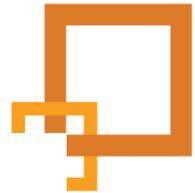


# DEEP DIVE INTO THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

DCFS Report to the Legislature



# DCFS REPORT – FOSTER CARE DEEP DIVE

## DEEP DIVE INTO THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

### DCFS Report to the Legislature

#### Recommendation 1:

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Request that DCFS improve data tracking in the following areas, in order to better assess system adequacy at matching children in custody with foster families and to more precisely target recruitment and retention efforts:

- a. Identify and document the level of assessed need for each child in custody, even though actual placement may vary based on the needs of siblings in custody, geography, family availability, and other factors, as well as the actual placement and reasons for deviation; and
- b. Identify and document the level of care that each foster family is qualified for, whether they are kinship or not, and whether they are available to take a placement, in a way that can be easily searched and compared to the assessed needs of children in custody.

**DCFS Response:** We agree with this recommendation. Although we currently have an assessment tool that informs a child's needs and level-of-care (UFACET), this score is one of many factors that are considered in determining an appropriate level of placement. Our current data system records the UFACET placement score, but after other placement factors have been considered, it does not record the final placement decision or the reason for deviation. This information is documented in narrative form in each child's case activity log. We agree, an enhancement to our system is necessary to capture the final recommended level-of-care and reasons for deviation from the UFACET. Enhancements to our placement module are in our project queue for SAFE [which is DCFS' data system, also known as the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System].

**DCFS Report:** DCFS has a need to improve the way the placements for children in custody are identified, carried out, and evaluated. The placement module in the SAFE system that will yield the data that is being recommended is a part of the project, but there are additional parts to the project that need to be addressed in order to fulfill DCFS needs. In order to do this correctly and in a way that is beneficial for children, we estimate that the analysis for the project will take a year, with the following phases or milestones:

- 1) Determination of the project scope, creation of a project plan, and presentation of the plan to DCFS administration for prioritization

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- 2) Research and analysis phase: looking at the data for the last 5 years regarding placement, determining where the gaps in data are and what information would make the most difference for making placements decisions. Examining current data reports and where things can be improved and what the gaps in information are. Looking at the current placement process in depth and determining where efficiencies can be created and how the process can be improved. Analysis of current SAFE system regarding placement and areas of impact, including what needs to be modified and/or improved. Seeking consultation and/or technical assistance from Center for states or other partners in designing a placement process that is efficient and effective, including defining what a “successful” placement is and what information is most helpful in creating a successful placement.
- 3) Determine scope and timeline to implement project and develop cost analysis to determine cost of project.
- 4) Re-prioritization of placement project in light of information learned in research and analysis phase.
- 5) Design a placement process that addresses the following areas of need:
  - a. Accurately reflecting the availability of placements, including the level of care that each provider is qualified to provide
  - b. Improvements in the ability to identify the most appropriate provider available for a child's needs, including how we are analyzing potential families for placement and how we could more effectively support those placements to prevent disruption.
  - c. A process to accurately reflect (document) the placement of the child and why the placement decision was made, including the outcome of the prior placement, and why the placement may have differed from the recommended level of care. This includes ensuring compliance with federal AFCARs data requirements and analysis to ensure the process corresponds with payment procedures. This will affect the SAFE database and will require programming changes.
  - d. Evaluation and rating of the placement caregiver after placement has been made, including what may have been useful to assist the caregiver in caring for the needs of the child
  - e. Creation of data reports that will inform the placement matching process for the RFCs and the targeted recruitment and retention process for Utah Foster Care.
- 6) Implementation of the placement process, including training and implementation of new practice procedures, implementation of data reports, and training regarding SAFE changes.

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## Recommendation 2:

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Request that DCFS evaluate the proctor care system, including:

- A. Determine whether private proctor care is cost-effective; and
- B. Determine the extent to which children in custody are placed in proctor care due only to insufficient availability of lower level foster families.

**DCFS Response:** Agree. The implementation of recommendation number one, improving the data elements captured by our placement module in SAFE, will allow DCFS to more accurately evaluate the proctor care system. Once this is in place, we can more effectively evaluate whether proctor care is cost effective, if the right children are being placed in proctor, and more precisely identify gaps in levels-of-care.

