



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Fiscal Year 2026-27 Needs- Based Plan & Budget

Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania

Office of Children, Youth
and Families

**NEEDS-BASED PLAN AND BUDGET
NARRATIVE TEMPLATE**

Budget Narrative Template

The following pages provide a template for counties to use to complete the narrative portion of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB). All narrative pieces should be included in this template; no additional narrative is necessary. Detailed instructions for completing each section are in the NBPB Bulletin, Instructions & Appendices. As a reminder, this is a public document; using the names of children, families, office staff, and Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) staff within the narrative is inappropriate.

Avoid duplication within the narrative by referencing other responses as needed.

All text must be in either 11-point Arial or 12-point Times New Roman font, and all margins (bottom, top, left, and right) must be 1 inch.

Note: On the following page, once the county inserts its name in the gray shaded text, headers throughout the document will automatically populate with the county name. Enter the county name by clicking on the gray shaded area and typing in the name.

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NBPB
FYs 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27

Version Control	
Original Submission Date:	
Version 2 Submission Date:	
Version 3 Submission Date:	
Version 4 Submission Date:	

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Section 2: NBPB Development

1-1: Executive Summary

➔ Respond to the following questions.

- Identify the top three successes and challenges realized by the CCYA since its most recent NBPB submission.

Since the most recent NBPB submission, WCCYS experienced a significant absence of leadership relative to the Administrator, Deputy Director, and one Casework Manager position that persisted for six months. In October 2024 a new Administrator was hired; however, an additional Casework Manager position was vacated, leaving only the Administrator and one Casework Manager in leadership roles. Since February, all Casework Managers positions have been filled with experienced child welfare staff. Although the Deputy Director position remains vacant, the current leadership team has established agency goals and continues to work cooperatively as executive leaders to propel the agency towards best practice standards. The recently obtained stability in upper-level management positions has improved accountability standards and consistent expectations amongst Supervisors and Caseworkers and such progress was evident in the County's most recent Licensing Inspection Audit. It is expected that continued leadership stability will allow the Agency to continue its mission to not only meet regulatory requirements but propel the Agency to exceed best practice standards. Stability within management is a success for the Agency. This improved leadership stability has allowed the Agency management team to assess current policies and procedures and revisions are underway. The Agency management team is in the process of implementing a blended unit model that will enhance casework. As the model is being gradually implemented, a unit will consist of two intake caseworkers and 2 ongoing caseworkers allowing the stability in the case supervisor throughout the life of a case and enhance accountability measures amongst the team. Additionally, all supportive resources, such as clerical, legal, etc. will be assigned to a unit in order to promote efficient strategies, enhance professional relationships, and positively impact the families served.

Despite the significant disruptions to executive leadership, the Agency has achieved numerous successes through the teamwork within the existing leadership. The agency has developed and implemented presentations on-site at school districts throughout the county and has introduced revised truancy programming that will allow WCCYS casework staff to integrate into each school district, providing preventative support for truant students as well as enhanced collaboration to target the high level of truancy needs persistent throughout the County. School district administration has been welcoming to the change, expressing concern that prior processes were not successful in addressing their truancy related concerns, and are anticipating a more collaborative relationship with WCCYS. In addition, the current Administrator has meet with the Federal Programs Coordinators for the local school districts to draft the required 3-year MOU relative to ESSA and subsequent transportation needs. The Agency has worked to develop an improved timeline and process for scheduling Best Interest Determination meetings to minimize school disruption when out-of-home placement becomes necessary due to child safety. At the start of the upcoming 2025-26 school year, the Agency staff assigned to truancy will meet with building level administration in order to provide introductions, determine the anticipated schedule for each caseworker/school district, and establish/enhance school-based relationships.

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The third identified success includes improved collaboration with the County Juvenile Probation Office as well as the juvenile court system. The current Administrator has worked cooperatively with the President Judge in order to enhance the current Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) plan within the county that includes clear expectations of both the Agency and the Court as related to matters of dependency proceedings. Currently, the Agency has established positive communication with the court and both dependency Hearing Officers have been instrumental in collaborating with the Agency to conduct mock trial proceedings as a strategy to improve caseworker court preparation. The Administrator and members of the judicial team have established open communication in an effort to identify concerns and implement solution focused strategies. In addition, the Agency continues to have a shared spreadsheet with JPO relative to children dually served; however, the Agency and JPO also meet on a monthly basis to review current cases, ensure collaborative efforts, and enhance the supports necessary to serve our dually active families.

