



## Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is submitting a placeholder request in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to begin implementing a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), which is a case management information system in support of the child welfare program. A feasibility study will be completed in the fall of 2023, which will provide DCYF with the considerations necessary to implement a successful CCWIS as well as an estimate for the corresponding funding needed.

## Program Recommendation Summary

### 090 - Program Support

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is submitting a placeholder request in the 2024 Supplemental Budget to begin implementing a Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), which is a case management information system in support of the child welfare program. A feasibility study will be completed in the fall of 2023, which will provide DCYF with the considerations necessary to implement a successful CCWIS as well as an estimate for the corresponding funding needed.

## Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2024	2025	2023-25	2026	2027	2025-27
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001 - 1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

## Decision Package Description

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) currently uses a child welfare case management system, FamLink, which is Washington State’s Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). The system code for FamLink was originally developed circa 2000 and transferred from the State of Wisconsin to Washington in 2007. In February 2009, it was implemented as Washington’s child welfare information system and renamed FamLink, replacing the legacy mainframe system. FamLink is used by approximately 2,800 DCYF staff (including intake, CPS, child welfare social service specialists, foster care licensors and fiduciaries) in addition to 400 external users, including tribal partners, Office of Children and Families Ombudsman, and others. FamLink supports 233,000 clients.

The current FamLink application does not adequately meet the business needs of the child welfare program. The system complexity causes several problems that creates challenges for department staff and partners to serve Washington families, including:

- Timely system modifications resulting from federal rule changes are not possible.
- No way to streamline system functionality to support day to day case management work.
- Difficult to incorporate new technology to support evolving child welfare practices.
- Lack of provider management functionality is a major gap in the current functionality.
- Interoperability with other state systems is time consuming and expensive.
- The existing system has poor data quality to measure outcomes and support effective decision making.

DCYF staff continue to correct system malfunctions, modify the system as necessary for changing state and federal legislative mandates and changing business practices, as well as maintain application software and hardware dependencies. These efforts require a significant time investment to avoid unexpected impacts to other data sets in the system. This lack of flexibility can cause a significant amount of work for child welfare workers to meet the needs of the children and families. The FamLink database lacks enforced referential integrity, scalability, and is overtaxed with data redundancy and inconsistencies, requiring regular data cleanup efforts and data fixes to ensure the information in the system is accurate.

The federal Administration of Children and Families (ACF), would not allow DCYF to claim Title IVE at the enhanced rate of 75 percent Federal Financial Participation (FFP) for costs associated with making new developments in FamLink because FamLink has never met federal SACWIS compliance, resulting in Washington continuing to work under a formal federal improvement plan, resulting in higher costs for the state

to bear should updates to FamLink continue to occur. The ACF implemented new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) regulations to allow states greater flexibility in developing case management information systems that are modular based with a focus on data quality and allows for the use of modern technology that will enable data sharing between multiple systems. DCYF anticipates a portion of the cost to build a new CCWIS will be reimbursed by the federal government at a rate of 75 percent FFP, with the state share of the cost at 25 percent. If the state does not come into compliance with the new CCWIS regulations, future FFP rates will be affected for the maintenance and operations services of the state’s current case management system and will increase the General Fund-State obligation of the total cost required to maintain and operate the current system.

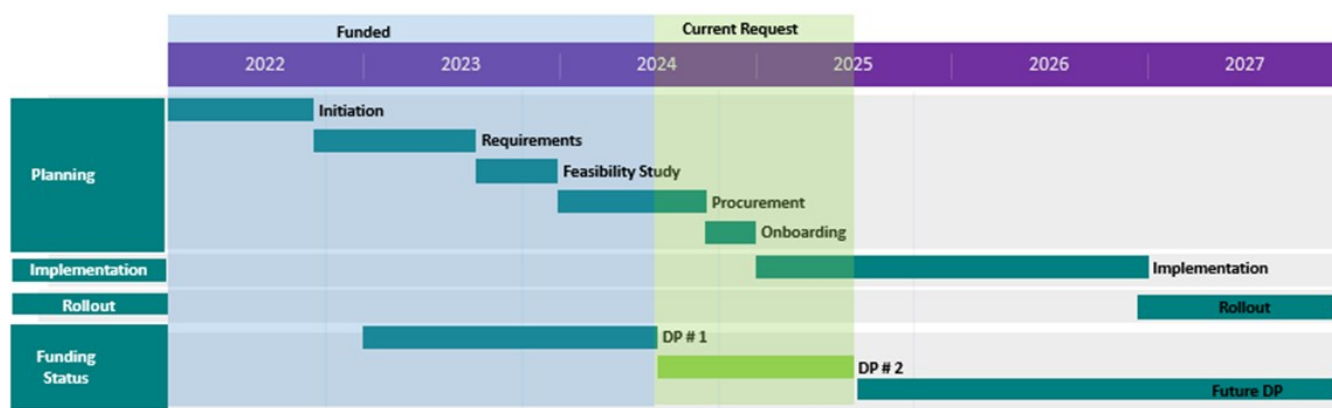
The new modular information system will be a complete replacement and enhancement of the legacy child welfare information system, enabling DCYF to more effectively serve families and protect children. Under the new federal rules, all states are required to provide a Declaration or submit a Notice of Intent to ACF of the state’s plan to comply with the new rules in order to maintain any future FFP funding for maintenance and new development. Washington has declared the current FamLink system as a “transitional” system with the intent to develop a new CCWIS system.

