

## **Taking Care of Kids in Foster Care: \$9,427,000 GF-S Cut**

### **Educational Advocacy Program – (\$1,491,000 GF-S + Education Legacy Trust Acct)**

#### **Braam related**

The Educational Advocacy Program is the only program specifically dedicated to facilitating strategic coordination between child welfare and school services in order to prevent school failure and out of school time due to enrollment, academic and/or disciplinary problems. This program is the primary lifeline between vulnerable youth in foster care and success in school.

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the Educational Advocacy Program. Without the Program, hundreds more foster children will disrupt from their foster placements because of stress and conflict over school issues, and/or leave school before graduation.

### **Foster Care Assessment Program – (\$1,132,000 GF-S)**

#### **Braam related**

FCAP is a statewide program that provides comprehensive assessment and follow up services to children in out of home care who do not have permanent plans. FCAP is evidence based, targets complex cases, includes multi-disciplinary consultation on permanency and well-being, and is explicitly designed to meet the mission of returning children safely to their homes or promoting permanency in a new home.

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the FCAP program. Given the outcomes associated with FCAP, (e.g 56% of children who did not have a permanent family identified at the time of referral had a permanent family identified at FCAP case closure; 24% of children achieved permanency through a completed plan of reunification, adoption, third party custody or guardianship during the 6 month period between FCAP and case closure) it is anticipated that if the program is eliminated children will remain in care longer and have poorer overall outcomes.

### **Behavioral Rehabilitative Services – (\$4,176,000 GF-S)**

#### **Braam related**

BRS provides intensive treatment intervention for children and youth aged 6 to 18 for whom finding a permanent home has been extremely difficult. BRS services are most typically provided through therapeutic foster care or residential group care, however, can also be provided in home. It is estimated that in other states 19% of youth in out of home care receive intensive, BRS-like services. In WA State only 9% do. Children/youth receiving BRS have an average of 5-9 failed placements prior to the BRS referral. Some youth have had as many as 25-30 prior placements.

The Governor's proposed budget reduces the BRS budget by 10%. **This includes a loss of \$2.296m in federal funds.** This is in addition to the reduction in the '09-'11 budget of \$12.678m. The impact of further reductions will likely mean that more children who need intensive services will be placed in family foster care, leading to another failed placement; high needs children/youth will be exited from BRS before a suitable placement has been located, again leading to another failed placement; and more BRS programs will downsize and/or close.

#### **HOPE Centers –(\$322,000 GF-S)**

##### **Braam related**

HOPE Centers provide 30-day emergency shelter for youth ages 13 – 18 who are living on the streets and/or are homeless. Although most youth who utilize the HOPE Centers are legal dependents of WA State and in foster care, the HOPE Center beds are open to all WA youth in crisis and homeless. The HOPE Centers are the only state funded housing service that young people can self refer into. HOPE Centers have been instrumental in re-engaging youth who have become street involved to return to services and have proven to be a gateway to family reunification, long term placement stability, and educational achievement.

The Governor's proposed budget eliminates the remaining General Fund State funding from the HOPE Centers. Funding from the Home Security Fund is not cut. Given the HOPE Centers are the primary strategy identified by the WA State Children's Administration to re-engage youth who have run away from foster care, it is anticipated that more foster, as well as non foster youth will be homeless and on the streets.

#### **Responsible Living Skills Programs (RLSP) – (\$707,000 GF-S)**

##### **Braam related**

Many older youth in foster care have experienced multiple foster home changes that have impacted all aspects of their lives. The RLSP provides these older youth with stable housing environments that focus on the skills and assets necessary to exit foster care and transition successfully to adulthood. The RLSP are viewed by providers as critical to improving outcomes for youth.

The Governor's proposed budget cuts funding for RLSP by approximately 44%. **This includes a loss of \$58,000 in federal funds.** This reduction will lead to an increase in the number of WA adolescents who are in the legal custody of the state living on the streets and engaging in survival behaviors and lifestyles.

#### **Medicaid Treatment Child Care – (\$1,599,000 GF-S)**

Medicaid Treatment Child Care (MTCC) is a comprehensive, research-based program for children ages one month through 5 years who have been abused, neglected, or are at risk of maltreatment, and as a result have received a diagnosis requiring onsite

therapeutic treatment. Today, MTCC providers serve over 500 abused and neglected children annually.

The Governor's proposed budget cuts MTCC funding by 50%. **This includes a loss of \$1.575m in federal funds.** This drastic cut would limit the number of children served to 150. The reduction would occur through a secondary review, conducted by DSHS, of the medical diagnosis done by the MTCC program. At this point, it is unclear how the process would work, and what input the trained, experienced therapists who work with the children would have. What is known is that 350 fewer abused/neglected children annually would benefit from the MTCC program.

**Total Most Egregious Cuts = \$20,030,000 GF-S**