Throughout the current fiscal year, numerous challenges have presented themselves. As noted above, the absence of critical leadership within the Agency from June 2024 through October 2024 resulted in deterioration of accountability, service delivery, and program monitoring. When the new Administrator started in late October 2024 the Agency had just completed annual Licensing Inspection and a corrective action plan was developed by the new Administrator and existing Casework Manager. Shortly following the hiring of the new Administrator, an experienced Casework Manager position was vacated and remained vacant for several months. Fortunately, all Casework Manager positions are currently filled, and the executive management team continues to build collaborative working relationships to move the Agency towards Best Practice standards. In addition, consistent with most counties throughout the state, WCCYS continues to experience high rates of caseworker turnover and barriers to recruitment and retention. The Agency is working with County leadership to move from Civil Service to merit-based hiring processes in an effort to increase the applicant pool and identify potential staff committed to working in the demanding field of child welfare. Based on the data provided by the CWRC, the caseworker retention rate for Washington County was above 50% at 12 months; however, this data is not currently reflective of the high rate of turnover post training requirements experienced in the past six months. WCCYS currently has 27 vacant caseworker positions and these continued vacancies as well as delays in the onboarding/training process continue to negatively impact efficacy of service delivery to the families within Washington County and result in high caseloads for current casework staff.

Following the hiring of the current Administrator, outreach to school districts throughout Washington County indicated dissatisfaction with communication as well as response to truancy related concerns. All 14 school districts throughout Washington County noted concerns relative to WCCYS' support and response to truancy related concerns. In addition, school districts throughout the county expressed frustration relative to difficulty communicating with Agency staff due to frequent changes in staff and/or delayed response times. The current Administrator is also a Certified School Psychologist in Pennsylvania and therefore, with the knowledge of educational law, has been able to engage the vast majority of school districts relative to opportunities for training on basic child welfare processes and developing shared understanding regarding matters of confidentiality and communication between school districts and child welfare professionals. While the agency continues to develop and strengthen relationships with every school district throughout the county, this remains a targeted area of need. The Agency continues to collaborate with county school districts to best serve the needs of our youth.

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Lastly, the past year has presented difficulty meeting the needs of families whose secondary involvement with the Agency is based on primary concerns relative to intellectual disability impacting caretakers. Contracted providers have been unsuccessful in implementing a parenting program to assist intellectually disabled parents in acquiring critical parenting skills necessary to meet the needs of their children, which has necessitated lengthy agency involvement based on historical patterns. The current administration has worked with local providers, and it is anticipated that through collaborative efforts to identify an appropriate parenting program and modifying the pace of the curriculum while pairing hands-on learning opportunities, we can better meet the needs of this specialized population and ultimately reduced the need for out-of-home placement and/or long-term involvement with child welfare services. As the Agency works with contracted providers to implement these supportive services, we will track data to monitor the success of the program with identified outcomes including the following: length of time that a family is open for services, out of home placement days, and re-entry rates.

During the 2024-25 year, the Agency showed a slight decrease in the overall number of children and families served (decreased by 4%) as well as a reduction in the total number of days in care. This is attributed to utilization of the Crisis Rapid Response, Family Group Decision Making, and crisis services which have been beneficial in preventing the need for court-initiated Agency intervention; however, there is not consistent utilization of this resource, which is being addressed through the county's FEI plan. Overall, the data suggests that family size is decreasing throughout Washington County. Over the past five years, the Agency has seen a 5% reduction in referral trend; however, the number of children necessitating placement has remained relatively consistent from 2023-24 through 2024-25. The number of successful reunifications has been reduced with a higher number of children exiting child welfare through adoption or other alternative permanency goals.

- ❑ Summarize additional information, including findings, related to the CCYAs annual inspection and Quality Services Review (QSR)/Child Family Service Review (CFSR) findings that will impact the county's planning and resource needs for FYs 2025-26 and 2026-27.

