



Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$10,952,000 (\$7,640,000 GF-S) and 35.5 full time equivalents (FTE) in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget to support increased licensed kinship placements. Placements with licensed kin are increasing and will continue to increase with the implementation of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) enacted in the 2021-23 biennial budget, the Washington Supreme Court case *In re Dependency of K.W.*, the agreed settlement order in the case of D.S., and vocal advocacy from stakeholders are all pushing the agency to reframe its approach to placing children with kin and supporting those kin families through the life of the placement. This package seeks to maintain licensing staff ratios as more kin placements become licensed.

Program Recommendation Summary

010 - Children and Families Services

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$10,952,000 (\$7,640,000 GF-S) and 35.5 full time equivalents (FTE) in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget to support increased licensed kinship placements. Placements with licensed kin are increasing and will continue to increase with the implementation of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) enacted in the 2021-23 biennial budget, the Washington Supreme Court case *In re Dependency of K.W.*, the agreed settlement order in the case of D.S., and vocal advocacy from stakeholders are all pushing the agency to reframe its approach to placing children with kin and supporting those kin families through the life of the placement. This package seeks to maintain licensing staff ratios as more kin placements become licensed.

090 - Program Support

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$10,952,000 (\$7,640,000 GF-S) and 35.5 full time equivalents (FTE) in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget to support increased licensed kinship placements. Placements with licensed kin are increasing and will continue to increase with the implementation of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) enacted in the 2021-23 biennial budget, the Washington Supreme Court case *In re Dependency of K.W.*, the agreed settlement order in the case of D.S., and vocal advocacy from stakeholders are all pushing the agency to reframe its approach to placing children with kin and supporting those kin families through the life of the placement. This package seeks to maintain licensing staff ratios as more kin placements become licensed.

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	27.0	43.9	35.45	51.9	53.1	52.5
Operating Expenditures						
Fund 001 - 1	\$2,510	\$3,924	\$6,434	\$4,579	\$4,638	\$9,217
Fund 001 - A	\$973	\$2,158	\$3,131	\$3,426	\$4,674	\$8,100
Fund 001 - A	\$69	\$112	\$181	\$132	\$135	\$267
Fund 001 - 1	\$458	\$748	\$1,206	\$884	\$905	\$1,789
Total Expenditures	\$4,010	\$6,942	\$10,952	\$9,021	\$10,352	\$19,373
Revenue						
001 - 0393	\$973	\$2,158	\$3,131	\$3,426	\$4,674	\$8,100
001 - 0393	\$69	\$112	\$181	\$132	\$135	\$267
Total Revenue	\$1,042	\$2,270	\$3,312	\$3,558	\$4,809	\$8,367

Decision Package Description

Research has shown that children who are placed with relatives have better outcomes compared to those placed in non-relative foster care. Relative placement promotes stability, decreased likelihood of re-abuse and institutional abuse, and better behavioral and mental health outcomes.

In addition, over the past few years DCYF has encountered significant external pressures to change the way the agency's approaches the relationship with kin and suitable others in the foster care system. HB 1227 Protecting the Rights of Families Responding to Allegations of Abuse or Neglect of a Child, the Washington Supreme Court case *In re Dependency of K.W.*, the agreed settlement order in the case of *D.S.*, and vocal advocacy from stakeholders are all pushing the agency to reframe its approach to placing children with kin and supporting those kin families through the life of the placement.

Many factors will increase the number of unlicensed kinship placements that become licensed including:

- Offering an initial license and payments to kin as authorized in HB 1227
- Kinship Engagement Unit, which will help kin in the process of becoming licensed
- Increased placements with kin as required in the Supreme Court decision listed above
- Streamlining of licensing requirements so kin can receive a child specific license.

DCYF seeks to keep the ratio of licensing staff to children in licensed placement the same as the percent of kin who are licensed increases over the next several years.

