



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$17,229,000 (17,195,000 GF-S) and 6.0 Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTEs) in the 2023-25 Biennium Budget to increase housing access and support services for youth exiting foster care, juvenile rehabilitation, and families involved in the child welfare system.

Program Recommendation Summary

090 - Program Support

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$17,228,000 (17,194,000 GF-S) and 6.0 Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTEs) in the 2023-25 Biennium Budget to increase housing access and support services for youth exiting foster care, juvenile rehabilitation, and families involved in the child welfare system.

Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Staffing						
FTEs	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$8,619	\$8,576	\$17,195	\$8,576	\$8,576	\$17,152
Fund 001 - A	\$17	\$17	\$34	\$17	\$17	\$34
Total Expenditures	\$8,636	\$8,593	\$17,229	\$8,593	\$8,593	\$17,186
Revenue						
001 - 0393	\$17	\$17	\$34	\$17	\$17	\$34
Total Revenue	\$17	\$17	\$34	\$17	\$17	\$34

Decision Package Description

DCYF clients across juvenile rehabilitation and child welfare have a demonstrated need for additional housing supports in order to maintain stability and to successfully transition out of public systems. The need for housing occurs in two primary populations, youth and young adults exiting juvenile rehabilitation and foster care, as well as families involved in child welfare.

Youth and Young Adults:

There is demonstrated need for housing supports for youth and young adults exiting publicly funded systems of care. The most recent RDA dashboard for State Fiscal Year 2020 showed that 17% of youth aging out of foster care and 21% of youth exiting the criminal justice system are experiencing homelessness within 12 months after exit. The youth and young adults entering homelessness are disproportionately black, indigenous, and people of color. In 2018, with the passage of HB 6560 the Legislature committed that “beginning January 1, 2021, any unaccompanied youth discharged from a publicly funded system of care in our state will be discharged into safe and stable housing (HB 6560).” While the state has certainly made progress toward this goal, more than a year past the January 2021 deadline, there are still not adequate resources and supports needed to achieve safe and stable housing for Washington young people as they exit our systems of care.



DCYF is proposing \$3.3 M to fund community-based housing support services to fulfill the state’s commitment of safe and stable housing to young people exiting juvenile rehabilitation and foster care.

\$2.37M of the funding requested will be dedicated for serving young people exiting foster care by providing housing support services. Youth and young adults exiting foster care are eligible for the federal Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Voucher, offered through local housing authorities. Per federal guidance, as part of the condition of the housing authority obtaining and issuing a voucher to an eligible young person, the public child welfare agency must provide or arrange for housing support services for that young person. Therefore, DCYF is requesting funding to provide housing support services, which can include locating housing, working with landlords, assisting with application submittal, and covering funds for deposits and fees. To date, there has not been a dedicated funding source for this and as such, there has not been consistent access to supportive services across the state. This has led to geographic inequities in how young people are served and are able to access vouchers. This funding would allow housing authorities to leverage additional federal resources available through the FYI voucher and allow for equitable access to vouchers for young people, wherever they are in Washington. Based on an estimate of \$5000 per young person for support services, DCYF anticipates serving approximately 444 young people throughout the biennium.

\$1M of this funding will be dedicated for young people exiting juvenile rehabilitation (JR). Although youth and young adults exiting JR are not eligible for specific housing vouchers upon exit, they are equally in need of housing support services. This funding would support community-based organizations in providing housing navigation and other activities to young people re-entering into their communities. This investment builds on the current resources that are available to the JR population, but that do not meet the current level of need. We anticipate serving 98 young people through this funding.

Child Welfare-Involved Families:

In addition to youth and young adults, families involved in the child welfare system also demonstrate a high need for housing. Housing instability can be a factor in the removal of a child and leads to longer duration of time in care for children. National data from experts in child welfare housing anticipate that roughly 30% of child welfare cases could be avoided or shortened if housing supports were provided to the family¹. Therefore, providing housing support services could lead to savings in foster care costs for the state.

In 2019, the Legislature established the Child Welfare Housing Pilot through SB 5718 with an initial budget of \$767K per year. In 2021, the Legislature extended the program and provided \$737K in resources for an additional year. DCYF contracted with a local community-based provider in Lewis County that is serving 70 families with \$636K, approximating roughly \$9,000 in cost per family. Families were able to obtain Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers through a partnership with the local housing authority, or otherwise find housing through non-FUP vouchers, connection to public benefits programs, and/or employment. Improvements have been made since the pilot phase that allow DCYF to achieve greater scale with current resources available and maximize leveraging existing housing opportunities. Similar to the vouchers for youth, child welfare agencies are required to provide or arrange for housing support services when families access FUP vouchers. Funding provided through this program allows Public Housing Authorities in the state to draw down increased federal dollars through vouchers by funding the required support services or the funds can be used flexibly if other housing opportunities are the best fit for the family.