The Agency did not participate in any QSR/CFSR during the 2024-25 fiscal year. The results of the Agency's annual inspection evidence significant progress towards the goals of the current administration. In October 2024 when the current administration was hired, the Agency had recently completed annual inspection with a total of 11 violations. A Plan of Correction was developed and through a hands-on and diligent approach to implement changes in program monitoring, regulatory compliance has improved. Due to the Agency's request to modify the prior licensing renewal timeframe, an annual licensing inspection was conducted in May 2025 at which time there was a total of 4 citations regarding corrective action. While this data suggests that the implemented changes have been effective in meeting regulatory compliance, the current administrative team would like to move the Agency beyond regulatory compliance and into a position of best practice implementation. This process is currently being implemented through a blended unit design as well as specialized units within the Agency to implement prevention, Independent Living, and truancy related services. As this process continues to be implemented, the current administration would like to implement additional training resources including Student Assistance Program (SAP) for school-based caseworkers as well as attendance at conferences and additional trainings offered throughout the state that can support our specialized teams. This may require additional funding to support these efforts but will help

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to ensure that casework staff have the necessary skills to be successful and therefore will assist in efforts at retention.

- Identify the top three successes and challenges realized by JPO since its most recent NBPB submission.

Washington County Juvenile Probation has experienced many successes over the 24-25 fiscal year. First, a big success has been the utilization of community-based providers to maintain a low number of youth removed from their homes and placed into a placement facility. Juvenile Probation officers continue to be trained in services available within the community to assist a juvenile and their family to prevent the need for out-of-home placement. The management at Juvenile Probation has continued to identify gaps in treatment and areas in which we need to strengthen our efforts to identify a service provider to assist the juvenile and family. Juvenile Probation made a total of 545 referrals to community-based providers during the 24/25 fiscal year (compared to 407 made in FY 23-24). This increase is mainly due to an increase in need for mental health services for the youth of Washington County. 319 referrals were made for some type of mental health treatment, some in-home, and some community based. Mental health services include medication management, counseling, clinical assessments, grief/loss, psychiatric and psychological evaluations, SAP referrals and autism services. Just as one example, JPO requested an addendum to our Innersight, LLC. contract to address trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TFCBT) due to the continuous increase to justice involved youth needing trauma therapy. In addition to this needed service, using Innersight has helped to cut down on wait times to get an assessment and/or medication. JPO made 71 referrals to Innersight this fiscal year. Of the 71 referrals, 37 were for a clinical assessment, 19 were for a clinical and medication assessment, 9 were referrals for counseling and medication management and 6 were for counseling. JPO will continue to utilize Innersight for mental health needs for the upcoming fiscal year.

Another notable success was Juvenile Probation's continued effort into enhancing prevention and diversion programming in Washington County. Prevention, as defined by our department, is preventing a case from entering the juvenile justice system. Diversion, as defined by our department, is diverting a case from formal adjudication of delinquency. Each is important to the youth in Washington County as formal involvement in the juvenile justice system can lead to long term consequences that often hinder a young adult from moving forward into adulthood. Over the past two years, the management team at Juvenile Probation has worked to educate stakeholders of the importance of preventing and diverting cases from the juvenile justice system. A roundtable was held with local police departments to discuss the juvenile probation process and to offer them the ability to utilize services within the juvenile probation department to prevent youth from becoming involved in the system. Approximately 20 police officers from Washington County attended and participated in the roundtable discussion. The CYS/JPO/BHDS training was also utilized to educate additional stakeholders of the importance of prevention and diversion in the juvenile justice system. For FY 25/26, Juvenile Probation plans to offer this same training to community and school police officers in Washington County. A diversion/prevention bench card was developed to allow stakeholders to visualize the services, situations in which they may be appropriate, location, and costs of each service. The bench card was expanded over the last fiscal year to include a Respect Online class for those youth displaying concerns with appropriate social media interactions. This curriculum is facilitated through Washington County Teen Outreach Program. This class only saw one referral for the fiscal year, but it was not implemented until the end of the fiscal year.