Assumptions and Calculations

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

This request for funding is based on House Bill 1227 in the 2021 regular session, would have had the department offer initial licenses to kin based on a judge order which would open up kin providers to receive foster care maintenance payments. The fiscal note for HB 1227 noted a need for more home studies and licensing monitoring staff. Staff were not provided in the funding of HB 1227. DCYF now requests these staff to maintain licensing ratios. In the 2022 supplemental session the department submitted a decision package for the Kinship Caregiver Engagement Unit (CE) requesting 15 FTEs ongoing. There was an error in this decision package that didn't include the additional 7 FTEs to replace the temporary FTEs the department had funded to pilot the program. In this decision package these 7 FTEs are being requested in order to expand the unit to the number needed for state wide implementation.

Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:

R-GAP Payments total costs are \$1,423,000 (\$0 GF-S) in the 23-25 biennium

For the cost estimate, all eligible guardianships are expected to continue receiving R-GAP payments until the child turns 18. Because guardianships can last a long time and continue receiving payments throughout the guardianship, the numbers of active guardianships receiving payments continues to stack year after year. Average monthly relative guardianship assistance payments are approximately \$729 per month.

Currently there are approximately 290 guardianships started per year, including tribal guardianships with tribes who have met Title IV-E qualifications and tribes licensed by DCYF as Child Placement Agencies (CPAs). Only licensed kin can qualify for R-GAP and currently only 20% of guardianships are licensed, however this number is expected to grow significantly based on the department issuing initial licenses (HB1227) and an increased departmental focus on support of kin. The department anticipates that 40% of unlicensed kin placements will become licensed scaled in over the course of the next biennium, with a continued increase in the following biennium.

The majority of current guardianships with licensed kin are eligible to receive Title IV-E R-GAP payments (88%). This is because the department generally only encourages guardianships in cases where an individual would be eligible for R-GAP. This 88% federal R-GAP qualifying number is assumed to remain consistent as the number of licensed kin increases, meaning that the increase in the licensed population would be primarily federally funded rather than state funded. The increase in Title IV-E funded Guardianships is expected to be as follows:

FY24: 421 months * \$729 average R-GAP per month = \$306,990

FY25: 1,530 months * \$729 average R-GAP per month = \$1,115,664

FY26: 3,028 months * \$729 average R-GAP per month = \$2,207,994

FY27: 4,719 months * \$729 average R-GAP per month = \$3,441,058

Training Costs for Initial Licenses total costs are \$50,000 (40,000 GF-S) in the 23-25 biennium

One-time training costs of \$50,000 to aid with the transition to offering initial licenses. This is a one-time cost in FY23.

Workforce Assumptions:

Licensing Staff total costs are \$6,869,000 (\$5,507,000 GF-S) and 25.3 FTEs in the 23-25 biennium

DCYF assumes that 40 percent of unlicensed relative placements will become licensed over the next biennium. Using the June 2022 caseload forecast and assuming the increasing rate of licensure, DCYF projects a 22 percent increase in the number of youth placed in licensed homes versus unlicensed. In order to maintain the current licensing ratios, DCYF is requesting a 22 percent increase in licensing staff. The current number of licensing staff is 150 FTE's. This request asks for a total of 33 additional FTEs, phased in over the next biennium. These staff are responsible for conducting initial licensing activities, assisting licensed families in access services, and maintaining the license over the life of the case. To maintain current supervisor ratios 1 out of every 5 of these additional FTEs will be a lead or supervisor.

The standard positions are classified as Social Service Specialist 3s (SSS3s) and the supervisory positions are classified as Social Service Specialists 5s (SSS5s). These positions are 21% funded via Title IV-E. Including \$1,800 per year in goods and services, \$2,400 per year in travel and a first-year equipment charge of \$7,200 total costs for these FTEs are as follows:

FY24: 14.0 SSS3s and 3.5 SSS5s FTE \$2,081,563

FY25: 26.4 SSS3s and 6.6 SSS5s FTE \$3,788,844

FY26: 31.68 SSS3s and 7.92 SSS5s FTE \$4,467,413

FY27: 31.68 SSS3s and 7.92 SSS5s FTE \$4,417,013

A 18.43% admin support rate is applied to all FTE costs to fund program support functions that scale with additional FTEs such as HR, IT, and Fiscal. This cost is represented in object T of this decision package. 13% of this admin support rate is funded via Title IV-E.

