

Budget Unit Brief

FY 2017



Child and Family Services

Background

Child and Family Services (CFS) programs are administered by the [Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#) and provide for a multitude of child welfare and juvenile justice services. Child welfare and juvenile justice services and interventions for children, youth, and families are designed to improve safety, permanency, well-being, and community safety. The [Division of Child Services](#) regulates and subcontracts appropriated state and federal funding for the delivery of community-based services and interventions.

Populations Served

Child welfare services are provided to children and families that are either at risk of abuse or that have experienced abuse and have been adjudicated a child in need of assistance (CINA). In addition, services are available to youth that have “aged out” of the foster care system and are employed or going to school. According to the DHS, the majority of children that have been abused are five years old or younger and are victims of denial of critical care. In FY 2016, 33,306 children were at risk and/or were abused. Of those, 11,706 (37.0%) were victims of abuse and received child welfare services. An average of 338 youth per year age out of the foster care system. An average of 275 new youth access Aftercare services annually for life skills training and limited financial supports each year.

Juvenile justice services are provided to children and their families if they are at risk of continued delinquent behavior, have committed a delinquent act and have been adjudicated as a delinquent, or have been certified by the chief juvenile court officer as eligible for court-ordered services. According to the DHS, in FY 2016, Juvenile Court Services received 14,376 referrals against juveniles. Less than 25.0% of the referrals resulted in a formal request for a delinquency petition. A majority were resolved through provision of services without court involvement.

Services Provided

The DHS strives to provide child welfare services that protect children and preserve and strengthen families in the least intrusive, least restrictive means possible. The DHS has established performance-based contracts with child welfare providers that align with Children and Family Services Federal outcomes. Services include:

- Early intervention and prevention services such as community care and [deategorization](#) services that build on families’ resources and community supports.
- In-home services that improve parenting skills. There are currently 11 family-centered providers that serve 4,836 families. In FY 2016, 68.0% of child victims remained in their home while receiving services to ensure safety.
- Out-of-home services that provide a safe environment when a child is not able to remain in the home or able to live with an extended family member. Services are provided to address both the parents’ and child’s needs. Approximately 29.0% of children that are removed from their home are in the care of an extended family member. Services include:
 - Parent Partners program provides peer mentoring for families in the child welfare system to improve engagement between families and the system, shorten lengths of stay for children in care, and maximize available community supports and services to reduce family reentry into the child welfare system. This service is available in approximately two-thirds of the state.
 - Family [foster care](#) services are designed to provide a temporary safe environment while parents are addressing the issues that put a child at risk. There are currently 2,253 foster families. In FY 2016, 1,818 children were served on average each month in family foster care. The average length of stay was 621 days.

Group foster care services are designed to treat children with behavior too severe to live safely in a less restrictive setting like a foster home. There are currently 14 group care contractors with a total of 1,207 available beds located throughout the state.

More Information

Department of Human Services: <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us/>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov>

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[Child Welfare Emergency Services \(CWES\)](#) includes an array of short-term and temporary interventions that range from the least restrictive approaches that can be used to avoid out-of-home placement (such as family conflict mediation or in-home interventions) to more restrictive services (including emergency juvenile shelter care). There are currently 11 CWES contractors that offer 14 CWES juvenile shelters. These contracts provide for 256 beds, although additional beds can be purchased up to the maximum number of licensed beds (currently 357).

Transition services support youth aged 18 to 21 that have aged out of foster care, such as Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) and Supervised Apartment Living (SAL). Emphasis is placed on life skills, housing, employment, education, budgeting, and relationships. Youth receive individualized services from case managers called self-sufficiency advocates. A network of 12 child welfare providers comprise the Iowa Aftercare Services Network, providing services to 452 youth monthly. In FY 2015, 93.0% of youth participating in aftercare reported having a safe and stable place to live, and 94.0% report having one or more supportive relationships.

Juvenile justice services ensure public safety by addressing delinquent behaviors. Graduated sanctions include four specific service programs: life skills; school-based supervision; supervised community treatment; and tracking, monitoring, and outreach. There are 115 graduated sanctions contracts with community providers for these services. Juvenile court/school liaisons are located in 64 school districts. Tracking and monitoring services are provided by 13 social services agencies. There were 1,143 tracking and monitoring cases closed in FY 2016.

Ten detention centers provide services to an average of 88 youth per day.

The [Eldora Training School for Boys](#) provides treatment and educational services within a highly structured setting to assist youth who are adjudicated delinquent. State funding for this institution is not included in the Child and Family Services appropriation but it is an important component of the child welfare system.

In addition to child welfare and juvenile justice services, Medicaid Behavioral Intervention Services (BHIS) are available for eligible children to improve social and behavioral functioning. The BHIS are provided by a network of 89 providers; many also provide other child welfare and juvenile justice services. The BHIS services are not included in the Child and Family Services state appropriation, but are an important component of the child welfare system.

Funding

The CFS General Fund appropriation is included in the Health and Human Services Appropriations Act, and has averaged \$84.0 million annually for the five-year period from FY 2011 to FY 2016. State funding accounts for approximately 54.0% of CFS total expenditures. Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Social Services Block provide federal matching funds for services. States are subject to financial penalties ranging from 1.0% to 5.0% of federal Title IV-B and IV-E funding if they fail to meet federal expectations, including annual targets for monthly visits with children in foster care. As of September 2016, the DHS is in the first quarter of implementing a program improvement plan approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to improve outcomes.

The CFS programs include a broad range of services and interventions for children, youth, and families. The average cost of services and interventions vary. The following information provides actual costs for FY 2015:

- Average annual cost per family for community care service: \$610.
- Average cost per child for family safety, risk, and permanency service: \$4,677 (per average 10-month episode of service).
- Average annual cost per child for family foster care: \$14,056.
- Average annual cost per child for group foster care: \$38,602.
- Average cost per child for an average 15-day CWES/emergency juvenile shelter care stay: \$2,089.
- Average annual cost per youth for PAL: \$12.35.
- Average annual cost per youth for SAL: \$29,206.
- Average cost per youth for graduated sanctions adolescent tracking and monitoring service: \$816 (per average three-month episode of service).
- Average cost per youth for graduated sanctions supervised community treatment service: \$1,159 (per average three-month episode of service).

Related Statutes

[441](#) Iowa Administrative Code

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