
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2021

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

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 DHS 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 who 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 who have "aged out" of the foster care system and are employed or going to school. According to the DHS, the majority of children who have been abused are five years old or younger and are victims of denial of critical care. In FY 2018, 28,201 children were at risk and/or were abused. Of those, 7,130 (25.3%) were victims of abuse and received child welfare services. An average of 450 youth age out of the foster care system each year. An average of 290 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 the children 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 2018, Juvenile Court Services received 13,922 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.

Child Welfare Services

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. These providers make available a wide array of services, including:

- Early intervention and prevention services, such as community care and decategorization services, that build on families' resources and community supports.
- In-home services that improve parenting skills.
- 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. Services include:

More Information

Department of Human Services: dhs.iowa.gov
LSA Staff Contact: Kent Ohms (515.725.2200) kenneth.ohms@legis.iowa.gov

- The Parent Partners program, which 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, which are designed to provide a temporary safe environment while parents are addressing the issues that put a child at risk. In FY 2018, 2,065 children were served on average each month in family foster care, and there are currently 2,289 foster families.
- Group foster care services, which are designed to treat children with behavior too severe to live safely in a less restrictive setting like a foster home. There are currently 12 group care contractors with a total of 1,165 available beds located throughout the State.
- Child Welfare Emergency Services (CWES), which include 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 14 CWES contractors that offer 17 CWES juvenile shelters. These contracts provide for 220 beds, although additional beds can be purchased up to the maximum number of licensed beds (currently 326). Both DHS and Juvenile Court Services utilize CWES.
- Transition services, such as Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) and Supervised Apartment Living (SAL), which support youth aged 18 to 21 years old who have aged out of the foster care. 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 nine child welfare providers comprises the Iowa Aftercare Services Network, providing services to approximately 490 youth monthly. In FY 2018, 94.0% of youth participating in aftercare reported having a safe and stable place to live, and 99.0% reported having one or more supportive relationships.

Juvenile Justice Services

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 109 graduated sanctions contracts with community providers for these services. Juvenile court/school liaisons are located in 60 school districts. Tracking and monitoring services are provided by 22 social services agencies. There were 1,022 tracking and monitoring cases closed in FY 2018.

Ten juvenile detention centers provide services to an average of 143 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 CFS 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 115 providers; many in the network also provide other child welfare and juvenile justice services. The BHIS are not included in the CFS State appropriation, but they 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. State funding accounts for approximately 56.0% of CFS total expenditures. Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Social Services Block Grant 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.

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 provides approximate costs:

- Approximate annual cost per family for community care service: \$550.
- Approximate cost per child for family safety, risk, and permanency service: \$7,500 (per average 10-month episode of service).
- Approximate annual cost per child for family foster care: \$15,400.
- Approximate annual cost per child for group foster care: \$41,400.
- Approximate cost per child for an average 15-day CWES/emergency juvenile shelter care stay: \$2,300.
- Approximate annual cost per youth for PAL: \$14,000.
- Approximate annual cost per youth for SAL: \$36,200.
- Approximate cost per youth for graduated sanctions adolescent tracking and monitoring service: \$1,000 (per average three-month episode of service).
- Approximate cost per youth for graduated sanctions supervised community treatment service: \$1,400 (per average three-month episode of service).

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters [232](#), [232B](#), [233](#), [234](#), [235](#), [235A](#), [237](#), and [238](#)
Iowa Administrative Code [441](#)

Budget Unit Number

4130N710001

1128516