



2021 CONSTITUENT RELATIONS ANNUAL REPORT



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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Purpose of Constituent Relations

The Constituent Relations Unit is part of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Quality Assurance & Continuous Quality Improvement section within the Administrative Services Division. Effective February 16, 2022 the Constituent Relations Unit will transition to the Government Affairs and Community Engagement (GACE) Division, inclusive of Communications, in order to more closely align with the constituents who seek support.

The complaint resolution process was developed based on RCW 74.13.045 that the *“department shall develop and implement an informal, non-adversarial complaint resolution process to be used by clients of the department, foster parents, and other affected individuals who have complaints regarding a department policy or procedure, or the application of such a policy or procedure, related to programs administered under this chapter. The process shall not apply in circumstances where the complainant has the right under Title 13, 26 or 74 RCW to seek resolution of the complaint through judicial review or through an adjudicative proceeding.”*

Constituent Relations provides a fair and courteous process for resolving complaints relating to child protection and child welfare cases, foster home and child care licensing, child care programs, and juvenile rehabilitation services. Constituent Relations staff are able to provide information relating to the various programs within DCYF, such as policies, dependency processes, relative placement, ICPC, adoption, foster care and child care licensing, Indian Child Welfare, extended foster care and independent living, contracts, and other information specific to DCYF.

**Constituent Relations has no legal jurisdiction in family court matters, such custody or parenting plans. We cannot assist with child support concerns or with concerns about benefits provided by the Department of Social and Health Services.*

The process to resolve complaints:

1. First attempt to resolve the complaint or concern at the lowest level by talking with the assigned worker or licensor.
2. If talking with the worker does not resolve the complaint or concern, contact the worker’s supervisor.
3. If the complaint or concern is not resolved with the supervisor, contact the area administrator.
4. If the complaint or concern is not resolved after contacting the area administrator, contact DCYF Constituent Relations.

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Constituent Relations data includes the nature of the complaint, who the constituent contacted, and the specific DCYF program. The annual Constituent Relations Report provides information for statewide results, regional results, and office level data.

Statewide Results

Contacts	Constituent Relations responded to 4,617 contacts between January 2021 and December 2021
615	Contacts relating to CPS-INV, CPS-FAR, FRS, FVS, CFWS, adoptions, intake
18	Out-of-Home Care (licensed and unlicensed placements)
5	Juvenile Rehabilitation
33	Child Care/Early Learning
414	Report allegations of child abuse/neglect
2,438	Contacts to request information relating to DCYF programs, policy/procedures, background checks, contracts, dependency process, to request records
274	Contacts about child welfare cases in other states
238	Contacts relating to WA State DSHS agencies
582	Contacts relating to non-DCYF issues such as parenting plans/custody, law enforcement, private adoptions, restraining orders

Child Welfare Contacts by Region*						
Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	TOTAL
101	42	100	121	133	118	615

*Contacts relating to child welfare (CPS-INV, CPS-FAR, CFWS, FRS, FVS)

Constituent Relations Unit was Contacted by:			
Governor's Office	78	Relative	162
Legislator	29	Kinship Caregiver	28
Secretary	8	Foster Parent	20
Deputy Secretary	8	Provider/Contractor	16
Asst Sec/Field Ops	1	DCYF Staff	1
Director Gov. Affairs	18	DCYF Child/Youth	
Chief of Staff	13	Citizen	96
Mother	263	Father	139

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Child Welfare Program Areas

Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Intake	Total
17	219	66	12	4	291	6	615

Region 1

Region 1 Child Welfare Program Areas

Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Intake	Total
4	34	6			56	1	101

Nature of Concern

CAN Finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	21	Placement	8
Case Services	6	Relative Search	2
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	7
Customer Service	40	Visitation	16

Reg 1 Office	Total	Office	Total
Adoptions	4	Newport	
Clarkston	3	Omak	
Colfax	2	Republic	
Colville	2	Spokane Central	31
Intake	1	Spokane North	16
Lincoln County		Spokane Valley	27
Moses Lake	10	Wenatchee	5