DCYF is proposing \$12.M in funding to expand the Child Welfare Housing Pilot to make the program available statewide and to serve families where children are at risk of removal in part due to housing instability as well as continuing to serve families who are seeking reunification. Based on experiences from the pilot, DCYF anticipates serving roughly 1330 families through the biennium. Based on average fair market rates, this amounts to roughly \$23 million in federal housing voucher dollars that the state could fully leverage through this \$12 million investment.

Page Break

System Improvements:

DCYF requests 6.0 additional FTEs and \$932,000 in FY24 and \$889,000 annually thereafter, to serve as regional housing leads. The regional leads will manage agreements with local housing authorities, develop relationship with landlords, and support housing programming in their region.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:

This proposal would be used for community-based housing support services for youth and young adults to aid them in achieving stable housing placements as they exit from publicly-funded systems of care. In addition, funding would be used to expand the Child Welfare Housing Pilot established in SB 5718 (2019) for families at-risk of entering out-of-home placement and supporting a speedy reunification.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

Calculations provided in attachment "Housing Decision Package".

Workforce Assumptions:

The following staff are requested ongoing beginning in FY24:

Soc & Health Prog Cons 4 – SHPC 4 (6 FTEs – 1 per Region)

The SPHC 4 staff will work with the Regional Administrator to coordinate housing systems development in each region and manage the processes related to housing.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This proposal contributes to the Governor's Result Washington:

- Healthy and Safe Communities: Providing youth, young adults, and families the resources and supports needed to achieve stable housing.

This Decision Package supports the DCYF Strategic Plan:

- DCYF Priority: Create successful transitions into adulthood for youth and young adults in our care. Supporting young adults and families.
- DCYF Priority: Reduce the number of children in out-of-home care.

Performance Outcomes:

- Reduction of youth and young adults entering homelessness after exiting publicly funded systems of care
- Reduction in the number of children in out-of-home care
 - Preventing entry into foster care
 - Reducing length of stay in out-of-home care
- This proposal would contribute to the following incremental performance metrics:
 - Improved relationships with DCYF and local public housing authorities
 - Increased capacity of DCYF to engage in housing initiatives, partnerships, and supports

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

Robust stakeholder engagement with public housing authorities, child welfare housing advisory group, courts, and the Office of Public Defense. Stakeholder engagement led to refinement in the decision package.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

Housing instability is disproportionately experienced by Black, Indigenous, and people of color in Washington State. According to the most recent RDA Dashboard from 2020, for young people exiting foster care into homelessness within 12 months, 30% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 26% are Hispanic or Latino, and 24% are Black or African American. For young people exiting the criminal justice system into homelessness within 12 months, 18% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 20% are Hispanic or Latino, and 27% are Black or African American. Rates of housing instability for families also indicate a disproportionate impact on BIPOC families. Therefore, this funding proposed will lead to an increase in equity by providing additional supports for families and young people.

Youth of color are disproportionately likely to enter into homelessness after exiting a system of care and families of color are more likely to experience housing instability.

Target Populations or Communities:

Housing instability is disproportionately experienced by Black, Indigenous, and people of color in Washington State. According to the most recent RDA Dashboard from 2020, for young people exiting foster care into homelessness within 12 months, 30% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 26% are Hispanic or Latino, and 24% are Black or African American. For young people exiting the criminal justice system into homelessness within 12 months, 18% are American Indian or Alaska Native, 20% are Hispanic or Latino, and 27% are Black or African American. Rates of housing instability for families also indicate a disproportionate impact on BIPOC families. Therefore, this funding proposed will lead to an increase in equity by providing additional supports for families and young people.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable

State Workforce Impacts:

There are no impacts to existing collective bargaining agreements, compensation or benefits. It is unknown whether there will be concerns expressed by the Union in regards to the FTE request for this decision package.

Intergovernmental:

This work requires close partnership with local counties and the designated public housing authority in that area. Public housing authorities are supportive of this funding proposal.

Stakeholder Response:

DCYF stakeholders including Public Housing Authorities, non-profit housing providers, Independent Living providers, and community-based organizations are in support of DCYF providing adequate housing access and other support services to young people and families.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable

Changes from Current Law:

Not applicable.

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Not applicable.

IT Addendum

Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?

No

Objects of Expenditure

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
Obj. A	\$549	\$549	\$1,098	\$549	\$549	\$1,098
Obj. B	\$180	\$180	\$360	\$180	\$180	\$360
Obj. E	\$11	\$11	\$22	\$11	\$11	\$22
Obj. G	\$14	\$14	\$28	\$14	\$14	\$28
Obj. J	\$43	\$0	\$43	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. N	\$7,704	\$7,704	\$15,408	\$7,704	\$7,704	\$15,408
Obj. T	\$135	\$135	\$270	\$135	\$135	\$270

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