FY24: \$346,201

FY25: \$652,836

FY26: \$783,403

FY27: \$783,403

R-GAP Specialists total costs are \$620,000 (\$497,000 GF-S) and 2.4 FTEs in the 23-25 biennium

Each region has R-GAP specialists who work with proposed guardians, reviewing case files, creating an R-GAP agreement, and establishing a subsidy. Based on the increase in guardianships receiving R-GAP payments, new specialists would be required to handle the increased caseload. This increase in caseload represents only state funded R-GAP payments. Each new guardianship on their caseload takes approximately 44 hours in upfront work. Established caseloads require on average 1 hour per guardianship per month:

FY24: 72 new guardianships * 44 hr + 349 months guardianship * 1 hr = 3,517 / 2,080 = 1.69 FTE

FY25: 114 new guardianships * 44 hr + 1,415 months guardianship * 1 hr = 6,431 / 2,080 = 3.09 FTE

FY26: 145 new guardianships * 44 hr + 2,883 months guardianship * 1 hr = 9,263 / 2,080 = 4.45 FTE

FY27: 165 new guardianships * 44 hr + 4,553 months guardianship * 1 hr = 11,813 / 2,080 = 5.68 FTE

Full detailed calculations can be found in the R-GAP Payments Estimation spreadsheet.

These positions are classified as Social and Health Program Consultants 2 (SHPC2). Including \$1,800 per year in goods and services, \$2,400 per year in travel and a first-year equipment charge of \$7,200 total costs for these FTEs are as follows:

FY24: 1.69 FTE \$194,203

FY25: 3.09 FTE \$335,952

FY26: 4.45 FTE \$487,846

FY27: 5.68 FTE \$611,508

A 18.43% admin support rate is applied to all FTE costs to fund program support functions that scale with additional FTEs such as HR, IT, and Fiscal. This cost is represented in object T of this decision package. 13% of this admin support rate is funded via Title IV-E.

FY24: \$31,800

FY25: \$58,197

FY26: \$83,811

FY27: \$106,977

Initial License Fiscal Staff total costs are \$165,000 (\$132,000 GF-S) and 1.0 FTEs in the 23-25 biennium

There are currently on average 246 kin placements per month that could qualify for the initial license and be eligible to receive state funded foster care maintenance payments. The agency also is projected a significant increase in the number of kin who will go on to become licensed and start receiving federally supported foster care maintenance payments. Each of these new payments has to be started, stopped, and checked for errors by fiscal staff, representing over 900 additional fiscal actions per month. The average number of actions each fiscal analyst takes per month is 1,085. The department is requesting 0.8 of a Fiscal Analyst 2 (FA2) to help process this significant increase in foster care payments. A one-time equipment cost of \$7,200 and ongoing annual costs of 66,930.

A 18.43% admin support rate is applied to all FTE costs to fund program support functions that scale with additional FTEs such as HR, IT, and Fiscal. This cost is represented in object T of this decision package. 13% of this admin support rate is funded via Title IV-E. Total costs are \$11,716 per year.

Kinship Caregiver Engagement Unit total costs are \$1,825,000 (\$1,464,000 GF-S) and 7.0 FTEs in the 23-25 biennium

The original intention for statewide expansion of the Kinship Caregiver Engagement Unit was a full staff of 23 FTEs:

- 18 engagement specialist FTEs (min 2/region, with flexibility to place the other FTEs if certain regions need more/less support)•3 supervisors (1 sup/2 regions)
- 1 administrative assistant
- 1 program administrator

Mistakenly the agency requested only 15 FTEs in the 2022 supplemental. The error was made by counting the 7 pilot FTEs (6 engagement specialists and a supervisor) as permanent, when they had actually been funded temporarily by the agency using vacancies in order to continue the initial pilot funded in the 2020 supplemental. This error was brought to the attention of OFM and the Governor when it was caught post-submission and the agency communicated that we would be requesting funding for the additional 7 FTEs as part of the 23-25BN budget.

