

# Budget Unit Briefs

## FY 2017



## Budget Unit: Family Support Subsidy

### Background

The Family Support Subsidy appropriation includes two programs: Family Support Subsidy (FSS) and Children at Home (CAH). These programs assist families of children with developmental disabilities to meet the special needs of their disabled children and are administered by the Department of Human Services.

### Services Provided and Populations Served

The FSS provides a \$296 monthly payment to participating families in FY 2016 to be used to support the families in raising their developmentally disabled child at home. Families receive the benefit until the eligible child turns 18. Approximately half of the families served through the FSS have a household income of less than \$30,000 per year. The FSS provides resources for families under the following conditions:

- Children (under age 18) living at home with a developmental disability that results in substantial functional limitation in three or more areas of major life activity.
- Families with income below \$40,000 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI).

The FSS Program began in 1987 as a means of reducing barriers to raising children with developmental disabilities at home. In FY 2010, state legislation ended new enrollment. The Program is expected to continue until 2024 (when the last enrollee turns 18 years of age).

The CAH Program provides cash for particular needs as they arise within funding parameters allowed by the Program. Adaptive equipment, special clothing, dietary needs, counseling, parent training, and respite care are some examples of allowable expenses. The CAH provides resources for families under the following conditions:

- Persons under 21 years of age with a disability that live at home or with a discharge plan for the child to return home within 60 calendar days.
- Families with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) below \$60,000.
- Residency in one of the 23 counties currently served by the Program.

Local parent councils participate in the decision-making process for the distribution of funds. A funding cap per child per year is established by local advisory boards. The CAH Program is currently available in 23 counties and services are being expanded to additional counties based on available funding.

### Funding

The Family Support Subsidy General Fund appropriation is included in the Health and Human Services Appropriations Act and has averaged \$1.1 million annually for the five-year period from FY 2011 to FY 2015. The two programs in this budget unit are funded only with State General Fund dollars. The average annual cost per child of providing FSS services in FY 2012 was \$2,833. The average annual cost per child of providing CAH services in FY 2012 was \$342. The amount allocated for administrative costs at the state level was set at \$25,000 by the General Assembly in 1988 and has remained at that level. Funding for the FSS program is gradually decreasing as there are no new enrollees and participants eventually age out of the program. At times, the General Assembly has chosen to use these savings to expand the CAH program.

### Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code section [225C.47](#)

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### More Information

Department of Human Services: [www.dhs.state.ia.us](http://www.dhs.state.ia.us)

Iowa General Assembly: [www.legis.iowa.gov](http://www.legis.iowa.gov)

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