

2018 Supplemental Budget Decision Package

Agency: 307 Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Decision Package Code/Title: PL – A9 / Improve Parent Child Visitation

Budget Period: 2017-19

Budget Level: Policy Level

Agency Recommendation Summary Text:

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$2,998,000 (\$2,939,000 GF-State) and four FTEs to develop and implement cost containment measures for visitation services, to fund an ongoing rate increase for the Family Impact Network (FIN) which provides Parent Child Visitation (PCV) services in Eastern Washington, to fund a contract for a “Visit Coaching” model and to fund full implementation of the modified parent visitation services to improve PCVs for parents and children.

Fiscal Summary:

Operating Expenditures	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
001-1 General Fund-State	\$0	\$2,939,000	\$2,812,000	\$2,373,000
001-A General Fund-Federal	\$0	\$59,000	\$57,000	\$48,000
Total Cost	0	2,998,000	2,869,000	2,421,000
Staffing	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
FTEs	0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Revenue	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
001-A General Fund-Federal	\$0	\$59,000	\$57,000	\$48,000
Object of Expenditure	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Object A – Salaries	\$0	\$269,000	\$269,000	\$269,000
Object B – Benefits	\$0	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$105,000
Object E – Goods and Services	\$0	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000
Object N – Client Services	\$0	\$2,558,000	\$2,429,000	\$1,981,000

Package Description:

DCYF is required to support visitation between both parents and their children in out of home care and between siblings. DCYF ensures visitation occurs through a variety of means including social workers, relatives, and foster parents conducting visitation or using contracted visitation providers. Costs related to the contracted visitation have increased from approximately \$3,000,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 to more than \$25,000,000 in FY 2017. The major factor contributing to this growth is the high utilization of supervised visitation. Supervised visits are costly as they require significant staff time. DCYF, the court

system, and attorneys strive to improve and maintain familial relationships. Concerns about child safety prompt courts, attorneys, DCYF staff, and other key advocates to promote supervised visitation as a means to mitigate potential sources of harm. Current data shows that 80 percent of children in out of home care have a plan for supervised visitation as opposed to monitored or unsupervised. Additional factors driving increased visitation costs include transportation costs, caregiver concerns regarding interactions with legal parents, and caseworkers' and court partners' reliance on provider reports to document what occurs during the visits.

In addition to high utilization of supervised visitation, the rates currently paid for PCV services are increasingly unable to cover the contractor costs for these services. This includes both costs related to provider time for visits and mileage reimbursement for transporting children to visits. In 2008, DCYF stopped reimbursing for mileage when the distance traveled was less than 60 miles. The lack of reimbursement for mileage makes it difficult to only purchase transportation for children to visits and not supervision. In 2016, DCYF made an arrangement with the Family Impact Network (FIN) to raise its hourly rate billing from \$24.49 to \$26.50. DCYF contracts with FIN as a network administrator for performance based contracts, as required by state law. FIN operates sub-contracts for PCV in eight counties in eastern Washington. The hourly rate increase was intended to help FIN keep its current and attract additional providers. Funding for this additional cost is not in CA's budget and if this request is not funded, DCYF will be unable to continue the increased rates for FIN's subcontractors. FIN could lose providers and the ability to have true transportation only options. There is currently a waitlist for visitation providers in the FIN area and this could be worsened by rolling back the rate increase.

FIN is a public-private partnership in Eastern Washington serving as the Network Administrator in eight counties to provide family support and related services to vulnerable children and families on behalf of DCYF.

It is expected that improvements in the PCV experience for parents and children will expedite family reunifications. Improving the quality of PCVs, making them more informed regarding the role of trauma, and providing more intensive intervention early in the case can be accomplished through the development and use of a Visit Coaching model. Coaches will work with parents to help alleviate some of the stress associated with PCVs and to build on the parent's strengths to enhance the parent/child interactions and make visits more productive and consistent.

Please see Decision Package for the Department of Social and Health Services for funding needs for these activities for Fiscal Year 2018.

Base Budget:

Parent-Child Visitation costs the state \$25 million annually.

Decision Package expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions, calculations and details:

This request is to fund four activities designed to improve Parent-Child Visitation (PCV) for parents and children, control costs, and increase the number of family reunifications.