Region 1 – Intake

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

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Region 1 - Clarkston

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	3	Visitation	

Region 1 - Colfax

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	2	Visitation	

Region 1 - Colville

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 1 – Moses Lake

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	1
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	4	Visitation	2

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Region 1 – Spokane Central

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	5	Placement	3
Case Services	2	Relative Search	1
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	3
Customer Service	11	Visitation	6

Region 1 – Spokane North

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	8	Placement	
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	3	Visitation	2

Region 1 – Spokane Valley

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	5	Placement	3
Case Services	1	Relative Search	1
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	12	Visitation	3

Region 1 - Wenatchee

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	1
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	2	Visitation	

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Region 1 – Adoptions

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service		Visitation	4

Region 2

Region 2 Child Welfare Program Areas

Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Intake	Total
	12	5			25		42

Nature of Concern

CAN Finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	9	Placement	3
Case Services	6	Relative Search	
Confidentiality	1	Removal of Child	3
Customer Service	17	Visitation	3

Reg. 2 Office	Total	Office	Total
Adoptions		Sunnyside	1
Ellensburg	4	Toppenish	1
Goldendale	1	Walla Walla	6
Intake		White Salmon	
Richland	16	Yakima	13

Region 2- Ellensburg

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

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Region 2- Goldendale			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 2- Richland			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	5	Placement	1
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	6	Visitation	1

Region 2- Sunnyside			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service		Visitation	

Region 2 - Toppenish			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

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Region 2- Walla Walla

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	1
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	5	Visitation	

Region 2- Yakima

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	1
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality	1	Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	3	Visitation	2

Region 3

Region 3 Child Welfare Program Areas

Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Intake	Total
3	38	12	1	1	44	1	100

Nature of Concern

CAN Finding	3	Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	
Case Plan	28	Placement	6
Case Services	7	Relative Search	1
Confidentiality	4	Removal of Child	9
Customer Service	35	Visitation	6

Office	Total	Office	Total
Adoptions	3	Lynnwood	17
Bellingham	27	Oak Harbor	6
Everett	8	Sky Valley	6
Friday Harbor	1	Smokey Pt.	20

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Intake	1	Mt. Vernon	11
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Region 3 – Bellingham

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	10	Placement	2
Case Services	2	Relative Search	1
Confidentiality	1	Removal of Child	3
Customer Service	7	Visitation	

Region 3 – Everett

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	2
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service		Visitation	

Region 3 - Friday Harbor

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service		Visitation	

Region 3 – Lynnwood

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	6	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	7	Visitation	2

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Region 3 - Mt. Vernon

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	3	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	4	Visitation	2

Region 3 – Oak Harbor

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	3	Visitation	1

Region 3 – Sky Valley

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	4	Visitation	

Region 3 – Smokey Point

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	
Case Plan	3	Placement	1
Case Services	2	Relative Search	
Confidentiality	3	Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	7	Visitation	1

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Region 3 – Adoptions			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	1
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	2	Visitation	

Region 3 – Intake			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 4

Region 4 Child Welfare Program Areas								
Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Central Intake	Reg. 4 Intake	Total
6	40	9	2	2	60	1	1	121

Nature of Concern			
CAN Finding	2	Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	1
Case Plan	20	Placement	17
Case Services	13	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	10
Customer Service	47	Visitation	11

Office	Total	Office	Total
Adoptions – Reg. 4	6	King South-West	29
Regional Intake	1	King West	22
King ICW	3	MLK	18
King East	17	White Center	5
King South-East	20	Central Intake	1

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Region 4 – Indian Child Welfare (ICW)			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	1

Region 4 – King East			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	
Case Plan	3	Placement	
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	3
Customer Service	8	Visitation	1

Region 4 – King South-East			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	5	Placement	6
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	6	Visitation	1

