



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$5,100,000 (\$4,507,000 GF-S) and 20.0 full time equivalents (FTEs) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to continue to meet the agency’s obligations under the Settlement Agreement in the D.S. lawsuit. DCYF requested and received funding in the 2023-25 budget to implement seven of the eight System Improvements outlined in the D.S. Settlement Agreement on behalf of children and youth experiencing placement instability. In order to execute the implementation required by the agreement, DCYF needs additional funds to implement the Family Group Planning system improvement, manage increased workload related to payments for new placement settings and pay for stakeholder engagement and plaintiffs fees.

Program Recommendation Summary

010 - Children and Families Services

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$4,205,000 (\$3,674,000 GF-S) and 17.0 full time equivalents (FTEs) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to continue to meet the agency’s obligations under the Settlement Agreement in the D.S. lawsuit. DCYF is executing the implementation plan required by the D.S. Settlement Agreement on behalf of children and youth experiencing placement instability. DCYF needs additional funds to implement the Family Group Planning system improvement (not funded in the 2023-25 budget) to improve and revise policy and practice and provide quality assurance in conducting shared planning meetings.

090 - Program Support

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$895,000 (\$833,000 GF-S) and 3.0 full time equivalents (FTEs) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to continue to meet the agency’s obligations under the Settlement Agreement in the D.S. lawsuit. DCYF requests program support fiduciary FTE to manage increased workload related to payments for Emerging Adult Housing Program, Professional Therapeutic Foster Parents, Referrals and Transitions and Hub Homes.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Staffing						
FTEs	1.0	20.0	10.5	20.0	20.0	20.0
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$700	\$2,974	\$3,674	\$1,827	\$1,827	\$3,654
Fund 001 - A	\$0	\$531	\$531	\$456	\$456	\$912
Fund 001 - A	\$2	\$60	\$62	\$60	\$60	\$120
Fund 001 - 1	\$106	\$727	\$833	\$713	\$713	\$1,426
Total Expenditures	\$808	\$4,292	\$5,100	\$3,056	\$3,056	\$6,112
Revenue						
001 - 0393	\$0	\$531	\$531	\$456	\$456	\$912
001 - 0393	\$2	\$60	\$62	\$60	\$60	\$120
Total Revenue	\$2	\$591	\$593	\$516	\$516	\$1,032

Decision Package Description

In January 2021, plaintiffs filed a federal class action lawsuit on behalf of children and youth with behavioral health and developmental disabilities experiencing placement instability including night-tonight foster care placements and hotel and overnight stays in DCYF offices. In June 2022, DCYF reached a settlement agreement with plaintiffs which requires the agency to make system improvements and offer services and supports to class members. The agreement also requires a stakeholder process to inform how the agency will implement some of the system improvements. The legislature provided funding in the 2023-25 budget for DCYF to implement most of the system improvements required under the agreement. However, at the time of the 2023 legislative session the stakeholder process was still underway and certain costs were unknown.

DCYF is requesting funding to address costs associated with three aspects of the settlement: 1. Costs associated with meeting the requirement to improve and revise policies for Family Group Planning meetings; 2. Costs to establish rates and pay providers for placement settings for youth and 3. Costs to pay plaintiff legal fees and continue the stakeholder process required under the agreement.

System Improvement for Family Group Planning:

The D.S. Settlement Agreement requires DCYF to improve and revise Shared Planning Meeting (SPM) and Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) policies and practices. FTDM meetings are a Family Group Decision Making model for family engagement. FTDMs are designed to share decision-making and engage extended family and support persons in case planning. DCYF will require funding to revise and update staff trainings, revise the supervisory structure for FTDM meeting practice, ensure consistent practice in meeting facilitation and continuous quality improvement.

As required by the settlement agreement, DCYF contracted with an independent stakeholder facilitator to engage stakeholders and those with lived experience of the child welfare system to inform the implementation plan for three system improvements in the agreement: Kinship Engagement Unit, Family Group Planning, and Referrals and Transitions. DCYF contracted with the Public Consulting Group (PCG) to serve as the independent facilitator and PCG subcontracted with Think of Us to specifically engage youth with lived experience in the child welfare system in the process. At the time of the 2023 Legislative Session, the stakeholder process was still underway, and costs associated with improving and revising these policies and practices were unknown. Phase 1 of the stakeholder process is complete and DCYF and plaintiffs have agreed on an implementation plan which was informed by the stakeholder process.

In the process, stakeholders identified a need to improve the format of family group planning meetings, strengthen youth engagement, and have consistent practice in the facilitation of meetings. Parents and caregivers wanted these meetings to occur more often and with more advance notice as well as more support for families and youth to participate in the meetings. A core recommendation that arose from the process was for DCYF to ensure there is an experienced assigned facilitator who maintains a consistent presence through the entirety of the case. Internal stakeholders identified the need to standardize family group planning meetings, create consistent job duties for facilitators, and provide training, guidance and supervision.

