



[SF 2385](#) – Child Abuse Hotline Procedures (LSB6060SV)
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Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

[Senate File 2385](#) directs the Department of Human Services (DHS) to adopt administrative rules to accomplish the following related to the Child Abuse Hotline:

- Utilize an audio script that includes immunity, liability, and confidentiality information regarding good-faith or false reports.
- Require an intake worker to read the written narrative of the reporter’s statements back to the reporter prior to the conclusion of the call.

Background

The Centralized Services Intake Unit (CSIU) accepts calls for child abuse, child in need of assistance, and dependent adult abuse. Total calls received for these three topics the past two fiscal years have averaged 66,700 annually.

Iowa Code section [232.71B](#)(18) permits the DHS to provide county attorneys with information about a caller who has reported more than three times entirely false and without merit alleged child abuse. Reporting or causing false information of alleged child abuse to be reported is a simple misdemeanor (Iowa Code section [232.75](#)(3)).

The Office of the Ombudsman released an [Investigative Report](#) into how the DHS handled child abuse reports about Natalie Finn and her siblings. A recommendation contained in that report was to develop a policy for all intakes requiring intake workers to read the written narrative of the caller’s statements back to the caller before the conclusion of the call. The DHS responded that it summarizes the reported concerns and reviews those with the caller to give the caller the opportunity to verify that summary.

Assumptions

- The scripted portion of the call can be incorporated into the pre-recorded messages portion of the hotline answering extensions.
- Reading the intake worker’s written report verbatim back to a caller will increase the average length of calls. Three minutes per call is an estimated average.
- The average number of child abuse intake calls has been 55,000.
- To prevent extra hold time for other callers, DHS will need to hire two additional Social Workers full-time equivalent (FTE) positions for the CSIU.
- Each additional FTE position will require \$2,097 for computers and technology.
- The federal match rate will cover 10.9% of the salary costs and 32.9% of technology costs.

Fiscal Impact

Senate File 2385 is estimated to increase state expenditures for DHS Field Operations by \$118,000 in FY 2021 and \$114,000 in FY 2022, and each year thereafter. These expenditures will draw down federal matching funds of approximately \$15,000.

Sources

Department of Human Services

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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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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