

QRTP Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is federal funding lost for good if the court does not approve a qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) placement in the first 60 days, either due to delayed scheduling or denial of the motion?

If the dependency court does not make the necessary findings to approve a placement as a QRTP placement within 60 days of the placement date, federal funding under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act is not reimbursable for the duration of the child's placement in that placement. If the youth transitions to another placement and all QRTP findings and requirements are then timely made, this federal funding may be claimed and reimbursed for the later QRTP placement.

2. Who has the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) identified as the qualified individuals who will complete the individualized QRTP assessments?

After evaluating several options, DCYF decided that its regional Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS) program managers are best positioned to provide a thorough QRTP assessment for foster youth in DCYF's custody. The Family First Preservation Services Act (FFPSA) allows states to request a waiver regarding some of the requirements that apply to the "qualified individual" who must complete the assessment in order for a QRTP to be eligible for federal funding. See 42 U.S.C. § 675a(c)(1)(D)(ii). DCYF has requested such a waiver and, if it is granted, it will be retroactive to October 1, 2019. The federal government has not yet responded to DCYF's QRTP plan that includes the waiver request; however, the federal government did approve Utah's QRTP plan, which included a similar waiver request.

3. What tool is DCYF using to conduct the QRTP assessment?

DCYF is using the Children's Functional Assessment Rating Scale (CFARS) as its QRTP assessment. FFPSA requires public child welfare agencies to use a validated assessment tool that focuses on the strengths and needs of the child. DCYF has used the CFARS to evaluate the need for Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS) for children in foster care for nearly 10 years. The CFARS is a validated assessment tool created in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy, Florida Mental Health Institute and the University of South Florida.



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4. Does DCYF's QRTP decision-making process include consideration of less restrictive alternatives, including family or relative placements?

Yes. DCYF decides whether to place a child in a QRTP as part of a holistic case planning approach whereby DCYF decides what placement is available to best meet the child's needs, inclusive of placement in the home of relatives, suitable other persons, and foster family homes. The QRTP requirements, including those related to considering less restrictive alternatives, built on and did not replace existing Washington state law and DCYF practices in this regard. See the attached flow chart for more detail on DCYF's decision-making process.

5. How does DCYF decide where to place a youth who needs BRS?

Applying relevant policies identified below, DCYF staff evaluate the child's needs including service and placement needs, compare them to the placements and services that are available, and identify the placement and service array that will meet the needs of the child. BRS providers provide an array of services to meet the needs of foster children who have behavioral challenges. A QRTP (group care facility) must provide BRS, but BRS is a service that can be provided in other placements as well, such as in treatment foster care or in-home services; only about half of the youth receiving BRS are placed in a QRTP (group care facility) in Washington. If the assigned caseworker believes that BRS is necessary to meet the child's needs, they prepare a BRS packet and complete a referral, which is received by the regional program manager. The regional BRS program manager conducts a comprehensive review of case information about a youth referred for BRS that includes a review of the child and family team's decisions and recommendations, and then conducts the CFARS assessment. This assessment helps guide decisions not only about what level of services are needed, but also how best to address any specific or unique needs of the youth that are identified. Once the level of care is determined, the BRS manager looks at available appropriate resources that best meet the youth's needs giving priority to the placement closest in proximity to the child's current placement.

***** 4250. Placement policy Out-Of-Home and Conditions for Return Home***

*****4533 BRS policy***

6. Why does DCYF treat Northwest Children's Home (NWCH) in Lewiston, ID, as an in-state facility for purposes of placement?

NWCH is in Lewiston, Idaho, and is 10 minutes away from the closest DCYF office located directly across the Snake River in Clarkston, WA. As they do for children who are placed in in-state group care facilities, Washington State DCYF staff conduct monthly health and safety visits to children in DCYF's custody who are placed at NWCH. NWCH also contracts with DCYF to provide BRS to children in DCYF's custody, and, likely due in part to its close proximity to Washington, is the only out-of-state facility that does so. NWCH is a QRTP.

7. How does DCYF assess whether a facility is trauma-informed? What process does DCYF use to make that determination?

Among other requirements, FFPSA requires that each QRTP be accredited by one of the three national organizations. All three of these organizations require accredited programs to use a trauma-informed treatment modality. Thus, accreditation by one of these organizations ensures that the program uses a trauma-informed treatment modality. In addition, DCYF also requires, through its BRS contracts, that QRTPs have a trauma-informed treatment model. The principles of such a model can be reviewed at: <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/creating-trauma-informed-systems>. Contracted QRTP must provide proof of accreditation and other FFPSA QRTP requirements. DCYF reviews each QRTP's accreditation when entering into and renewing contracts, and may make additional reviews at any time.