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Lastly, another success is Juvenile Probation's efforts toward community service, collect money for fines/costs/restitution, and working closely with schools and Magisterial District Justices to utilize the diversion/prevention services to educate youth on making better decisions in hopes to prevent them from future involvement in the juvenile justice system. Each probation officer is asked to work closely with the police departments and Magisterial District Judge within their school districts to better service the youth in those communities. For FY 24/25, regarding prevention referrals from MDJ and local school police, JPO received 10 referrals for Teen Impact Safe Driving, 1 referral for Respect Online, 22 referrals for Underage Drinking, 56 referrals for Victim Awareness Class, 53 referrals for community work service, and 1 referral for Saturday Teen Education Program. Over the course of FY 24/25, the Community-Based Manager worked diligently to collect fines and costs, complete community work service and assist in job searches with Washington County youth as referred by the Magistrates. For FY 24/25, there were 79 youth referred for nonpayment of fines and costs at the Magisterial District Justice level for a total of \$6,726.61 money collected. There were 189 hours of community work service completed in lieu of a juvenile paying fines and costs. The total amount of money collected was slightly up from FY 23/24. JPO has begun the process of working with Clean and Tidy Our County Inc. to help beautify the county with litter pick up and plastic bottle cap recycling. This will offer endless hours of community work service for the youth of Washington County. The Community-Based Manager also supervises youth referred to our community service for restitution program in which youth aged 13 and below can complete community work service to assist in paying off restitution. JPO had five youths participate in this program this fiscal year for a total of \$1,090.71 restitution paid. The Community Based Manager also worked with the following organizations within the community: Clean and Tidy Our County, Inc., Canonsburg Oktoberfest, Monongahela City Hall, Monongahela Police Department, The Salvation Army and the Avella Sportsman's Association. Litter pick-up was conducted at Cross Creek Park, New Eagle Park and Ride, Washington Park and Pony League.

Washington County Juvenile Probation Department has faced challenges, too. We continue to see struggles surrounding the placement of youth when they must be removed from their home. Over the past several years, we have seen the closure of many of our placement providers. Remaining placement providers have become extremely selective when interviewing youth for placement. This has led to long waitlists and youth being held in detention until a bed opens for admission. Although this has been an ongoing issue over the past few years, it has become particularly challenging as our youth being placed have become more complex in their placement needs. Many of the youth being removed from their homes and placed in a placement facility have very complex needs including mental health, drug and alcohol, family issues, and educational issues. Many have been denied to placement facilities due to severe mental health, aggressive behaviors, or educational needs. Unfortunately, these are the types of youth that we are seeking placement for as they are not safe in the community or their home environment. Some placement providers have opened complex case units, but the price is astronomical and with more complex cases needing placed, the costs are unimaginable for a county to pay.

Another struggle is juvenile offender competency over the 24/25 fiscal year. There is much confusion over how a juvenile with competency concerns is handled in Washington County. Conflicting beliefs in the courtroom have led to youth having repeated evaluations which extends their cases on for a significant length of time. Washington County does not have a juvenile competency restoration program but will explore the option over the 25/26 fiscal year.

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JPO has continued with our progress with the JJSES initiatives. We continue to evaluate and make improvements to our policies surrounding JJSES initiatives. Washington County Juvenile Probation has implemented most of the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy. We utilize the YLS, case plan, PaDrai, and MAYSI-2 tools. Over the last several years, we have focused on diversion and prevention strategies, motivational interviewing, and a more evidence-based intake process. Washington County focuses on family engagement at all junctures of the probation process. JPO has implemented graduated responses and utilizes them in all cases, when appropriate. At the current time, we are looking to add the child trauma screening tool and EPICS into our supervision. JPO expanded the expungement project to include youth that have been adjudicated delinquent. For calendar years 2024 and 2025, JPO completed 494 expungements. For FY 26/27, JPO will continue to enhance JJSES initiatives and BARJ principals in Washington County. In FY 24/25, JPO completed 153 YLS/CMI assessments at the intake level or at critical junctures in the case, with 101 juveniles scoring in the low risk level, 43 juveniles scoring in the moderate risk level, 8 juveniles scoring a high-risk level and 8 youth scoring at a very high-risk level. 69 youth scored lower on their closing assessment than they did on their intake assessment. 39 youth that scored moderate scored lower during the closing assessment and 7 youth scoring high scored lower on their closing assessment. Overall, only 8 youth scored higher on their closing assessment than they did on their initial assessment. These scores would indicate that we are making a difference with the youth we are working with. JPO closed a total of 153 for FY 24/25.

Motivational Interviewing continues to be a focus of the department. Regular coding, mini boosters and biannually JJSES boosters are held throughout the year. Coaches continue to code and coach staff on utilization of motivation interview in their visits with juvenile offenders. Continuous Quality Improvement continues to be a critical part of the motivational interviewing process.