DCYF has worked with plaintiffs to develop an implementation plan for all the system improvements in the settlement agreement, which has been informed by the stakeholder process. In accordance with the plan, DCYF will update the FTDM model to include early engagement, safety-focused meetings, placement decisions, and permanency. In addition, the updated model will provide youth, parents, and caregivers an opportunity to have an orientation to meetings, receive agendas before the meeting, allow the family to identify additional topics or areas they would like to explore during their meeting and time without the agency to discuss key elements before the plan is agreed on. DCYF requests resources in order to revise policies and practices, and ensure that FTDM meetings are conducted with fidelity to the new model and practice standards: revise policies and practices, and ensure that FTDM meetings are conducted with fidelity to the new model and practice standards:

- Contract with an outside provider for consultation training, program development, monitoring and evaluation.
- Hire 6 Program Consultant Supervisors (WMS1) to supervise meeting facilitators within each region. Currently, most facilitators report to Area Administrators or other supervisors in the region. This inconsistency in facilitator supervision has led to practice drift and varying practice standards throughout the state. These new positions will ensure consistency in job duties, guidance, supervision, and adherence to the updated model.
- Hire 6 additional Shared Planning Meeting facilitators (SHPC4) to absorb increased workload for facilitators related to expanded job duties to be a more consistent presence throughout the life of the case, and to better support families and youth to prepare for, engage and participate in Shared Planning Meetings.
- Hire a Shared Planning Meeting Program Manager to improve practice consistency, ensure policies and procedures are followed and updated as needed. This position will conduct monthly leads meetings review FTDMs and Shared Planning Meetings as a part of coaching and training.
- Hire a Quality Assurance/Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist to collect and oversee data, provide monitoring, and conduct qualitative reviews. This position will work to ensure that shared planning meetings are conducted with fidelity to the model and standards for practice.
- Hire 3 full-time staff to provide coaching and mentoring to facilitators statewide. These positions will support field offices to provide ongoing training and coaching for meeting facilitators. These positions will observe shared planning meeting to provide feedback, training, and coaching to facilitators. They will be ensuring consistency and structure of the shared planning meeting, in conjunction with the Shared Planning Program Manager.

Rate Setting and Payment for Placement Settings:

The D.S. Settlement Agreement also requires DCYF to develop new placement settings for children and youth experiencing placement instability; specifically, the development of an emerging adulthood housing program, expansion of the Hub Home Model and the development of Professional Treatment Foster Care placements. The implementation plan calls for expansion of the Adolescent Transitional Living Pilot Program to meet the emerging adulthood housing program requirement. DCYF is committed to public, transparent, and data driven methods for

developing rate models that fully compensate Providers for the cost of a service and supports worker well-being. In order to develop these placement settings, DCYF needs additional staffing to develop the rate modelling for the rates that will be paid to contracted providers and to process payments for these contracts. DCYF requests funding for:

- One (1.0) WMS1 FTE starting in FY24 and ongoing in finance is needed to address timely fiscal modeling for the intensive resources placement continuum and services related to the Adolescent Transition Living Program/Emerging Adult Housing, changes/implementation for Professional Therapeutic Foster Care and other needed programming. Timely development of the continuum is essential to eliminating hotel stays and night-to-night foster care placements as well as ensuring we have a continuum of placement to support reduction in the overall number and stabilization of children and youth who are class members.
- 2.0 Fiscal Analyst FTE starting in FY24 and ongoing to manage increased workload related to payments for Emerging Adult Housing Program, Professional Therapeutic Foster Parents, Referrals and Transitions and Hub Homes. The anticipated start date is January 1, 2024.

Stakeholder Engagement and Plaintiff Fees:

Funds for covering plaintiff legal fees were not included in the decision package submitted for the 2023-25 Biennium. Paying the plaintiff legal fees are an ongoing requirement under the settlement agreement. DCYF is requesting funds to cover plaintiff legal fees for FY24 and FY25.

In addition, DCYF requested and received funding for stakeholder engagement in the 2023-25 biennial budget. However, costs to implement the required stakeholder engagement exceeded the estimated funding amount due to unanticipated delays in contract development and implementation. The amount requested for stakeholder engagement is estimated based on the first round of engagement funded in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget. A second round of stakeholder feedback is required following the issuance of the Monitor's initial report in FY 2025.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

DCYF received \$34,982,000 (\$27,702,000 GF-S) and 69.6 FTE in the 23-25 Biennial Budget for the following items related to the D.S. Settlement:

- Implementation & Monitoring
- Hub Home Model
- Licensing Standards
- Referrals & Transitions
- Therapeutic Foster Care
- Qualified Residential Treatment
- ATLP
- Family Group Planning
- NRM

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$5,100,000 (\$4,507,000 GF-S) and 20.0 full time equivalents (FTEs) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to continue to meet the agency's obligations under the Settlement Agreement in the D.S. lawsuit.

