

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION
Braam Compliance



2016 Supplemental Budget

Request	FY16	FY17	15-17
FTE		34.0	17.0
GF-State		\$3,137,000	\$3,137,000
Total		\$3,201,000	\$3,201,000

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Children's Administration (CA) requests FTEs and \$3,137,000 GF-State and \$3,201,000 Total Funds in the 2016 Supplemental Budget in order to become compliant with measures required under the Braam settlement. By funding this request, CA is expected to achieve compliance with required Braam outcomes including, but not limited to, locating children on the run, conducting monthly health and safety checks for children in out of home care, and ensuring foster parents have adequate information, training and support.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In 2004, DSHS settled a lawsuit brought by a number of former foster children in what is known as the Braam case. The 2011 revised settlement and exit agreement mandated DSHS to become compliant with 21 outcomes related to the welfare and well-being of children in out of home care and their caregivers.

In July of 2014, CA went back to the court to demonstrate that it had substantially complied with the majority of the remaining measures. The court did not find that CA was in full compliance, despite substantial improvement in most measures. The court has maintained oversight for CA compliance with the remaining eight measures. By operation of the agreement, if CA achieves 18 consecutive months of full compliance related to conducting health and safety visits each and every month with children in out of home care, and giving caregivers necessary information when a child is placed with them, the outcome measures regarding caseworker caseloads, adequate training for caregivers, and adequate support for caregivers are not enforceable pursuant to specific terms of the exit agreement. The remaining measures involving youth missing from care (the percentage of children who run from out-of-home placements and the median number of days youth are on runaway status) remain enforceable.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

In 2015, CA requested funds for 63 FTEs (18 Social Worker 3 and 45 Social Worker 1) to achieve compliance for the remaining required Braam outcomes. This request was partially funded: including three Social Worker 3 positions that will assist with placement stability, especially for youth at a high risk for running away from care, and 18 Social Worker 1 positions that will be assigned to offices to provide support for monthly health and safety checks for children in out of home care and ensure foster parents have adequate information, training, and support.

CA proposes hiring 34 additional staff to implement the remaining strategies and achieve and maintain compliance. The proposed FTEs include 19 Social Worker 1 positions to assist in maintaining or achieving compliance with the remaining



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

measures including monthly health and safety checks for children in out of home care and ensuring foster parents have adequate information, training, and support. CA cannot miss a monthly health and safety visit during each performance year. If any monthly visit is missed, the case is out of compliance for the remainder of the year. These positions will help ensure that caregivers receive the caregiver information packet within the very narrow timeframes outlined in the agreement. The staff will also contact caregivers upon initial placement of a foster child to ensure they have adequate support and resources from DSHS. These activities will help free up time for case carrying Social Workers so they may conduct their monthly health and safety visits. These positions will be assigned to support the offices that did not receive FTEs in 2015.

In addition, CA proposes hiring 15 additional Social Worker 3 positions to assist with placement stability, especially for youth at high risk for running away from care. CA will work with the Research and Data Analysis office within DSHS to determine which youth are most at risk for running and focus attention on them and their caregivers.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The CA will become compliant with the following Braam measures:

- 90 percent of the children in out of home care will receive a monthly health and safety visit each and every month.
- 90 percent of all caregivers will be given critical information about the children placed with them within 72 hours of initial placement, at or before a planned change in placement, or within 24 hours of an urgent placement change.
- The percentage of youth in out-of-home care for at least 30 days who run from out-of-home care placements during the annual reporting period will decrease to 2.35 percent.
- Median number of days that youth are on runaway status is 25 days or less.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

The Braam measures are supported by key CA stakeholders, including foster parents and other caregivers and youth advocates. Achieving these outcomes will lead to improved safety and well-being for youth in out of home care.