Region 4 – King South-West			
CAN finding	2	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	4	Placement	2
Case Services	4	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	14	Visitation	1

Region 4 – King West			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	1
Case Plan	1	Placement	1
Case Services	3	Relative Search	

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Confidentiality		Removal of Child	3
Customer Service	8	Visitation	5

Region 4- MLK

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	3	Placement	3
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	8	Visitation	1

Region 4 – White Center

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	1
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service		Visitation	1

Region 4 – Adoptions

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	4
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service		Visitation	

Region 4 – Central Intake

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 4 – Regional Intake

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	

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Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 5

Region 5 Child Welfare Program Areas

Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Intake	Total
2	56	13	6		56		133

Nature of Concern

CAN Finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	3
Case Plan	24	Placement	25
Case Services	9	Relative Search	2
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	8
Customer Service	48	Visitation	12

Office	Total	Office	Total
Reg. 5 Adoptions	2	Parkland	25
Bremerton	22	Puyallup	27
Lakewood	24	Tacoma	33

Region 5- Bremerton

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	4
Case Services	1	Relative Search	1
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	11	Visitation	3

Region 5 - Lakewood

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	2
Case Plan	7	Placement	7
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	5	Visitation	1

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Region 5 - Parkland			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	6	Placement	6
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	7	Visitation	1

Region 5 – Puyallup			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	5	Placement	5
Case Services	4	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	9	Visitation	3

Region 5 - Tacoma			
CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	
Case Plan	4	Placement	5
Case Services	1	Relative Search	1
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	3
Customer Service	13	Visitation	4

Region 5- Adoptions			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 6

Region 6 Child Welfare Program Areas

Adoptions	CPS-INV	CPS-FAR	FVS	FRS	CFWS	Intake	Total
2	39	21	3	1	50	2	118

Nature of Concern

CAN Finding	3	Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	1
Case Plan	15	Placement	18
Case Services	14	Relative Search	
Confidentiality	4	Removal of Child	5
Customer Service	48	Visitation	9

Reg. 6 Office	Total	Office	Total
Adoptions	2	Pt. Townsend	2
Aberdeen	17	Shelton	9
Centralia	8	South Bend	
Forks		Stevenson	3
Intake	2	Tumwater	27
Kelso	12	Vancouver-Cascade	12
Long Beach	2	Vancouver-Columbia	10
Pt. Angeles	4	Vancouver- Clark	8

Region 6 – Aberdeen

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	1
Case Plan	1	Placement	4
Case Services	2	Relative Search	
Confidentiality	2	Removal of Child	
Customer Service	6	Visitation	1

Region 6 – Centralia

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	2
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	

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Customer Service	2	Visitation	3
Region 6 – Kelso			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	1
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	7	Visitation	1

Region 6 – Long Beach			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 6 – Port Angeles			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	1	Placement	1
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 6 – Port Townsend			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services	1	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 6 – Shelton			
CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	3	Placement	1
Case Services	2	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	

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Customer Service	2	Visitation	1
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CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	2	Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 6 – Tumwater

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan	4	Placement	2
Case Services	2	Relative Search	
Confidentiality	2	Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	12	Visitation	3

Region 6 – Vancouver Clark

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	3
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	1
Customer Service	3	Visitation	

Region 6 – Vancouver Cascade

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA	1	Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	2
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	6	Visitation	

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Region 6 – Vancouver Columbia

CAN finding	1	Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	1
Case Services	3	Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	2
Customer Service	3	Visitation	

Region 6 – Adoptions

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	1
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	1	Visitation	

Region 6 – Intake

CAN finding		Discrimination	
CAPTA		Payment	
Case Plan		Placement	
Case Services		Relative Search	
Confidentiality		Removal of Child	
Customer Service	2	Visitation	

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Juvenile Rehabilitation

2021: Complaints and Comments Regarding Juvenile Rehabilitation

2 complaints regarding personnel concerns at facilities, forwarded to Central Intake
1 comment from an adult who had experienced decline process and requested law changes
1 complaint about lack of discharge planning for incarcerated youth, multi-agency response
1 complaint about facility condition concerns, forwarded to Central Intake