- ❑ Summarize any additional areas, including efforts related to the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) and the data and trends related to the Youth Level of Service (YLS) domains and risk levels impacting the county's planning and resource needs for FYs 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Washington County JPO continues to utilize the Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument {PaDrai). JPO completed 247 PaDRAI assessments during FY 2024/2025. 207 juveniles were released to a parent or guardian, 18 received an alternative to detention such as shelter, EHM, and expedited intakes. 22 juveniles were placed in secure detention with zero assessments pending for the year. There were 31 approved overrides for discretionary reasons, including 12 that were aggravating for reasons including parent refusal to take the juvenile home and the protection of the community and 19 that were mitigating for reasons such as young age and offense details less serious than charges filed. There were 4 mandatory detentions due to juveniles having an active bench warrant at the time of the new allegation. To ensure quality assurance and proper completion of the PaDRAI, one booster training and several mini boosters were conducted that coincided with the YLS/Case Plan training during the FY 2024/2025. The JPO staff that was assigned for quality control of the PaDRAI in FY 2022/2023 continued to monitor IDashboards monthly for accuracy and completeness for FY 2024/2025. The use of the PaDRAI ensures fundamental fairness throughout the juvenile justice system.

Graduated Response systems have been identified as a "Stage Three: Behavioral Change" activity within the JJSES Framework. Washington County has officially been utilizing graduated

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responses, both sanctions and incentives/rewards, since 2021. Washington County again asked for \$5000.00 to utilize in FY 25/26 and 26/27. Probation Officers are encouraged to use graduated responses, when appropriate, with youth on their caseload. Probation Officers utilize the Graduated Responses Matrix when implementing a response. There were 29 gift cards distributed for a total of \$630.00 for FY 24/25. These gift cards are utilized when a youth has achieved a goal or display positive steps towards long term behavior change. JPO will continue to purchase and issue gift cards in 25/26.

The BASS Program, an entry-level fishing education initiative for Justice-involved youth, continued in FY 24/25. Two additional staff were trained in the S.M.A.R.T Angler's Education Curriculum, bringing the total trained facilitators to five. The program held 11 sessions, with 27 unique youth participating and some attending multiple times, resulting in 42 total attendances. Fourteen fishing poles and tackle boxes were distributed as program incentives, purchased during program start-up in 2023. Replenishment of equipment will be needed in FY 25/26.

- **REMINDER:** This is intended to be a high-level description of county strengths, challenges, and forward direction. Specific details regarding practice and resource needs will be captured in other sections of the budget submission.

1-2: Determination of Need through Collaboration Efforts

- Respond to the following questions.

- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of staff, consumers, communities, and stakeholders in determining how best to provide services that meet the identified needs of children, youth, and families in the county. Describe the county's use of data analysis with the stakeholders toward the identification of practice improvement areas. Counties must utilize a Data Analysis Team as described in the NBPB Bulletin Guidelines, Section 2-4: Program Improvement Strategies. The Data Analysis Team membership should be reflective of the entities identified. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improvement. Counties do NOT need to identify activities with EACH entity highlighted in the instruction guidelines but provide an overview of activities and process by which input has been gathered and utilized in the planning process. Address engagement of the courts, service providers, and County Juvenile Probation Offices separately (see next three questions).

WCCYS is committed to building strong, collaborative relationships with stakeholders throughout the county to ensure the best possible outcomes for families. The Agency continues to participate in trainings offered through the CWRC with a goal to enhance staff knowledge and skill. The Agency has resumed monthly MDIT meetings with our local Child Advocacy Center to collaborate regarding CPS referrals received by the Agency. This team includes Agency casework and management members, law enforcement, medical professionals, and members of the county's integrated Human Services Department. In addition, the integrated Human Services model allows for internal complex case meetings to efficiently and effectively identify family needs and ensure that families are receiving and benefiting from available community-based resources with the goal of reducing their need for involvement with child welfare services. The Human Services Department continues to require cross-disciplinary training to ensure that all human services staff are aware of the various services available to best meet the needs of the families residing in Washington County and the Agency continues to benefit from a Human Services Coordinator and Clinician to assist with case planning/complex case needs. The

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Agency continues to maintain compliance with child fatality/near fatality review meetings that also provide an opportunity for collaboration with stakeholders. WCCYS administration has engaged in community outreach relative to presentations at county school districts, serving on local panel discussions, and presentations throughout various events in the county. The prevention team continues to conduct community outreach alongside the Human Services and WCCYS Community Engagement Specialists.

