

**CHAPTER 1019**

## STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER — PROJECT TO PRESERVE FAMILIES

H.F. 2356

AN ACT establishing the state public defender's pilot project to implement innovative models of child welfare legal representation as the project to preserve families.

*Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:*

Section 1. Section 13B.13, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

**13B.13 State public defender pilot project—child welfare legal representation project to preserve families.**

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law to the contrary, ~~for each fiscal year for the period beginning July 1, 2020, and ending June 30, 2025,~~ the state public defender ~~may establish a pilot shall administer and maintain the project to implement innovative models of legal representation in order~~ preserve families to assist families involved in the child welfare system. ~~The state public defender shall have sole discretion to establish and implement the pilot project.~~

2. The state public defender may ~~implement~~ administer and maintain the ~~new pilot project in up to sixteen counties to preserve families~~ throughout the state.

3. ~~The purpose of the pilot project is to preserve families shall implement, administer, and study innovative ways~~ models of legal representation, through a team approach or ~~through~~ other methods, to achieve positive outcomes for families, reduce trauma to young children, and deliver financial benefits to families and their communities.

4. The state public defender may coordinate with other agencies and organizations to ~~implement the pilot project administer and maintain, seek grant funding for, and measure the results~~ analyze the outcomes of the project to preserve families.

5. The state public defender may appoint an attorney to represent an indigent person prior to initiation of formal proceedings, without court order, if such representation is deemed appropriate by the state public defender and relates to the purposes of the ~~pilot project to preserve families.~~

6. The state public defender may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this section.

Approved April 9, 2026