

Fiscal Highlights

Managing the \$173 Million DCFS Budget - Clare Tobin Lence

At the October 2016 meeting of the Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee, LFA staff presented an issue brief titled "[Managing the \\$173 Million DCFS Budget](#)." Completed in collaboration with the Department of Human Services - Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), the brief reviews the regionalized structure of DCFS and introduces new methodology to inform the appropriate distribution of resources.

DCFS has a statewide administrative office in Salt Lake City and operates five regional offices: Salt Lake, Northern, Southwestern, Western, and Eastern. Allocating resources effectively among the regions given unpredictable caseloads and service needs is one of the division's challenges.

The brief identified a methodology for assessing the level of staffing in each region by creating a measure of (1) maltreatment incidents, (2) direct court-ordered custody placements, and (3) children referred to DCFS from other sources, referred to as MCOs. Staff determined the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees per 1,000 MCOs and compared the five regions. The assessment showed that Salt Lake had the lowest staffing ratio and the Eastern region had the highest (see Table 3 on page 3).

Another measure highlighted in the brief used MCOs, the number of children under 18, and the number of children currently in foster care to create a composite needs assessment. Each region's need score was then compared to usage of the 12 most expensive services. This analysis identified which services were used notably more or less in each region, compared to what would be expected based on the need score; the results will allow DCFS to look further into what variances are warranted based on particular population needs and what funding or service usage could be more effectively employed in another region or service category (see Table 11 on page 8).

For more detail, see the full brief: <http://le.utah.gov/interim/2016/pdf/00004098.pdf>.