

Childrens Administration

010 - PL - AF - STRENGTHENING STAFF TO SUPPORT KIDS

Agency Submittal: 11-2017-19-YR Agency Req

Budget Period: 2017-19

SUMMARY

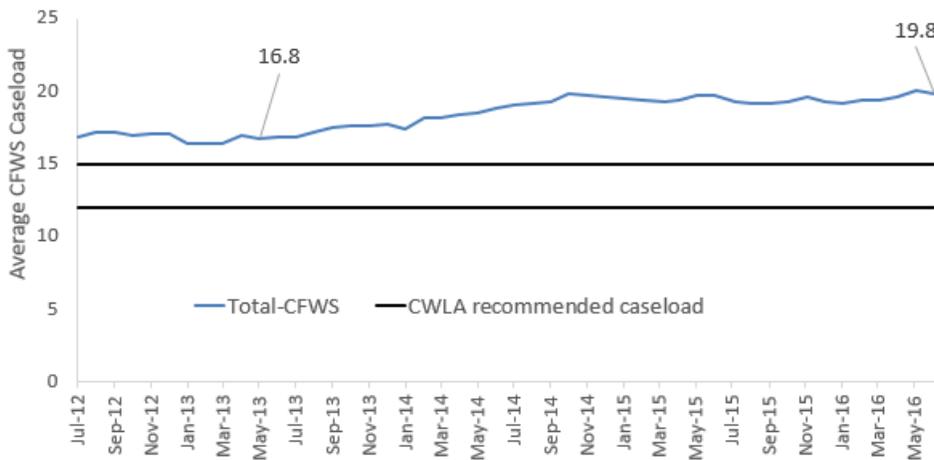
High social worker caseloads have led to increasing lengths of stay in foster care, high turnover and burnout among social workers, and poor outcomes for children who are in out-of-home care. CA requests \$8,858,000 (\$8,680,000 GF-state) and 61 FTE to lower caseload ratios to 18 cases per social worker. This will increase the quality of case management and improve outcomes for children and families. Hiring additional social workers will improve the recruitment and retention of staff, maintain a stable workforce, and decrease social worker burnout.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2016, 10,000 children could not be kept safely at home with their family and were in out-of-home care because of risk of maltreatment, including neglect and physical or sexual abuse. These children deserve quality, stable foster placements and engaged social workers with the time and resources to quickly find the child a permanent home and to monitor the child’s safety and well-being.

Child and Family Welfare Services (CFWS) workers work with these children, their families and foster parents. CFWS caseloads have increased from 16.8 cases in Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) to a statewide average of 19.8 cases per worker for FY16 (please see chart below).

Chart title: Social worker caseloads matter. Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and America Humane Association recommend 12 to 15 cases per worker, significantly lower than 19.8 cases per worker. Social worker caseloads have increased steadily since May 2013 contributing to high turnover rates.



DSHS VISION

People are healthy • People are safe • People are supported • Taxpayer resources are guarded

DSHS MISSION

To transform lives

DSHS VALUES

Honesty and Integrity • Pursuit of Excellence • Open Communication • Diversity and Inclusion • Commitment to Service

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High caseloads mean that social workers have to prioritize basic tasks, including: 1) finding permanent, safe homes for children, 2) scheduling visits between parents and children, and 3) monitoring court-ordered activities. Social workers may lack time to deliver appropriate reunification services to parents or time to focus on child well-being, such as medical and mental health, or educational success.

When social workers carry too many cases, lengths of stay for children increase. The median length of stay for kids in care longer than 60 days increased to 497 days, up 2 days since June 2015. Longer lengths of stay mean that children are not being reunified with their families or finding adoptive homes in a timely manner. This conflicts with federal performance measures.

The federal Children’s Bureau conducts periodic reviews of state child welfare systems called the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). In preparation for the next CFSR review, performance data indicated that Washington State will only meet two of seven safety and permanency performance indicators. These measures are related to social worker casework around safety and permanency, such as preventing abuse for kids in foster care, achieving permanency within a certain time frame, preventing re-entry into foster care and reducing the number of times a foster child is moved.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

CA requests \$8,858,000 (\$8,680,000 GF-state) and 61 FTE to reduce caseload ratios to 1 worker to 18 cases. This request includes 47.0 FTE case-carrying social workers 3s, 6.0 FTE social worker 4 supervisors, and 8.0 office assistants to support the new social workers.

In FY 2016, 586 social workers carried 11,387 total cases. This is a ratio of 1 worker to 19.4 cases, on average. To reduce the caseload ratio to 1 worker to 18 cases, CA would need 47 additional social worker 3s. CA applied the 1:8 supervisor ratio and 1:6 ratio for clerical support.

Table Title: To achieve a 1:18 caseload ratio, CA would need 46.6 additional social workers, as well as supervisors and office assistants to support their work.

FY 2016 Cases	<i>divided by</i>	Current Workers	<i>results in</i>	Caseload Ratio
11,387		586.1		19.4
FY 2016 Cases	<i>divided by</i>	Caseload Ratio	<i>results in</i>	Total Workers
11,387		18		633
Total Workers	<i>less</i>	Current Workers	<i>results in</i>	Requested FTE*
633		586		*SW 3s: 47
				SW 4s: 6
				OA 3s: 8
				Total: 61

Almost half of CA local offices have caseload ratios higher than 1 social worker to 20 cases.				
Caseload Ratio	June 2016	March 2016	December 2015	September 2015
1:20	24 offices	23 offices	18 offices	20 offices
1:25	6 offices	5 offices	4 offices	3 offices
Total Offices	47 offices	47 offices	47 offices	47 offices

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CA estimated the number of social workers 3s it would take to lower caseload ratios to 1:15, which is recommended by Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and America Humane Association. To achieve the recommended caseload standard, CA would need, 223.6 additional staff, for an annual cost of \$21,091,000 (\$20,669,000 GF-state).

