federal funds provided \$80.9 million of all Field Operations funding. Federal funding also supports the Bureau of Refugee Services, located within the Field Services appropriation. The primary function of this unit is to help non-English-speaking refugees find employment.

**Related Statutes and Administrative Rules**

Iowa Code chapters [235B](#) and [239B](#)

Iowa Code sections [217.42](#), [217.43](#), [217.44](#), [234.12](#), [235A.14](#), and [249A.3](#)

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