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[HF 644](#) – Federal Family First Prevention Services Act (LSB1265HV.1)  
Analyst: Kent Ohms (515.725.2200) [kenneth.ohms@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:kenneth.ohms@legis.iowa.gov)  
Fiscal Note Version – Final Action

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**Description**

[House File 644](#) makes changes to the Iowa Code to begin implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) (Pub. L. No. [115-123](#), Title VII).

Sections 1 and 7 of the Bill require protocols to ensure children maintain suitable existing medical, dental, or mental health provider relationships so that children are not inappropriately placed in nonfamily settings due to an inappropriate diagnosis of mental illness, behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities.

Section 2 requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to include “Proof of Foster Care” letters as part of a child’s transition plan.

Sections 5 and 6 amend Iowa Code section [237.8](#) regarding background checks related to hiring of employees working in residential facilities. Current law requires a fingerprint-based criminal history check for prospective employees “with access to a child when the child is alone.” The FFPSA raises the standard to require the national fingerprint-based criminal history check for anyone working in a facility where children reside.

**Background**

The FFPSA was a provision of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 and will dramatically change child welfare systems across the country. The FFPSA includes a major change in the way federal Title IV-E funds can be spent by states. Title IV-E funds previously could be used only to help with the costs of foster care maintenance for eligible children; administrative expenses to manage the program; training for staff, foster parents, and certain private agency staff; adoption assistance; and kinship guardianship assistance.

Under FFPSA, states, territories, and tribes with an approved Title IV-E plan have the option to use these funds for prevention services that would allow “candidates for foster care” to stay with their parents or relatives. States will be reimbursed for prevention services for up to 12 months. A written, trauma-informed prevention plan must be created and services will need to be evidence-based. Iowa’s current implementation timeline is to have an approved Title IV-E plan in place by July 1, 2020. Conversely, the federal government will place restrictions on Title IV-E funding for group care placements.

**Assumptions**

- The current Iowa Child Welfare Information System and Medicaid System would need to be updated to allow for efficiencies of pulling medical data from the Medicaid System and making it available for a caseworker. This is estimated to take 2,380 hours of work.
- The current Child Welfare Information System would need updates to autogenerate foster care age-out letters. This is estimated to take 190 hours of work.
- One hour of system updating costs \$105.

- Federal matching funds are available for computer programming costs.
- In 2019, there were approximately 1,900 staff employed at residential facilities in Iowa.
- On an ongoing basis, 25.0% staff turnover at these residential facilities will require an additional 475 fingerprint-based criminal history checks in successive years. This turnover will only be half realized in the first year.
- Each fingerprint-based criminal history check costs \$40. The DHS intends to pay for these background checks, but could also pass along the costs to the providers or applicants.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Total costs for computer system updates are estimated at \$270,000. Of this amount, the State will be responsible for covering an estimated \$130,000. These will be one-time costs in FY 2020. These costs were covered by the Technology Reinvestment Fund appropriations for the Family and Children Services System ([HF 765](#), FY 2020 Infrastructure Appropriations Bill).

The cost for background checks is estimated at \$85,000 in FY 2020, and \$19,000 annually thereafter. This cost is planned to be absorbed into the Child and Family Services General Fund appropriation included in [HF 766](#) (FY 2020 Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill).

### **Sources**

Department of Human Services  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
Legislative Services Agency calculations

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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June 3, 2019

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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