The 6 engagement specialists are classified as Social Service Specialist 3s (SSS3) and the supervisor is a Social Service Specialist 5 (SSS5). Including \$1,800 per year in goods and services and \$2,400 per year in travel total costs for these FTEs are \$774,993 per year ongoing.

A 18.43% admin support rate is applied to all FTE costs to fund program support functions that scale with additional FTEs such as HR, IT, and Fiscal. This cost is represented in object T of this decision package. 13% of this admin support rate is funded via Title IV-E. Total costs are \$137,412 per year.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic Framework:

This proposal supports the Governor's Results Washington Goal 4: Health and safe communities: Fostering the health of Washingtonians from a healthy start to safe and supported future. It also supports DCYF's strategic plan priorities to improve the quality and intention of our practice, and to improve the quality and availability of provider services.

Performance Outcomes:

Success will be measured in the percentage increase in kin providers who move successfully through the initial health and safety assessment, home study, and child-specific license processes. We will also measure success in improved timeliness of kin moving through each step of the process. We'll also look at qualitative feedback on the ease with which kin felt like they were able to move through the process and how they felt supported during the process.

Equity Impacts

Community outreach and engagement:

Much of this proposal came together late as the agency adjusted its plans to various external factors. However, stakeholders have been supportive of the concept of providing more supports to

The current foster care system prioritizes placement of children with foster families (mostly white family foster homes), creating undo barriers for kin and suitable others to become viable placement options. Ensuring that children who are removed from their homes can be placed with relatives will reduce the number of children who are placed with families of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and who do not have a shared cultural history and narrative.

Disproportional Impact Considerations:

The current foster care system prioritizes placement of children with foster families (mostly white family foster homes), creating undo barriers for kin and suitable others to become viable placement options. Ensuring that children who are removed from their homes can be placed with relatives will reduce the number of children who are placed with families of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and who do not have a shared cultural history and narrative.

Target Populations or Communities:

This DP will support children in out of home placement and their relatives/kin.

Other Collateral Connections

Puget Sound Recovery:

Not applicable

State Workforce Impacts:

Not applicable

Intergovernmental:

Not applicable

Stakeholder Response:

Much of this proposal came together late as the agency adjusted its plans to various external factors. However, stakeholders have been supportive of the concept of providing more supports to kin.

State Facilities Impacts:

Not applicable

Changes from Current Law:

Not applicable.

Legal or Administrative Mandates:

Placements with licensed kin are increasing and will continue to increase with the implementation of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) enacted in the 2021-23 biennial budget, the Washington Supreme Court case *In re Dependency of K.W.*, the agreed settlement order in the case of D.S.

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	\$2,114	\$3,451	\$5,565	\$4,078	\$4,170	\$8,248
Obj. B	\$746	\$1,216	\$1,962	\$1,437	\$1,470	\$2,907
Obj. C	\$50	\$0	\$50	\$0	\$0	\$0
Obj. E	\$49	\$79	\$128	\$93	\$96	\$189
Obj. G	\$66	\$105	\$171	\$124	\$127	\$251
Obj. J	\$151	\$115	\$266	\$65	\$7	\$72
Obj. N	\$307	\$1,116	\$1,423	\$2,208	\$3,442	\$5,650
Obj. T	\$527	\$860	\$1,387	\$1,016	\$1,040	\$2,056

Agency Contact Information

Kevin Keogh
 (360) 628-2652
 kevin.keogh@dcyf.wa.gov