

**232.188 Decategorization of child welfare and juvenile justice funding initiative.**

1. *Definitions.* For the purposes of [this section](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

a. “Decategorization governance board” or “governance board” means the group that enters into and implements a decategorization project agreement.

b. “Decategorization project” means the county or counties that have entered into a decategorization agreement to implement the decategorization initiative in the county or multicounty area covered by the agreement.

c. “Decategorization services funding pool” or “funding pool” means the funding designated for a decategorization project from all sources.

2. *Purpose.* The decategorization of the child welfare and juvenile justice funding initiative is intended to establish a system of delivering human services based upon client needs to replace a system based upon a multitude of categorical programs and funding sources, each with different service definitions and eligibility requirements. The purposes of the decategorization initiative include but are not limited to redirecting child welfare and juvenile justice funding to services which are more preventive, family-centered, and community-based in order to reduce use of restrictive approaches which rely upon institutional, out-of-home, and out-of-community services.

3. *Implementation.*

a. Implementation of the initiative shall be through creation of decategorization projects. A project shall consist of either a single county or a group of counties interested in jointly implementing the initiative. Representatives of the department, juvenile court services, and county government shall develop a project agreement to implement the initiative within a project.

b. The initiative shall include community planning activities in the area covered by a project. As part of the community planning activities, the department shall partner with other community stakeholders to develop service alternatives that provide less restrictive levels of care for children and families receiving services from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems within the project area.

c. The decategorization initiative shall not be implemented in a manner that limits the legal rights of children and families to receive services.

4. *Governance board.*

a. In partnership with an interested county or group of counties which has demonstrated the commitment and involvement of the affected county department, or departments, of human services, the juvenile justice system within the project area, and board, or boards, of supervisors in order to form a decategorization project, the department shall develop a process for combining specific state and state-federal funding categories into a decategorization services funding pool for that project. A decategorization project shall be implemented by a decategorization governance board. The decategorization governance board shall develop specific, quantifiable short-term and long-term plans for enhancing the family-centered and community-based services and reducing reliance upon out-of-community care in the project area.

b. The department shall work with the decategorization governance boards to best coordinate planning activities and most effectively target funding resources. The department shall work with the decategorization governance boards to support board planning and service development activities and to promote the most effective alignment of resources.

c. A decategorization governance board shall coordinate the project’s planning and budgeting activities with the department’s designee for the county or counties comprising the project area and the early childhood Iowa area board or boards for the early childhood Iowa area or areas within which the decategorization project is located.

5. *Funding pool.*

a. The governance board for a decategorization project has authority over the project’s decategorization services funding pool and shall manage the pool to provide more flexible, individualized, family-centered, preventive, community-based, comprehensive, and coordinated service systems for children and families served in that project area. A funding pool shall also be used for child welfare and juvenile justice systems enhancements.

b. Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#), moneys designated for a project's decategorization services funding pool that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain available for expenditure as directed by the project's governance board for child welfare and juvenile justice systems enhancements and other purposes of the project for the next three succeeding fiscal years. Such moneys shall be known as "carryover funding". Moneys may be made available to a funding pool from one or more of the following sources:

- (1) Funds designated for the initiative in a state appropriation.
- (2) Child welfare and juvenile justice services funds designated for the initiative by the department.
- (3) Juvenile justice program funds designated for the initiative by a chief juvenile court officer.
- (4) Carryover funding.
- (5) Any other source designating moneys for the funding pool.

c. The services and activities funded from a project's funding pool may vary depending upon the strategies selected by the project's governance board and shall be detailed in an annual child welfare and juvenile justice decategorization services plan developed by the governance board. A decategorization governance board shall involve community representatives and county organizations in the development of the plan for that project's funding pool. In addition, the governance board shall coordinate efforts through communication with the department regarding budget planning and decategorization service decisions.

d. A decategorization governance board is responsible for ensuring that decategorization services expenditures from that project's funding pool do not exceed the amount of funding available. If necessary, the governance board shall reduce expenditures or discontinue specific services as necessary to manage within the funding pool resources available for a fiscal year.

e. The annual child welfare and juvenile justice decategorization services plan developed for use of the funding pool by a decategorization governance board shall be submitted to the department and the early childhood Iowa state board. In addition, the decategorization governance board shall submit an annual progress report to the department and the early childhood Iowa state board which summarizes the progress made toward attaining the objectives contained in the plan. The progress report shall serve as an opportunity for information sharing and feedback.

6. *Departmental role.* The departmental share of the child welfare appropriation that is not allocated by law for the decategorization initiative shall be managed by and is under the authority of the department. The department is responsible for meeting the child welfare service needs with the available funding resources.

[92 Acts, ch 1229, §18; 98 Acts, ch 1206, §11, 20; 99 Acts, ch 111, §10; 99 Acts, ch 190, §16; 99 Acts, ch 192, §33; 2004 Acts, ch 1116, §14; 2005 Acts, ch 95, §1; 2010 Acts, ch 1031, §297; 2011 Acts, ch 129, §90, 156; 2017 Acts, ch 29, §54; 2022 Acts, ch 1098, §69; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §642](#)

Referred to in [§225C.49, 235.7, 237A.1, 249A.26](#)