In addition to the benefit of more effectively serving the families in Washington state, there is also a financial benefit to implementing a CCWIS system. A CCWIS system will allow the Department to claim Title IV-E Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) funding for families in which a child has been determined to be a candidate for foster care. The Title IV-E Foster Care program provides federal entitlement funding for Title IV-E eligible children receiving allowable services while placed in licensed foster care. Prior to the passage of the FFPSA, which was signed into law in February 2018 under H.R. 1892, Title IV-E federal funding was not available to reimburse for services in support of children safely remaining in their own home but rather for children placed into foster care. FFPSA shifts the focus of the child welfare system toward keeping children safely in their own home, which is demonstrated by the federal government’s federal financial participation under Title IV-E FFPSA. In order to claim these dollars, State’s must submit a State Prevention Plan for approval by the federal government and must provide the necessary data elements for each FFPSA allowable service delivered to each family, with each federal quarterly Title IV-E claim to support the request for FFPSA reimbursement. Washington State’s FFPSA State Prevention Plan has been approved by the federal government, allowing the claiming of FFPSA. However, DCYF’s current case management system does not have the capability to capture the data elements necessary to claim FFPSA, nor can the current system identify and track candidates for foster care and their corresponding child-specific prevention plans. A new CCWIS will capture this data, allowing the ability to claim FFPSA federal funding for allowable services provided to keep children safely in their own homes. A new system will also support the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) as passed by the Legislature in 2021, which became effective July 1, 2023.

DCYF implemented a feasibility study for a new CCWIS in the September 2022, with the completion of the study expected in the fall of 2023. In addition to the feasibility study and upon additional planning for the successful implementation of a CCWIS, DCYF spoke to other state child welfare agencies, consulted with and received technical assistance from ACF, and attended industry conferences to more fully understand how a new child welfare information system could assist in meeting the current challenges faced by DCYF.

The feasibility study will provide DCYF with the considerations necessary to implement a successful CCWIS. Until the feasibility study is complete, the implementation approach and costs are unknown. DCYF will better know the funding need and time period necessary to reach full implementation of a CCWIS, once the study is completed.

The chart below shows the funding path for the CCWIS modernization work. This decision package ask is highlighted in green below. Future phases are shown to reflect the full project scope.



## Assumptions and Calculations

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

This is a placeholder request, which will be updated based on the feasibility study, which will be completed in the fall of 2023.

### ***Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:***

This is a placeholder request, which will be updated based on the feasibility study, which will be completed in the fall of 2023.

### ***Workforce Assumptions:***

This is a placeholder request, which will be updated based on the feasibility study, which will be completed in the fall of 2023.

## Strategic and Performance Outcomes

### ***Strategic Framework:***

The new CCWIS rules require three additional interfaces within practicability:

- Educational
- Medical
- Legal/court

The addition of these interfaces in the CCWIS system will directly support the Results Washington Goals specifically for Washington children within the state's foster care system. It will allow workers and caregivers who are responsible for the youth's day to day care and planning better access to timely and complete information necessary to help improve outcomes for these children in education, health/medical, well-being and permanency. DCYF believes that successful implementation of the CCWIS will have the following general positive benefits of enhanced Services, decreased costs, increased efficiency, decreased risk, and increased data accuracy.

**Performance Outcomes:**

DCYF expects the new child welfare information system to achieve improvements including:

- **Better Outcomes for Children and Families:** By leveraging data-driven insights, child welfare services can be tailored to address individual needs, resulting in better outcomes for children and families involved in the system.
- **Reduction of Disproportionality and Disparity:** Modernized technology will better enable DCYF to track, measure and integrate tools to support marginalized cultural populations.
- **Scalable and maintainable Solution:** A solution that runs on up-to-date technology that is easy to maintain.
- **Improved Search:** Able to identify kin and relationships much more easily.
- **Enhanced Data Integration:** The Solution will enable seamless data integration across various government agencies, providing a comprehensive view of a child's case history and family situation.
- **Streamlined Case Management:** Automation and standardized processes will lead to reduced paperwork and administrative burden, allowing caseworkers to focus more on providing quality services to families in need.
- **New Provider Management Functionality:** To ensure end to end tracking of all referral capabilities.
- **Improved Decision-Making:** The system's advanced analytics and reporting capabilities will provide valuable insights to aid in better decision-making for child welfare professionals and policymakers.
- **Timely Interventions:** The improved data access and communication between agencies will enable early identification of risks, leading to more timely interventions and preventive measures.
- **Data Quality:** The use of technology to improve data quality by creating more timely data entry, data processing, data retention and data exchange standards. In addition, it will have features to support continuous monitoring of data quality and implement user facing responsive tools to address issues with data quality.
- **Federal Reporting:** AFCARS 2.1 went live in May 2023 and DCFY will be unable to meet these new federal reporting requirements until the new CCWIS solution is in place. The changes are too complex and extensive to make in the FamLink application.
- **Resource Utilization:** Through elimination of redundant data entry, it will increase availability of information and documentation, and result in timely business practice execution.
- **System Access:** Improved child welfare worker, service provider and service organization access to system information through portal and mobile technologies.
- **Information Exchange Interfaces:** Improved access, accuracy and completeness of data located in external department and business partner repositories, including CCWIS required new data exchanges with education agencies, the courts, and Medicaid claims processing systems.
- **Business Collaboration:** Improved communication/collaboration and information management between child welfare workers, community organizations, service providers and multidisciplinary teams.
- **Outcome Driven Planning, Management and Assessment:** Improved case management outcome/process planning, management, and assessment/reporting.