**DCFS Report:** Though more analysis could be done on the effectiveness of proctor care once our Placement Module in SAFE is built, the Division performed a fiscal analysis of our proctor level and found that to serve a child for a year in a proctor level home is only slightly more costly than a level 3 foster home, with the calculated cost difference of \$1,774 per 365 day length of stay or \$4.86/day (see Proctor Care Cost Analysis on following page).

Both proctor and level 3 homes are designed to serve children which have higher needs than the first 2 levels of foster care by providing greater levels of supervision, more training requirements of parents, as well as more expertise in oversight of services. Benefits of having a proctor care system that is not included in the basic 3 levels of foster care include having providers who have the ability to provide wrap services that coordinate with the more intensive needs of the children placed at this level of care.

For example, proctor agencies are able to coordinate and provide therapy and supervision services because they are built-in to the services that they offer DCFS through the contract, as all proctor providers are required to have clinical oversight and the ability to coordinate mental health services for the clients. In addition, they can easily increase the level of supervision and oversight provided to a child through assigning additional staff to the child that serve a "tracking" or "mentoring" function in order to provide the types of oversight that children placed in this level of care require. Overall, it appears that proctor care is cost-effective enough for the Division to maintain at this time.

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## Recommendation 3:

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Request that DCFS take the following actions related to Utah Foster Care (UFC):

- A. Consider whether to increase the recruitment and retention targets, given that recruitment targets were lowered in the past but UFC has consistently exceeded them and that the target appears lower than the average rate of families exiting the system; and
- B. Compare the employee compensation and overhead costs of UFC to those of DCFS and consider whether contracting for recruitment and retention services is cost-effective.

**DCFS Response:** We agree this is something that deserves review. We will meet with UFC to negotiate a new minimum recruitment target that better matches our current need. We also agree that a comparison and assessment of UFC to determine the most cost-effective way to procure foster care recruitment and retention services is in order. We will plan on reporting back with our findings.

**UFC (Utah Foster Care Foundation) Response:** The average rate of families exiting the system includes licensed “kinship” providers of which UFC does not recruit. For accurate numbers for comparison, the Office of Licensing would need to identify and separate which families who exit annually are foster families and which are kinship families. In addition to the new recruited and graduated families, UFC also trains and retains on average 872 families each year who renew their licenses and continue to provide foster care services.

Utah Foster Care annually provides news stories through television, radio, print advertising and social media. This constant community awareness campaign over many years has resulted in measurable outcomes. The visibility and high regard for foster parents has become much more positive. This constant outreach has also increased the visibility of DCFS/DHS as Utah has become a role model for the nation for best foster care practices and quality foster parents.

UFC also supports a Development department (not paid for by contracted funds) that brings in \$300,000 to \$400,000 each year to assist the state in caring for the needs of children in foster care. The “quality” of foster parents in Utah has increased significantly because UFC prescreens every inquiring family during an in-home initial consultation before inviting them to begin the training process of becoming a foster parent.”

### DCFS Recommendation 3 Report:

- A. The Division met with UFC to address recruitment targets to meet the current demand of the foster clients. The Division is working with the Foundation to

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- adjust the recruitment goal as well further assess jointly the efficiency and effectiveness of UFC.
- B. The Division pays UFC approximately \$3.1 million per year to operate the foster parent training program. If DCFS were to bring the program in-house at the same level, it would cost the Division \$3.4 million per year (see full cost analysis on following page). There are many benefits that Utah Foster Care Foundation brings by contracting this very important service outside of the internal structure of the Division. They have the ability to fund-raise more effectively by leveraging their Not-For-Profit status. This has allowed their organization to raise between \$300k and \$400k each year to provide for foster parents.

There are many people who would rather donate to a charity rather than a government which has allowed fundraising to be less restrictive. This is helpful in receiving cash contributions as well as in-kind donations like volunteer work. In addition, because the foster parent training is not maintained internally, it facilitates keeping resources tied to training foster parents, rather than diverting those resources to other priorities. Many years ago the foster parent training program was set up in an independent entity as a result of the David C. lawsuit that the Division settled about 10 years ago. This independence and non-profit status has enabled the Division to keep foster parent training consistent over the years of funding shortfalls and surpluses.