As noted above, WCCYS continues to build enhanced collaborative relationships with stakeholders throughout the county. The current administration has provided consultation, training, and revised programming in an effort to meet the identified truancy needs throughout the county, which has been identified as a prior area of weakness by school district administration. In addition, the current administration has worked intensively to establish open communication and discussion with the court system. Due to the retirement of the county President Judge/Dependency Judge, the Agency is experiencing transition in assigned Dependency court staff; however, there remains open communication and a shared desire for continued collaboration between the Agency and the court system. The Agency Administrator and Lead Solicitor attend monthly FEI meetings with members of the legal community in order to develop and enhance our shared commitment to the families within Washington County. The Agency continues to meet monthly with JPO staff to ensure collaboration regarding shared youth.

- Summarize activities related to active engagement of contracted service providers in identifying service level trends, strengths and gaps in service arrays and corresponding resource needs. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improvement in the engagement of service providers in the NBPB process.

In regard to service providers, the current Administrator has met with all contracted service providers since onboarding in October 2024. This has created opportunity for open discussion and assessment of service utilization, quality review, and collaboration regarding gaps in our service array specifically parenting education for intellectually delayed parents and aftercare services. In addition, service providers are submitting quarterly data reports that ensures Agency insight regarding service utilization and efficacy. Contracted providers are also invited to host "Would You Like to Know" sessions with casework staff, which provides opportunities for providers to share information regarding their service array as well as Q&A from staff.

- Summarize activities related to active engagement of the courts in the NBPB process, specifically identification of strengths and gaps in service arrays and corresponding resource needs. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improved engagement with the courts.

The current Administrator has worked to establish open communication between the court/legal staff and the Agency. Currently, both assigned Hearing Officers have open communication with the Agency Administrator and will initiate communication regarding youth involved in both the dependency and delinquency court to ensure that any identified concerns/areas of need are effectively addressed through available resources. In addition, Agency administration has met monthly with the President/Dependency Judge in the company of service providers to discuss available resources and needs identified through the legal process. Both Hearing Officers have worked with the Administrator to implement mock trial trainings for staff that further allows for

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collaboration regarding testimonial needs and enhanced legal representation. While the relationship with the court remains a targeted goal to promote efficacy within our dependency system, there has been significant progress related to open communication and dialog regarding strengths and weaknesses within both systems in order to propel Washington County dependency system to be a leader throughout the state. That is not to suggest that challenges do not remain. In particular, the unexpected retirement of the President/Dependency Judge has resulted in changes to assigned Dependency Judges and vacancies within the court system. The Agency will continue to work with the current Dependency Judge as well as the President Judge in order to continue to build and enhance the Agency's relationship with the court. Historical input suggests that there have been deficiencies in the court's trust in the Agency and both court staff and the Agency remain actively committed to improving not only relationships but also building trust and open communication. All parties continue to actively participate in monthly FEI meetings to further our shared mission of excellence.

- Summarize activities related to active engagement of the County's Juvenile Probation Office in the NBPB process, specifically the identification of in-home, prevention or rehabilitative services needed to assist with discharge of delinquent youth from out-of-home care or decreasing recidivism. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improved engagement in the NBPB process.

The Agency has improved communication with JPO through regularly scheduled monthly review meetings as well as updated shared spreadsheets that allow for identification and collaboration on shared cases. Unfortunately, the prior JPO Chief unexpectedly resigned, and the Agency is awaiting further communication regarding this change. WCCYS Administrator has engaged in meetings and open communication with the prior Chief of JPO in order to ensure adequate service array to meet the needs of delinquent youth in the county regardless of shared case status. At the time of this budget preparation, there are no identified gaps in the service array; however, available resources remain limited by capacity and can impact service implementation including waitlists for interventions determined necessary.

Significant progress has been made in collaboration between Juvenile Probation and Washington County Children and Youth Services (CYS). Leadership from both agencies recognize the importance of presenting a unified approach when engaging families, service providers, and the Courts. The shared case management system has notably improved over the fiscal year, facilitating better coordination despite ongoing challenges in accurately identifying true dual adjudication cases. For FY 24/25, 69 shared cases were identified through these efforts.