CCWIS adherence: To ensure retention at the current or enhanced federal financial participation rate.

## Equity Impacts

### **Community outreach and engagement:**

DCYF has partnered with tribes, engaged with other state child welfare agencies, and have consulted with and received technical assistance from our federal partners.

CCWIS modernization will benefit various target populations and communities involved in child welfare services. Some examples of the populations and communities with the associated benefits:

**Families Involved in the Child Welfare System:** Families that are receiving services from child welfare agencies can benefit from CCWIS by streamlining processes and improving data sharing, families can experience more efficient and effective services. Better tracking of services and interventions can help support families in placement prevention, achieving reunification or other positive outcomes.

**Children Receiving Services and/or in Foster Care:** The ultimate beneficiaries of CCWIS modernization are the children receiving services including foster care. By enhancing data sharing and communication between agencies and professionals involved in their care, children can experience increased safety, health, education, and stability. The system can reduce bureaucratic delays and improve placement prevention, placement matching, leading to quicker and more suitable placements as needed. This, in turn, can reduce trauma and promote overall well-being for the children.

**Communities with High Child Welfare Needs:** Geographic communities with high child welfare needs, such as those facing poverty, substance abuse issues, or domestic violence, can benefit from CCWIS by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of child welfare services, the system can help address these issues more promptly and comprehensively.

**Foster Parents and Caregivers:** Foster parents and caregivers who provide temporary or permanent homes for children in the child welfare system can benefit from CCWIS by having access to pertinent information and support services, they can provide improved care, leading to better outcomes and stability for the children they are caring for.

**Tribal Communities:** Native American or Indigenous tribal communities involved in child welfare services can also benefit from CCWIS modernization. Enhanced data sharing and collaboration with tribal agencies can help preserve cultural connections and improve outcomes for Native American children and their families.

**Child Welfare Partner Agencies:** CCWIS modernization creates the opportunity for interoperability between systems and provide improved tools and technologies to manage caseloads, streamline processes, and enhance data collection and reporting. It can help these agencies make more informed decisions about child welfare cases, leading to better outcomes for children and families.

**Social Workers and Caseworkers:** Social workers and caseworkers play a critical role in child welfare services. With CCWIS modernization, they can have access to up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information about the children and families they serve. This allows them to make well-informed decisions, develop better intervention plans, and track progress more effectively.

Overall, CCWIS modernization benefits not only specific demographic populations, such as children in foster care, caregivers, or families involved in the system, but also the broader geographic communities that face child welfare challenges. The improved efficiency and effectiveness of child welfare services lead to better outcomes for children and families, contributing to stronger and more stable communities.

### **Disproportional Impact Considerations:**

Black and Indigenous children are over represented in the child welfare system in Washington. This request will address malfunctions with the current system, the ability to modify the system as necessary for changing state and federal legislative mandates and changing business practices, as well as maintain application software and hardware dependencies to better children and families in Washington while striving for better outcomes.

### **Target Populations or Communities:**

Child welfare involved children and families in Washington State.

## Other Collateral Connections

### ***Puget Sound Recovery:***

Not applicable.

### ***State Workforce Impacts:***

CCWIS Implementation could change the job description/duties of the staff that support the system but is not expected to impact.

### ***Intergovernmental:***

Potential impacts include: Child Welfare Contributing Agencies (CWCA) under the CCWIS rules are defined as a public or private entity that by contract or agreement with the Title IVE agency, provides child abuse and neglect investigations, placements or child welfare case management (or any combination of these) to children and families. Under CCWIS rules, all current and historical CCWIS data must be stored and maintained in the CCWIS system. This includes data collected by the Title IVE agency and any CWCA's. While the CCWIS rules explicitly exempt county or city governments, tribal entities may fall under the CWCA definition. The State agency would be required to interface or provide for usage of the CCWIS by CWCA's.

### ***Stakeholder Response:***

See above for CWCA information that could affect stakeholders.

### ***State Facilities Impacts:***

Not applicable.

### ***Changes from Current Law:***

Not applicable.

### ***Legal or Administrative Mandates:***

This request is in response to new CCWIS federal rules.

### ***HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions***

Not applicable.

## Reference Documents

[CCWIS IT Addendum 2023.docx](#)

## IT Addendum

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

Yes

## Agency Contact Information

Crystal Lester  
(360) 628-3960  
crystal.lester@dcyf.wa.gov