At the end of the last contract cycle with UFC, the Division submitted a Request for Proposal to determine if other contractors would be willing to perform the foster parent training services that the Division needs. There were 2 entities that responded and UFC won the bid based upon qualifications and was awarded the contract. The Division continues to work with UFC to ensure that foster parent training services are provided at the most effective level and while adhering to fiscal responsibility. There is also room to explore and develop a better understanding for both agencies about what "retention" entails. More analysis and the setting of more clear expectations needs to occur between the Division and UFC to create the most efficient and effective delivery of both recruitment and retention services. The Division will continue to coordinate with UFC on a local level to ensure that foster parent level needs are being communicated and met in the future.

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## Recommendation 4:

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Request that DCFS provide the following information related to their federal Social Security Title IV-E waiver, which is used to provide in-home services:

- A. Provide their detailed budget plan for service continuity and maintaining the emphasis on in-home care when the waiver expires; and
- B. Identify and project trends in eligibility among children in custody and describe their budget plan for managing the resulting budgetary impacts.

### DCFS Response:

Waiver Status. Implementation is in process, with three of five regions meeting basic competency in direct casework practice components. Trauma training continues until November 2017. In-home service array development continues, with two new parenting contracts in effect, and active collaboration with the substance use disorder system progressing at the state level (and to follow at the local level). The waiver is authorized until September 30, 2018; DCFS plans to apply for a one-year extension.

Plan for Waiver End. DCFS has planned for HomeWorks [the program supported by the waiver] sustainability from the start of the waiver. Caseworker practice components are part of new employee training and ongoing practice. Service contracts were funded at a basic level by repurposing other Federal grant funds, which allows for continuation. Additional IV-E waiver funds will end, which reduces capacity for flexible services and in-home supports at the family level.

Eligibility Trends and Budget Impact. Title IV-E eligibility for children in custody historically fluctuates 2-3% annually. However, the percentage dropped by about 6% in FY16 and stayed about the same in FY17. Due to a recent Federal policy change, we expect the eligibility percentage to slowly decline over the next few years. Under the waiver capped allocation, eligibility fluctuation does not affect overall Title IV-E funding for foster care. After the waiver ends, a reduction in IV-E eligibility will result in a reduction of Federal foster care administration and maintenance funds.”

### DCFS Recommendation 4 Report:

The Division is preparing the request to extend the Title IV-E waiver for an additional year, to end in September 2019 (after extension). The IV-E waiver has allowed the Division to expand, temporarily, the number of services that the Division can provide to in-home clients as well as enable the Division to bolster the support to caseworkers. When the IV-E waiver ends, the Division will lose federal funding that was allowed by the Federal government to reallocate to In-home services. The Division plans to scale back on the services that were expanded as well as FTEs that were hired temporarily. Below is a breakdown of those elements that will be scaled back:

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	<b><u>Reduction of Funding</u></b>
<b>Estimated Time-limited Personnel to be reduced:</b>	
Total Personnel Division-wide (16 Time Limited FTE's)	1,030,210
Research Contract and Training by U of U	40,000
<b>Total Personnel and related Costs to be reduced:</b>	<b>1,070,210</b>
<b>Estimated In-Home Services to be reduced:</b>	
Families First Services and Peer Parenting Services - Est. 59 clients	173,617
Additional Home-based needs (therapy svcs, community svcs, utils, rents, etc) - Est. 392 clients	528,237
Client Services provided by Southwest Behavioral	44,000
<b>Total In-Home Services Provided to Clients - Reduction</b>	<b>745,854</b>
<b>Total Services and Funding Reductions</b>	<b>1,816,064</b>

In-Home services will not be eliminated from DCFS-provided services, but merely reduced due to the reduction of IV-E.

Total other funding that supports In-home community services (Not including IV-E Funds) 1,936,400

The IV-E funds provided a great boost to DCFS in-home services and the Division hopes that federal law changes happen to facilitate using IV-E funds on a more permanent basis for in-home; however, there is no initiative currently supported in Congress to support that, therefore DCFS anticipates the decrease in federal revenues to the Division will commence in FY2020.

# Proctor Care Cost Analysis

## Average Cost per Client Proctor (Proctor Care Single Client (DIB)/ Proctor Care Multiple Clients (DPB)) vs. Foster Care Level 3 (FC3)\* (Includes RFC\*\* costs)

### Foster Care Level 3 (FC3)

Count of RFC	Total Sal/Ben	Avg of Salary/Benefits
49	3,669,928.77	74,896.51
Total Units for Foster Care		430,119
Cost of RFC per Unit		\$8.53

As a Proctor Agency is licensed as a child-placing agency, they recruit and retain their own proctor parents, therefore RFC work would be provided by them and would be part of their daily rate.