Item	FY24	FY25
Family Team Decision Making		
A) Family Group Planning Contract	\$ -	\$ 250,000
B) 1.0 FTE (MA5) Shared Planning Program manager	\$ -	\$ 165,000
C) 6.0 FTE (SHPC4) Shared Planning Meeting facilitators	\$ -	\$ 991,000
D) 1.0 FTE (MA5) Quality Assurance/Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist	\$ -	\$ 165,000
E) 6.0 FTE (WMS1) Program Consultant Supervisors	\$ -	\$ 994,000
F) 3.0 FTE (MA5) Statewide Mentoring and Coaching	\$ -	\$ 495,000
Total Family Team Decision Making	\$ -	\$ 3,060,000
Stakeholder Engagement and Plaintiff Legal Fees		
A) Plaintiff Legal Fees	\$ 700,000	\$ 700,000
B) Stakeholder Facilitation Stage 2	\$ -	\$ 150,000
Total Stakeholder Engagement and Plaintiff Legal Fees	\$ 700,000	\$ 850,000
Fiscal Staff		
A) 1.0 FTE (WMS1) Fiscal Modeling/Rate Setting	\$ -	\$ 166,000
B) 2.0 FTE (FA2) Manage increase workload from DS Settlement	\$ 108,000	\$ 216,000
Total Fiscal Staff	\$ 268,000	\$ 375,000
Total Request	\$ 808,000	\$ 4,292,000

Family Team Decision Making

DCYF requests \$250,000 (\$200,000 GF-S) for contracted services for consultation training, program development, monitoring and evaluation.

Stakeholder Engagement and Plaintiff Legal Fees

DCYF requests \$1,400,000 (\$1,400,000 GF-S) for FY24 and FY25 for plaintiff legal fees that were not included in the decision package submitted for the 2023-25 biennium. Paying the plaintiff’s legal fees are an ongoing requirement under the settlement agreement. Legal fees are estimated at \$175,000 quarterly.

DCYF requests \$150,000 (\$125,000 GF-S) for stakeholder engagement. DCYF requested and received funding for stakeholder engagement in the 2023-25 biennial budget. However, costs to implement the required stakeholder engagement exceeded the estimated funding amount. A second round of stakeholder feedback is required following the issuance of the Monitor’s initial report in 2025.

Workforce Assumptions:

DCYF requests \$3,300,000 (\$2,757,000 GF-S) and 20.0 full time equivalents (FTEs) in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to continue to meet the agency’s obligations under the Settlement Agreement in the D.S. lawsuit.

Family Team Decision Making

DCYF requests \$165,000 (\$134,000 GF-S) and 1.0 FTE (MA5) for a Shared Planning Meeting Program Manager to improve practice consistency, ensure policies and procedures are followed and updated as needed. This position will conduct monthly leads meetings review FTDMs and Shared Planning Meetings as a part of coaching and training.

DCYF requests \$991,000 (\$803,000 GF-S) and 6.0 FTE (SHPC 4) Shared Planning Meeting facilitators to absorb increased workload for facilitators related to expanded job duties to better support families and youth to prepare for, engage and participate in Shared Planning Meetings.

DCYF requests \$165,000 (\$134,000 GF-S) and 1.0 FTE (MA5) for a Quality Assurance/Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist to collect and oversee data, provide monitoring, and conduct qualitative reviews.

DCYF requests \$994,000 (\$805,000 GF-S) and 6.0 FTE (WMS 1) Program Consultant Supervisors to supervise meeting facilitators within each region. Currently, most facilitators report to Area Administrators or other supervisors in the region. This inconsistency in facilitator supervision has led to practice drift and varying practice standards throughout the state. These new positions will ensure consistency in job duties, guidance, supervision, and adherence to the updated model.

DCYF requests \$495,000 (\$401,000 GF-S) and 3.0 FTE (MA5) to provide coaching and mentoring to facilitators statewide. These positions will support field offices to provide ongoing training and coaching for meeting facilitators. These positions will observe shared planning meeting to provide feedback, training, and coaching to facilitators. They will be ensuring consistency and structure of the shared planning meeting, in conjunction with the Shared Planning Program Manager.

