

# DCYF Placement Continuum

## 2022 Supplemental Decision Package

Since 2014, The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) has faced increased difficulty finding stable placements for some foster youth, resulting in rising use of emergency placements such as hotels, offices, and night-to-night foster homes.

- ✔ These exceptional placements can result in trauma for both youth and staff.
- ✔ Black, Indigenous, youth of color, and youth in King and Clark counties are disproportionately impacted by exceptional placements, making stable placement a first step to addressing disproportionality.
- ✔ Many gaps in services can be addressed through rate increases that will provide additional capacity in programs that are effective in serving this population.

DCYF is partnering closely with the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to ensure that each system appropriately serves youth in dependency and at-risk of dependency. We have identified the following solutions to stabilize the placement continuum for these youth and better serve them.



### Increase Behavioral Rehabilitation Services Rates

Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is a temporary intensive wraparound support and treatment program for youth with complex, high-level service needs. BRS is used to safely stabilize youth and assist in achieving a permanent plan or a less intensive service. These services can be provided in the home, in residential care facilities, in treatment foster homes, and in short-term care facilities.

Over the last few years, the number of out-of-home placement settings with BRS have declined. Staff turnover in BRS residential care facilities is extremely high. A 2017 cost study found that the turnover rate for direct care staff was 44%, and DCYF has received notice from several providers stating that they were unable to fill their beds or were closing group homes due to an inability to find staffing. The current BRS rate is only sufficient to pay direct care staff minimum wage. A rate increase will stabilize this crucial line of service for youth.

**\$24.8 MILLION IN THE 2021-23 BIENNIUM**

### Family Team Decision Making Case Management

Shared planning meetings and Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) are an effective strategy for helping to stabilize youth in the least restrictive setting possible. DCYF is proposing six new FTE to provide case management and to conduct high-quality, consistent FTDMs, which are crucial in moving cases forward toward reunification or placement.

**\$1.2 MILLION IN THE 2021-23 BIENNIUM**

#### DCYF STRATEGIC PRIORITY ALIGNMENT:

- ✔ Eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity.
- ✔ Safely reduce the number/rate of children in out-of-home care.
- ✔ Create successful transitions to adulthood for youth and young adults in our care.
- ✔ Improve quality and intention of our practice.



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## Increase Case Aide Hourly Rate

Foster homes taking youth with high behavioral or personal care needs would benefit from in-home help. DCYF accomplishes this through positions called case aides. However, capacity is declining in this line of service.

Pay for case aides has not kept pace with increases to minimum wage and compensation for jobs that compete for the same employees. The current rate is not sufficient to see a significant increase in availability of the service. Stakeholders have identified this rate increase as a particularly effective method to help stabilize youth in foster homes.

**\$350,000 IN THE 2021-23 BIENNIUM**

## Increase Treatment Foster Care Rate

Treatment Foster Care settings are foster homes licensed to provide a higher level of care for children and youth with high behavioral health service needs. DCYF has seen a decline in the number of treatment foster homes. Funding provided to treatment foster homes is insufficient to allow for foster parents to provide the high-level care and support necessary without holding down other full-time employment. DCYF is proposing to increase funding to provide adequate reimbursement to foster families and other necessary support services.

**\$8.6 MILLION IN THE 2021-23 BIENNIUM**

## Pilot for Adolescent Housing Program (ages 16-17)

Many older adolescents in foster care are ready for greater levels of independence, however DCYF does not have placement settings appropriate for these youth. DCYF will be piloting a program for adolescents that provides a heavily supported housing option that will allow youth to gain skills for ultimate independence. DCYF anticipates the new placement option could serve approximately 15-20 youth in three sites across the state in SFY 2023.

**\$1.2 MILLION IN THE 2021-23 BIENNIUM**

### Contact

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