Total UFCF contract amount \$3,133,977.00  
Total Units for Foster Care

(Lvl 1-3)	430,119
UFCF Cost per unit	\$7.29

FC3 Avg Daily Rate	\$30.59
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Adjusted FC3 Rate Per Day	\$46.41
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Days in Year	365
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FC3 Rate Annualized	\$16,940
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<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$16,940</b>
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Based on FY17 data

### Proctor Care (DIB and DPB)

DIB/DPB Average Rate Per Day	\$51.27
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Days in Year	365
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DIB/DPB Average Rate Annualized	\$18,714
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<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$18,714</b>
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### Daily Rate

### Difference

**\$4.86**

### Yearly

### Difference

**\$1,774**

\* Foster Care Level 3 used as a comparison as they are closer in level to type of client served.

\*\* The RFC (Resource Family Consultant) provides support for placements with resource families that are licensed through the Department of Human Services, Office of Licensing for general foster care (LFC). This section does not pertain to support for resource homes which are certified through contract providers or resource homes that are licensed for a specific child (LSC). Under the conditions of the contract, contract providers are responsible to provide support to the homes they certify. Child and Family Services staff, who possess an LSC license, with an expertise in supporting kinship homes will provide the support for families.

## UFC Cost Analysis - Estimate of Expenses for Foster Care Training

	Expenses	Recruitment	Education	Retention	Management	Total
1 Salaries	\$1,746,465.84	\$673,932.52	\$492,601.87	\$364,497.07	\$215,434.37	\$1,746,465.84
2 Fringe Benefits	\$1,190,516.62	\$441,973.86	\$16,977.65	\$729,092.89	\$2,472.23	\$1,190,516.62
3 Travel/Transportation (Mileage etc)	\$98,143.00	\$34,375.15	\$19,642.94	\$20,465.39	\$23,659.52	\$98,143.00
4 Space Costs (rent, mort, lease)	\$24,000.00	\$8,824.51	\$5,631.59	\$4,695.10	\$4,848.80	\$24,000.00
5 Direct Services	\$160,000.00	\$49,823.55	\$61,964.41	\$25,008.71	\$23,203.33	\$160,000.00
6 Communications (tele, postage, etc)	\$39,642.00	\$15,013.44	\$10,262.27	\$8,410.63	\$5,955.66	\$39,642.00
7 Equipment/Furniture	\$47,306.00	\$9,371.67	\$4,209.31	\$29,522.93	\$4,202.09	\$47,306.00
8 Supplies/Maintenance	\$16,000.00	\$6,256.40	\$1,739.04	\$3,400.24	\$4,604.32	\$16,000.00
9 Misc	\$3,000.00	\$1,070.16	\$752.33	\$552.08	\$625.43	\$3,000.00
10 Conferences/Workshops	\$5,700.00	\$2,126.26	\$1,357.17	\$1,130.91	\$1,085.66	\$5,700.00
11 Professional Fees/Contract Services	\$4,175.00	\$1,481.06	\$928.98	\$817.33	\$947.63	\$4,175.00
12 Printing/Publications	\$49,000.00	\$14,933.57	\$12,695.87	\$20,454.92	\$915.64	\$49,000.00
13 Software/Tech	\$12,000.00	\$3,879.03	\$5,439.37	\$1,942.73	\$738.86	\$12,000.00
14 Community Outreach	\$55,370.00	\$10,739.63	\$26,778.22	\$0.00	\$17,852.15	\$55,370.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,451,318.46</b>	<b>\$1,273,800.81</b>	<b>\$660,981.02</b>	<b>\$1,209,990.94</b>	<b>\$306,545.70</b>	<b>\$3,451,318.46</b>

**Current Contract (UFCF) \$3,133,977.00**

Cost Difference for DCFS to Operate \$317,341.46

The cost analysis shows what DCFS would estimate the expenses to be if the Division operated the Foster Parent training program internally. Estimates are based upon 2015 through 2017 UFC financial statements in combination with informed estimates from the Division.