Fiscal Staff

DCYF requests \$166,000 (\$163,000 GF-S) and 1.0 FTE (WMS1) starting in FY24 and ongoing to address timely fiscal modeling for the intensive resources placement continuum and services related to the Adolescent Transition Living Program/Emerging Adult Housing, changes/implementation for Professional Therapeutic Foster Care and other needed programming. Timely development of the continuum is essential to eliminating hotel stays and night-to-night foster care placements as well as ensuring we have a continuum of placement to support reduction in the overall number and stabilization of children and youth who are class members.

DCYF requests \$324,000 (\$318,000 GF-S) and 2.0 FTE (FA2) to manage increased workload related to payments for Emerging Adult Housing Program, Professional Therapeutic Foster Parents, Referrals and Transitions and Hub Homes. Estimated start date of January 1, 2024.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

DCYF's strategic plan calls for reducing the number of children in out-of-home care by half. In order to achieve this goal, we must reduce the length of time children and youth stay in foster care by developing supportive and stable placements while we are working on permanency.

DCYF also has a strategic priority to improve the quality and intention of our practice. Improving our policy and practice in conducting shared planning meetings will result early and often family group engagement and empower parents and youth to be participants in case planning. Family meetings will increase collaborative planning and develop time sensitive options for case planning and prevention services.

Performance Outcomes:

This proposal will contribute to reducing the number of children and youth who are deemed "in class" under the D.S. Settlement Agreement by 1) reducing the number of times a child or youth moves placements, and 2) reducing the need for out of state placements and use of exceptional placements by supporting children and youth to access the least restrictive placement appropriate to their needs, improving family engagement and supporting older youth in transitioning to adulthood. In addition, this proposal will result in greater fidelity to the family group planning practice model and consistency in practice related to conducting shared planning meetings, providing families with advance notice of meeting and improved family engagement.

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

Black and Indigenous children are over represented in the child welfare system in Washington. Additionally, children and youth in exceptional cost placements are more likely to have mental health and disability diagnoses. As a result, children and youth in the intersection of race and disability face the greatest barriers to placement stability in the foster care system. The resources in this decision package will contribute to the overarching D.S. objective of 1) reducing the number of children and youth who are “in class” and facing placement instability, 2) ensuring children and youth with high placement instability are better served in the least restrictive environment, and 3) strengthening youth voice in decision-making related to placement decisions. Shared Planning Meetings that emphasize youth voice and choice, and have youth supports at the table, including kin, are a conduit to equity. The infrastructure in place to support the training quality and practice quality contribute to this.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

Children and youth “in class” in the Settlement Agreement are and youth children experiencing placement stability in the child welfare system. Children with mental health, developmental and behavioral disabilities are more likely to experience placement instability and are over represented in the child welfare system. This proposal will contribute to reducing the number of children “in class” and improve placement stability.

Target Populations or Communities:

The target population is defined the settlement agreement those who are “in class” who are children and youth in foster care experiencing placement instability. In addition, the system improvement for family group planning will benefit all children and families with involvement in the child welfare system through better family engagement and more consistent practice in conducting these meetings.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable.

State Workforce Impacts:

Not applicable.

Intergovernmental:

The D.S. Settlement Agreement requires DCYF to conduct a second stakeholder process that may impact the direction of implementation based on the feedback of the stakeholders. Although not stakeholders, but rather governmental partners, Tribal members will be included in the engagement work to solicit feedback for consideration on implementation, as they were included in stage one engagement on planning. Placement resources that DCYF develops are available to tribal dependents.

Stakeholder Response:

Stakeholders include children, youth, parents and families, out of home caregivers, court partners, and service providers. Stakeholder input was obtained as part of the process for developing the D.S. Implementation Plan and was considered/incorporated into this improvement strategy. Opposition is not anticipated.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable.

Changes from Current Law:

Not applicable.

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Under the D.S. settlement agreement, DCYF is required to develop the implementation plan (now completed) to achieve specific outcomes to Exit the lawsuit and Settlement Agreement. The Settlement Agreement has specific requirements related to Family Group Meetings. This proposal addresses those requirements.

HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions

Not applicable.

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. A	\$0	\$1,670	\$1,670	\$1,670	\$1,670	\$3,340
Obj. B	\$0	\$541	\$541	\$541	\$541	\$1,082
Obj. C	\$0	\$250	\$250	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. E	\$700	\$881	\$1,581	\$31	\$31	\$62
Obj. G	\$0	\$41	\$41	\$41	\$41	\$82
Obj. J	\$0	\$122	\$122	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. A	\$58	\$218	\$276	\$218	\$218	\$436
Obj. B	\$24	\$81	\$105	\$81	\$81	\$162
Obj. E	\$2	\$5	\$7	\$5	\$5	\$10
Obj. G	\$2	\$7	\$9	\$7	\$7	\$14
Obj. J	\$7	\$14	\$21	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. T	\$15	\$462	\$477	\$462	\$462	\$924

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