To enhance collaboration, multiple strategies have been implemented, including:

- Joint staff trainings developed and delivered by managers from Juvenile Probation, Children and Youth, and Behavioral Health departments to clarify system terminology and build mutual understanding.
- Establishment of a more reliable system for identifying and tracking dually involved youth, managed and updated by Juvenile Probation. This includes securing, housing, and tracking release of information forms.
- Monthly shared case meetings now held on the last Friday of each month for all dually involved youth, even those not formally adjudicated in both systems. These meetings facilitate communication, review of services to avoid duplication or overload, and identification of unmet needs.

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- Interagency meetings convened as needed, involving additional providers, to address stalled treatment or complex case issues.
- Coordination of court hearings for youth with dual adjudications to provide the Court with a comprehensive view of all systems involved and interventions. One dually adjudicated youth was handled this fiscal year under this process.

These collaboration enhancements have yielded stronger partnerships and improved outcomes for families involved in both systems.

- Identify any strengths and challenges engaging and coordinating with law enforcement on Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Teams (MDIT) and in joint investigations of child abuse.

The Agency continues to maintain engagement and communication with the county District Attorney's office in order to collaborate on relevant cases. In addition, the District Attorney's office is consistently represented at all MDIT meetings as well as Fatality/Near Fatality Reviews. At the time of the prior NBPB submission, it was noted that due to limited staff, local law enforcement agencies were not consistently attending MDIT meetings; however, this trend has not been noted under the current administration. At this time, although local law enforcement agencies are limited in staff and availability, they have consistently attended scheduled MDIT meetings. In addition, the Agency has resumed regular monthly MDIT meetings, coordinated with the local CAC to ensure open dialog relative to CPS investigations. These meetings are well attended and have been instrumental in reviewing and sharing information relative to child welfare investigations, legal investigations, and information obtained through CAC assessments as well as historical information from relevant stakeholders. The Agency expects that monthly MDITs will continue throughout the upcoming fiscal year.

1-3 Program and Resource Implications

- ➔ **Do not address the initiatives in Section 1-3 unless requested below;** address any resource needs related to all initiatives by identifying and addressing within the ADJUSTMENT TO EXPENDITURE request.

1-3b. Workforce

Please respond to the following questions regarding the county's current workforce recruitment and retention efforts:

- Identify successes the county has experienced implementing recruitment and retention strategies since its most recent NBPB submission.

The Agency continues to utilize Prevention/diversion to support families through connection to community-based resources. In FY24-25 476 referrals were sent to prevention with only 130 of those cases needing assigned an intake caseworker. Given that 83% of the cases served through prevention were able to avoid further child welfare involvement supports the overall efficacy of this service.

The Agency has redesigned the current onboarding process for new caseworkers that includes a highly monitored checklist, pairing/mentoring of new hires with experienced Caseworker III staff, and gradual assignment of cases after completing a full rotation throughout all units within the Agency. This revised onboarding process was recently implemented in May 2025 and data

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regarding efficacy will be tracked over the upcoming months to determine whether the revised onboarding process yields any benefit to retention. As part of the revisions implemented by the new Administrator, a Casework Manager has been assigned the additional duty of recruitment. This individual is implementing a plan to conduct consistent and quarterly outreach to local colleges and universities who offer social work/criminal justice programs. This will provide opportunities to share information regarding child welfare and the benefits of employment with the Agency with the hopes of increased recruitment. In addition, the Community Outreach Liaison attends various job fairs and community events in an effort to increase recruitment. The current Administrator is also working with the county Human Resources Department to exit civil service process in favor of a merit-based hiring system to increase the recruitment and number of applicants for vacant positions. Since the new Administrator started in October 2024, staff recruitment and retention has been a targeted area of need, and the Agency is proud to note that from June 2025 to July 2025 was the first month that 0 caseworkers left the Agency, and 2 additional caseworkers successfully completed the required training.

- Identify major challenges impacting the county's workforce recruitment and retention experience since its most recent NBPB submission.

Washington County continues to experience significant concern relative to caseworker recruitment and retention, which ultimately impacts the overall efficacy of the agency in meeting best practice standards relative to child welfare. At the time of this submission, Washington County has 27 number of vacant caseworker positions, which represents 48 % of the total caseworker workforce. In addition, retention rates generally average 12-14 months, with at least 3 hires vacating their positions within the first month following completion of the required CWRC Foundations training series since the current administrator's employment in October 2025.