1. DCYF requests \$323,000 (\$317,000 General Fund-State) and 3.0 FTE (Research Analyst 5) to conduct a systematic review of how visitation services are utilized in different regional offices. These staff will conduct targeted case reviews, which may include interviews with parents, providers, and caseworkers. The three FTEs will review the visitation data that is currently available and determine if improved data is needed to better understand, analyze, and control the use of visitation services. This work will be used to develop methods to monitor and control visitation costs. Among other potential controls, this will include the education of DCYF staff, courts, providers, and legal representatives on the appropriate usage of visitation services.

DCYF also requests \$117,000 (\$115,000 General Fund-State) and 1.0 FTE (Social Services Specialist 4) to oversee this review of the PCV program at the headquarters level. The FTE will also oversee a contract for the development of a Visit Coaching model to be piloted in multiple offices throughout the state (see 3 below).

2. DCYF requests \$729,000 (\$714,000 GF-State) to increase the hourly and mileage reimbursement rates for the FIN, which provides PCV services. Rate increases were implemented for FIN to see if this level of increase will result in an increase in the number of providers available to provide visitation services. If these rate increases are successful in increasing the number of providers, additional funding may be requested in the future to increase rates statewide.

The current hourly staff rate paid for this service is \$24.49. This request is to maintain an increased rate of \$26.50 an hour, at a total cost of \$309,000 per year. Additionally, this contractor has not historically been paid mileage for the first 60 miles of travel to a PCV. Funding is requested to pay mileage for all miles traveled, at a total cost of \$420,000 per year.

3. DCYF requests \$1,829,000 (\$1,793,000 GF-State) to implement the modified parent child visitation pilot project statewide. DCYF is piloting the modified PCV in Fiscal Year 2018 with three providers and plans to roll out statewide in FY 2019. DCYF will also continue the visit coaching program. This request assumes using the \$431,000 provided for Fiscal Year 2019 under proviso in 2017-19 budget to fully accomplish this work.

Decision Package Justification and Impacts

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

DCYF expects that increasing the quality and availability of visitation can decrease the amount of time to reunification by 25 percent.

Performance Measure detail:

Fully describe and quantify expected impacts on state residents and specific populations served.

DCYF provides child welfare services to more than ten thousand children statewide.

What are other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

Impact(s) To:		Identify / Explanation
Regional/County impacts?	No	Identify:
Other local gov't impacts?	No	Identify:
Tribal gov't impacts?	No	Identify:
Other state agency impacts?	No	Identify:
Responds to specific task force, report, mandate or exec order?	No	Identify:
Does request contain a compensation change?	No	Identify:
Does request require a change to a collective bargaining agreement?	No	Identify:
Facility/workplace needs or impacts?	No	Identify:
Capital Budget Impacts?	No	Identify:
Is change required to existing statutes, rules or contracts?	No	Identify: RCW 74.13.031 and WAC 388-15-009 to reflect new federal definitions of "child abuse and neglect" and "sexual abuse"
Is the request related to or a result of litigation?	No	Identify lawsuit (please consult with Attorney General's Office):
Is the request related to Puget Sound recovery?	No	If yes, see budget instructions Section 14.4 for additional instructions
Identify other important connections		

Please provide a detailed discussion of connections/impacts identified above.

What alternatives were explored by the agency and why was this option chosen?

In 2015, DCYF convened a workgroup around parent child visitation designed to maintain and enhance the parent-child relationship through improved quality of visits. One of the outcomes of the work group, was a change in policy that aims at integrating tools of the Safety Framework to determine the proper supervision level. In addition, there was an acknowledgement of a need for more and better data. The cost of Parent Child Visitation has increased dramatically over the last several years. There needs to be a comprehensive coordinated approach to identifying the causes of the increase, as well as the proper implementation of appropriate data-driven remedial/cost saving measures.

What are the consequences of not funding this request?

The use of supervised parent child visitation will continue to increase. The cost of this service will continue to rise without a corresponding increase in positive outcomes.

How has or can the agency address the issue or need in its current appropriation level?

DCYF has worked to increase awareness among staff and others, but without specific data and an office by office approach at education, it is difficult to point to any one root cause. If DCYF is not able to come up with a systemic solution to containing costs in visitation while maintaining services, other areas of the budget will be impacted including potential social worker layoffs or reduction to other services.

Other supporting materials:

Information technology:

- No
- Yes