CA's request achieves a 1:18 caseload ratios in the hardest hit offices. This proposal costs \$12.4 million less annually, than reaching the 1:15 ratio.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Additional social workers will allow CA to provide high quality case management for all children and youth in out-of-home care, including:

- Regular meetings between social workers and parents;
- Connecting families with appropriate services;
- Ensuring children are able to see and maintain a relationship with their parents and siblings; and
- Quickly finding children safe, permanent homes.

Improvements in federal CFSR permanency and safety measures will result in:

- increasing the number of children who can achieve permanency in 12 or 24 months,
- decreasing re-entry into the child welfare system, and
- improving safety and well-being for children in out-of-home care.

To address the high caseloads and high worker turnover, CA has added field staff within its existing resources. To reach the 1:18 caseload, CA would have to reduce service expenditures to fund additional social workers. CA has committed to reducing social worker workload by streamlining processes, eliminating duplicate processes, and rolling out mobile technology.

If this request is not funded, CA will continue to lose social workers due to workload demands and foster parents due to a lack of support from social workers. In addition, it is likely that CA will not pass its federal program review and be required to enter into a program improvement plan.

No child wants to be placed in foster care. Children want their families to remain intact or, if that is not possible, to find a loving family and a forever home. The most critical reason to decrease social worker caseloads is to improve services and outcomes for the 10,000 Washington children in the state's care.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

This proposal will be supported by all CA stakeholders. The workload and pressure on CFWS workers results in damage to relationships with foster parents, providers and courts. These groups support appropriate staffing levels for CA.

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Program Contact: Jenny Heddin, (360) 902-0221

OTHER CONNECTIONS

Performance Outcomes/Important Connections

1. Does this DP provide essential support to one or more of the Governor's Results Washington priorities?

Not applicable.

2. The decision package meets the following DSHS' strategic objectives:

1.4: Number of Child Protective Services investigations open more than 90 days will decrease.

4.3: The average number of days to complete an employee investigation will decrease.

4.4: CA will retain a skilled and ready workforce.

3. Identify other important connections or impacts below. (Indicate 'Yes' or 'No'. If 'Yes' identify the connections or impacts related to the proposal.)

a) Regional/County impacts? No.

b) Other local government impacts? No.

c) Tribal government impacts? No.

d) Other state agency impacts? No.

e) Responds to specific task force, report, mandate or executive order? No.

f) Does request contain a compensation change or require changes to a Collective Bargaining Agreement? No.

g) Facility/workplace needs or impacts? Potentially. CA is beginning the move to a modern work space, which should decrease the need for additional facility space from adding staff.

h) Capital budget impacts? No.

i) Is change required to existing statutes, rules or contracts? No.

j) Is the request related to litigation? No.

k) Is the request related to Puget Sound recovery? No.

l) Other important connections? None.

4. Please provide a detailed discussion of connections/impacts identified above.

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Alternatives/Consequences/Other

5. What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

CA has examined the possibility of moving service funding over to pay for staff, but does not feel that is a viable option to cover the number of staff needed to reduce caseloads. In addition, CA has examined re-allocating staff within its own workforce but that would create caseload problems in other areas.

6. How has or can the agency address the issue or need within its current appropriation level?

CA has added additional field staff within its existing resources. In order to add any more staff, CA would have to reduce service expenditures to fund additional social workers. In addition, CA has committed to reducing the workload on social workers by streamlining processes, eliminating duplicate processes and supporting social workers with mobile technology.

7. Does this decision package include funding for any IT-related costs (hardware, software, services, cloud-based services, contracts or IT staff)?

- No**
- Yes (Include an IT Addendum)**

Fiscal Detail

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Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
001-1 General Fund-State	3,407,000	5,273,000	5,273,000	5,273,000
001-A General Fund-DSHS Fam	70,000	108,000	108,000	108,000
Total Cost	3,477,000	5,381,000	5,381,000	5,381,000

Staffing	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
FTEs	37.0	61.0	61.0	61.0

Performance Measure Detail

Activity:	Incremental Changes			
	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
Program: 010				
A010 Children's Administration Client Services Staff and Support	0	0	0	0
No measures submitted for package				

Object Detail

	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
A Salaries and Wages	2,076,000	3,437,000	3,437,000	3,437,000
B Employee Benefits	821,000	1,355,000	1,355,000	1,355,000
E Goods and Other Services	225,000	370,000	370,000	370,000
G Travel	11,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
J Capital Outlays	222,000	0	0	0
P Debt Service	11,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
TZ Intra-agency Reimbursements	111,000	183,000	183,000	183,000
Total Objects	3,477,000	5,381,000	5,381,000	5,381,000

DSHS Source Detail

Overall Funding

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
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Fund 001-1, General Fund-State

Sources Title

0011 General Fund State	3,407,000	5,273,000	5,273,000	5,273,000
Total for Fund 001-1	3,407,000	5,273,000	5,273,000	5,273,000

Fund 001-A, General Fund-DSHS Fam

Sources Title

658L Title IV-E-Foster Care (50%)	70,000	108,000	108,000	108,000
Total for Fund 001-A	70,000	108,000	108,000	108,000
Total Overall Funding	3,477,000	5,381,000	5,381,000	5,381,000