

Issue Brief – Foster Care Citizen Review Board Caseload

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DHS-09-07

FOSTER CARE CITIZEN BOARD CASELOAD

The Foster Care Citizen Review Board (FCCRB) requests \$107,100 (\$84,600 from General Fund and \$22,500 from federal funds), to hire 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff to meet the demands of caseload growth. The Analyst recommends that this funding request not be placed on the priority list at this time.

OBJECTIVE

Under Section 78-3g-103 of the Utah Code, the FCCRB is “required to conduct periodic reviews” of all children in state custody within 18 months and every year until the child is removed from foster care.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The FCCRB was established in 1997 as a statewide, independent agency (UCA 78-3g) to comply with federal statute (42 U.S.C. 675 (5) (B)). The board is governed by a 16 member steering committee representing the Department of Human Services, the Juvenile Court, Guardian Ad Litem, the Foster Parent Association, independent child advocates, service providers, and FCCRB volunteers. Currently, there are 26 volunteer boards with about 200 volunteers located throughout the state. A full time director and eight other employees provide staff support to the Boards.

Prior to the establishment of the FCCRB, the reviews were accomplished through an administrative review process by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) or by the courts. The FCCRB evaluates the appropriateness of the placements and ensures there is a plan in place for moving the child out of foster care. Reviews are also performed by the Courts in the first year of placement. The FCCRB is advisory and can only make recommendations to DCFS and the courts.

In 2005, the FCCRB conducted reviews of approximately 66 percent of the children in foster care as opposed to 56 percent in FY 2007. Monthly, there are about 20 children that cannot be reviewed because there are not enough review slots available within the existing infrastructure.

This request is to hire a Board Coordinator and support staff. Currently, there are four Board Coordinators statewide to facilitate the reviews. The Board Coordinators schedule reviews by coordinating with the caseworkers, facilitate the reviews for the volunteers and families, assist the volunteers with the foster care cases, and write the final Disposition Report. The following table shows the increase in caseload for the FCCRB:

FCCRB Caseload History				
FY	# of Reviews	% Increase	# of Children Reviewed	% Increase
2003	456		651	
2004	487	6.8%	681	4.6%
2005	495	1.6%	729	7.0%
2006	501	1.2%	730	0.1%
2007	526	5.0%	740	1.4%

Since 2003, the number of reviews and the number of children reviewed have increased by 15.4 percent and 13.7 percent respectively.

RECOMMENDATION

The Analyst recommends that this funding request of \$84,600 in General Fund for the Foster Care Citizen Review Board to hire 1.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff not be placed on the priority list at this time.