



MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Legislative Fiscal Division

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Director
AMY CARLSON

DATE: September 30, 2016

TO: Legislative Finance Committee

FROM: Alice Hecht and Scot Conrady

RE: Federal funding in the Child & Family Services Division

During the last Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) meeting, staff were asked to prepare a breakdown of federal funds used by the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) and gather feedback from the division on the most onerous federal requirements associated with the funding sources. This was a follow up to the LFC meeting in March 2016 wherein the committee heard testimony from the Division Administrator of CFSD and the Senior Deputy County Attorney from Yellowstone County on the excessive workloads facing caseworkers. It was suggested that one of the major difficulties for caseworkers and the agency as a whole was the amount of time required to fill out paperwork needed for federal funding requirements and that the value of some federal funds may not be worth effort.

Federal funds account for 40.6% of the CFSD budget. The major federal funding sources are outlined in the table below.

FY 2016 Federal Funding of Child and Family Services		
Funding Source	Budget	Share of total
Title IV-B	\$622,891	1.9%
Title IV-D	101,518	0.3%
Title IV-E	27,223,034	84.9%
CAPTA	1,111,249	3.5%
TANF	3,011,032	9.4%
Other	1,309	0.0%
Total	\$32,071,032	100.0%

LFD followed up with CFSD in asking for feedback on which regulations were the most onerous and whether there was a way to be able to reduce the amount of clerical work needed to comply with federal regulations or if there were any funds that weren't worth the work.

Due to the individual nature of the division's case work and how federal funding is distributed, CFSD did not provide a list of the most onerous requirements, however CFSD responded with examples of federal procedural and documentation requirements as well as data collection and reporting demands.

The examples include:

- The Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) mandate does not address the time and effort for preparing for and conducting the review, and/or the necessary resources to make any systematic changes identified in the review through a subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP)
- The requirement for assessing potential sex trafficking victims and referring for services
- Additional Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting elements – i.e. federal reporting done through the CAPS reporting system every 6 months. Currently there are 66 foster care reporting elements (i.e. pieces of data to be entered into CAPS) and 37 adoption reporting elements. There is proposed regulation change that may increase the reporting elements - this may increase data entry for staff
- Additional federal reporting requirements are being added to the monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. These requirements require additional resources of time and staff.
- The IV-B State Plan is about 100 pages long. Every item in the plan is linked to a federal requirement

CFSD indicated that it is necessary to comply with federal requirements in order to continue to receive federal funding and that federal funding is necessary for the division's budget. Additionally, the division pointed out that it operates within Montana's judicial system and many of the documentation requirements are necessary in order to thoroughly document decisions made for child safety and present those in district court.

CFSD substantiates that data entry is currently slow and cumbersome but nevertheless required. The division is currently working to amend this situation by developing a new case management system that is intended to streamline the process.

The LFC asked if the program would benefit by restructuring to align individual duties in a more efficient manner. CFSD recently restructured its field operations by creating a sixth region and realigning existing regional boundaries to address changing staffing patterns and leadership needs as a result of the substantial increase in the number of children in foster care. Additionally, CFSD is addressing increasing caseloads by hiring workers to fill modified FTE positions funded by realized vacancy savings. They are distributed as follows:

- 4.00 are leadership staff positions for a new administrative region was created in NW Montana
- 24.00 are social service technicians throughout the state who may transport children, gather required documents, or help families and kinship providers access services
- 2.00 are subject matter specialists, one focusing on recruitment and retention, and one to address complaint resolution and critical incident management