

Childrens Administration

010 - PL - AG - INCREASING PLACEMENT OPTIONS

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

Budget Period: 2017-19

SUMMARY

Children’s Administration is facing a crisis due to a shortage of adequate foster homes for children. The number of licensed foster homes is insufficient to meet the challenging and complex needs of children in out-of-home care. On average, it takes six months to complete a new state foster license. This timeframe reduces the number of available placement resources. Fewer foster placement options has increased the need for expensive emergent options. DSHS requests \$1,918,000 (\$1,879,000 GF-State) and 10 FTEs to license foster homes in a shorter timeframe and increase foster and adoptive placement options for children in out-of-home care.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Foster homes are a resource that needs to be constantly replenished to meet the challenging and complex needs of children in out-of-home care. An insufficient number and inadequate geographic distribution of foster homes has led to a placement crisis for Washington kids who cannot safely be with their families.

Matching children with a foster home that meets their needs is key to the child’s well-being and safety. Without a sufficient number of licensed foster families, matching children to appropriate placements becomes more difficult. Children frequently have to be placed a significant distance away from their biological parents or siblings.

Placements that do not support frequent contact with parents and siblings or that do not meet the needs of foster children result in poorer outcomes for children, including frequent moves to new homes, increasing levels of intervention, and longer timeframes for achieving a safe, permanent home.

The shortage of licensed foster homes makes it challenging to place young children with special needs. Children with acute needs struggle to stay in a stable home and sometimes to stay in school. The lack of placement options has led to children staying with social workers in the CA office during the day and housed in hotel rooms, until a placement can be found.

One barrier to an adequate supply of placement options is the time it takes to license a new foster home. It took the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) six months, on average, to complete a new state foster home license in 2015.

Several factors contribute to the time it takes to complete a foster care license:

- increasing workload,
- limited staffing resources,
- staff turnover, and
- in-depth background checks and increasing background check requirements by Washington State Patrol and Federal Bureau of Investigation.



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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Additionally, the average number of newly licensed general foster care homes increased 29 percent since calendar year (CY) 2015 and the average number of newly licensed foster homes (general, child specific, and foster to adopt) increased 19 percent since CY 2015.

In June 2016, there were 857 pending applications from relative placements needing foster care licenses, of these, 339 applications were outstanding for more than 90 days (source: DLR 2016 statewide stats). In the first six months of calendar year 2016, CA monthly average bed capacity was 6,535 from its licensed foster homes. As of June 2016, CA had 469 pending applications for licenses, of these 177 were outstanding more than 90 days for non-relatives.

Without changes in staffing resources, the foster care application wait times will continue to worsen and foster children will lose out on potential foster parents.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Licensing new foster homes and relative care foster homes more quickly will help provide more placement options each month for children in out-of-home care. CA requests \$1,918,000 (\$1,879,000 GF-State) and 10.0 FTEs to license new foster and adoptive homes in a shorter timeframe to increase placement options.

Each month, CA receives 157 foster care license applications, which require an intensive home study. With existing staffing resources (47.5 FTE), DLR completes 95 home studies on average per month, leaving a backlog of 62 pending applications.

This request includes eight Social Service Specialist 3 (licensors) and two Social Service Specialist 4 (supervisors). With eight additional licensors, CA assumes the new staff could reduce the backlog of Foster Care license applications by 16 home studies each month.

The requested FTE will assist DLR in completing more home studies for both licensed and unlicensed relative care each month, however, it would take significantly more FTE to eliminate the backlog in licensed and unlicensed apps that are pending approval. CA estimates it would take 40 licensors to complete all new licensed applications and unlicensed applications received.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Division of Licensed Resources will process foster and adoptive home licenses more quickly resulting in improved outcomes for children in out-of-home care, such as:

- More foster and adoptive placement options for children who cannot safely be with their families, resulting in better matches between foster parents and children;
- Increased adoptions;
- Improved safety and well-being for children in out-of-home care.
- Decreased workload for social workers (less time spent finding placement, elimination of hotel stays, and driving between disparate foster homes).
- Decreased costs for supervised visitation between parents and children.

By funding this request, prospective foster families will experience improved customer service, such as:

- Improved communication and support for prospective foster parents
- Shorter timeframe from initial application to licensure

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If this request is not funded, the licensing and background check time frame will continue to be long, causing attrition among interested foster homes and posing potential safety issues for children in care and social workers caring for high needs children.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

Foster and adoptive parents, advocates for children, and contractors support this effort because quicker, safer and longer-term placements allow children to grow up in healthier environments.

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OTHER CONNECTIONS

Performance Outcomes/Important Connections

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

Goal 4: Healthy & Safe Communities - Safe People - Help keep people safe in their homes, on their jobs, and in their communities.

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

3.4: Set a baseline for completion of and increase the number of home studies.

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? No.

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? No.

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

This budget request has no impacts or connections to the list above.

Alternatives/Consequences/Other

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

The only options for increasing the amount of homes that DLR can license is by increasing the licensing staff. The alternative of leaving staffing levels as they are will continue to negatively impact the number of available foster homes.

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

CA has already streamlined the licensing process through multiple LEAN events and a move toward managing for performance. Additionally, CA already added 5 positions within DLR using existing resources to allow for timely processing of background clearance for licensed and relative placements.

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**010 - PL - AG - Increasing Placement Options**

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
001-1 General Fund-State	969,000	910,000	910,000	910,000
001-A General Fund-DSHS Fam	20,000	19,000	19,000	19,000
Total Cost	989,000	929,000	929,000	929,000

Staffing	<u>FY 2018</u>	<u>FY 2019</u>	<u>FY 2020</u>	<u>FY 2021</u>
FTEs	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

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	601,000	601,000	601,000	601,000
B Employee Benefits	230,000	230,000	230,000	230,000
E Goods and Other Services	61,000	61,000	61,000	61,000
G Travel	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
J Capital Outlays	60,000	0	0	0
P Debt Service	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
TZ Intra-agency Reimbursements	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Total Objects	989,000	929,000	929,000	929,000

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	969,000	910,000	910,000	910,000
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Total for Fund 001-1 **969,000** **910,000** **910,000** **910,000**

Fund 001-A, General Fund-DSHS Fam**Sources Title**

658L Title IV-E-Foster Care (50%)	20,000	19,000	19,000	19,000
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Total for Fund 001-A **20,000** **19,000** **19,000** **19,000**

Total Overall Funding **989,000** **929,000** **929,000** **929,000**