

FINAL

2014 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

IMPROVING PRACTICE

Request	FY14	FY15	13-15
FTE	0	9.0	4.5
GF-State	\$0	\$732,000	\$732,000
Total	\$0	\$950,000	\$950,000

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Children's Administration (CA) requests additional staff in order to enhance CA's quality assurance capabilities. By funding this request, CA is expected to increase the oversight of local office practice ensuring that critical goals such as child safety are being met.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Currently, CA conducts in-depth case reviews for offices only once every two years. Case reviews are a critical way to conduct quality assurance (QA) for all aspects of child welfare. In a typical case review, a random sample of cases is selected and reviewed against standardized tools to assess how closely the case follows practice standards for the whole spectrum of child welfare. These reviews result in a report identifying areas of strength and improvement for the office, which are used to develop action plans to address those areas needing improvement. Adhering to best practices will enhance child safety and positive outcomes for children and families involved in our child welfare system. Not only are case reviews required by the federal government, there is an increasing focus on quality assurance systems.

Additional staff will assist local offices in developing strong quality assurance and continuous quality improvement (CQI) systems to ensure that action plans developed from case reviews are completed and to enhance reliance on data driven decision making. Without additional resources, CA will continue the status quo of reviewing offices every two years and will not be able to provide additional QA/CQI assistance to offices. Conducting case reviews more frequently will make them a more meaningful part of the CQI process, which requires monitoring and follow up reviews to assess progress toward improvement goals.

Federal guidance was recently issued emphasizing the importance of strong QA/CQI practices for states. Specific guidance regarding components that may become required has not been issued yet. However, case review and QA/CQI staff are considered fundamental components of all child welfare agencies. CA is nationally recognized for its case review process and other

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states have modeled their reviews after Washington. We are in the process of assessing practices in other states to see if ours can be made more efficient.

CA also uses data from case reviews and our QA team to complete the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). These are reviews conducted by the federal government to ensure conformity with Federal child welfare requirements, measure the experiences of children and families receiving child welfare services, and assist in enhancing capacity to help families achieve positive outcomes. CA is still in the process of achieving the benchmarks for six more goals from our last review.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

CA requests six FTE's to conduct case reviews. This request doubles our current capacity and allows the case reviews to occur twice as frequently. An additional three FTE's are requested to facilitate QA/CQI activities within local offices and will increase the number of program staff working on these activities from two to five. Funding is requested to start these staff July 1, 2014 and maintain them on a permanent basis.

EXPECTED RESULTS

CA will be able to conduct office reviews and follow up on early action plans on an annual basis. These kinds of reviews can address practices aimed at keeping children safe and reducing fatalities. Improving practices will assist children in the system with achieving better outcomes and ensure that we are approaching families in an appropriate and constructive manner. These office reviews may also identify issues that partner entities such as the Attorney General's Office or courts may need to address.

This request supports Results Washington Goal 4 of Healthy and Safe Communities. Funding this request will result in a decrease in the percent of children with a founded allegation of abuse or neglect who have a new founded allegation within 6 months.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

Child welfare stakeholders and system participants should support this investment because it will ensure CA's focus on creating and maintaining a consistent and high quality child welfare system.