Foster Care Licensing/Facility Investigations

Region	Licensing	Nature of Complaint	Contacted by		DLR/ CPS	Nature of Complaint	Total
HQ	1 1	Customer service Customer service	Citizen Foster parent		1	CA/N allegation	
1	1- OHL 1- OHL	Home study denial Customer service	Relative Foster parent				
2	1- FI	Case plan	Citizen				
3	1- FI 1- FI 1- OHL 1- OHL	Customer Service Customer Service Home study denial Customer Service	Legislator Dep. Secretary Sec. Hunter Foster parent				
4	1- FI 1- FI 1- FI 2- OHL	Case plan Customer Service Customer Service Removal of child	Legislator Sec. Hunter Chief of Staff Governor				
5	1- FI 1- FI	Removal of child Case plan	Foster parent Foster parent				
6	1- FI	Customer service	Foster parent		1	CA/N allegation	
Total	16				2		18

Child Care Licensing

Region	Licensing	Nature of Complaint	DLR/CPS	Nature of Complaint	Total
None	7	Vaccination	1	CA/N- unlicensed	
	3	Child Care subsidy			
	1	Child care payment			
	9	Customer service			
1					
2	1	Customer Service	1	Lack of supervision	
3	1	ADA	2	CA/N-licensed facility	
4	1	Provider licensing	2	CA/N-licensed facility	
	1	Customer service	1	Insufficient nurturing	
	1	Home visiting			
5	1	Customer service			
6					
Total	26		7		33

Good News Stories

A former foster youth from the Mount Vernon area contacted Constituent Relations regarding the social worker assigned to his case while he was in care. He stated, "I remember her. I feared and hated her as a wild child . . . But I remember her now, and I love her for all her efforts. I'll always remember." He signed his email, "Thank you. All of you. . . One from the past, full of gratitude."

A high school sophomore from Tacoma wrote to the Chief of Staff's Office and requested information for a class project about resources for youth who will age out of foster care. The student said her aunt and grandmother are foster care providers, so the student became aware of the needs of youth who age out of our system due to her family's work with foster children. Constituent Relations thanked the student for their interest and for making this inquiry. DCYF provided resource information such as the Independent Living Skills program, Education and Training Voucher, Extended Foster Care Program, and the website for Independence.wa.gov. The agency provided contact information for DCYF staff who work with adolescent foster youth programs.

A former foster parent from King County wrote to Constituent Relations that he and his wife were foster parents in the 1970s or 1980s. He said his wife had formed positive relationships with social workers. He noted how meaningful the work was, and their experiences as foster parents were very heartwarming for the two of them. In his moving letter, he said he

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remembers the names of all the children they worked with, and the memories are very dear to him.

Areas for Further Improvement

Relative Search and Ongoing Efforts to Place with Relatives

Many constituents were confused when they received a “relative search letter.” The letters were described as vague and impersonal, unfamiliar names, and some feared it was a scam. They asked if these letters were legitimate and why DCYF sent them. Recipients were hesitant to respond, or they considered disposing of the letter. We have made it very clear the letters are important, recipients are not obligated in any way, but they can call the relative search worker for more information. A more inviting, reassuring letter could encourage more responses.

Some relatives who contacted Constituent Relations said they were not asked about placement at all or felt passed over for placement of children in care. While some interested parties cannot pass requirements, DCYF documentation was lacking regarding specific contacts, follow-up, and continuing efforts to identify, locate, and vet relatives who could provide support or placement for a child. Early, ongoing, and thorough relative search work is vital to avoid placement disruption and inconsistent placement practices. Along with comparable search efforts, Shared Planning Meetings provide an opportunity to inquire about a child’s ancestry, family connections, fictive kin, and suitable persons who may be interested in helping a child.