The current CWRC training requirements present a significant barrier to onboarding of newly hired caseworkers. While the Agency does generally receive 10-12 applicants per posting, approximately 50% are ultimately recommended for hire. Delays in accessing the required training subsequently results in the Agency's inability to efficiently onboard new hires, which results on ongoing high case load levels for trained staff, and, ultimately, impacts the retention of workers post-training. Additionally, the current training process consumes, on average, 3-4 months post-hire, which represents, per state provided retention data, 25% of caseworker lifespan. Throughout the required training period, new hires are unable to assist the already overwhelmed casework staff, and new hires spend months being disillusioned relative to the nature of being a caseworker. Despite repeated opportunities and conversations relative to the alternate schedule for casework staff, the months spent with limited caseloads, daytime training requirements, and limited ability to support trained staff, results in a disillusioned belief that caseworkers can work 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday. As a result, once training is complete and they independently enter the workforce they are ill-prepared/unwilling to accept the demanding hours required of caseworkers and, again, impacts the Agency's ability to retain qualified and experienced staff.

As an additional barrier, although there are frequent discussions and recommendations regarding the impact of vicarious trauma on casework staff, the Agency currently lacks any viable supports for casework staff. Although Washington County does provide access to an Employee Assistance Program, this program is not readily accessible to staff and does not allow team members to establish any connection with a consistent support person who understands

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the trauma associated with child welfare roles. This is a targeted area of need for the Agency and additional funding will be requested in the 2026-27 NBPB to include a full-time Licensed Social Worker/Licensed Professional Counselor to provide immediate and consistent trauma-informed training and support to all Agency staff. It is hoped that this additional support position will improve overall retention and serve as a strategy to reduce unexpected and immediate resignations that has been characteristic of the Agency. This support will require additional financial support in the upcoming NBPB. The Agency is also seeking funding that will allow the Agency to offer various staff activities to support retention including regularly scheduled on-site visits with therapy dogs, supportive training opportunities, and financial incentives for retention all of which will require additional financial support; however, these supports are critical for the Agency to effectively target retention.

Lastly, due to the Agency's plan to reduce/eliminate contracted truancy services in favor of Agency delivered truancy services, this will require not only additional casework staff but also supervision of the program. The Agency has open Supervisor positions within the current complement that are currently being filled to ensure adequately trained supervisors in preparation of this newly implemented unit; however, an additional Casework Manager position is being requested for the 2026-27 NBPB to ensure adequate oversight of the truancy Supervisors and casework staff. While the Agency is realistic in staffing goals, it is hoped that the new recruitment, onboarding, and retention planning will be beneficial in reaching a target goal of 70% staffing during current implementation year.

- Describe the county's efforts and strategies to address employee recruitment and retention challenges and needs since its most recent NBPB submission. Identify whether the county has obtained any data or collected feedback on effort/strategies implemented to assess effectiveness.

To improve the selection of candidates, the current Administrator has revised the caseworker interview process relative to revisions to the standard interview questions to target key aspects of casework. In addition, all potential interviewees are provided a skill-based mock case scenario that assists in assessing potential candidates' overall judgment (absent of regulatory knowledge), ability to follow written instruction, attention to detail, and written communication skills. As noted above, the Agency has revised the onboarding process noted in the prior NBPB to include very specific checklist to ensure that, during the training process, new casework staff are exposed to every component of caseworker responsibilities concurrent with their required training through CWRC. Data monitoring will continue to occur as this change was recently implemented in May 2025. The Agency continues to offer summer employment and internship opportunities as an additional strategy to introduce college-level students to the field of child welfare and currently have 3 interns/summer employees staffed at the Agency. The Agency consistently attends available county-wide employment expos and, as noted, has assigned a Casework Manager with the task of regular presentations at local colleges/universities, which will commence during the upcoming 2025-26 academic term.

At this time, the primary challenges include identifying potential staff who possess adequate independence and application of learned regulations necessary for effective casework as well as retention of staff within the first year. In that regard, the Agency has experienced turnover within the first 6 months of employment with the total caseworker resignations within the first 6 months exceeding 6 staff since this Administrator's commencement in October 2024. At least 50% of the resignations since October 2024 have resulted in no formal notice and an abrupt

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resignation of employment. This trend remains highly concerning and suggests that new staff are not adequately prepared for the independent role of a child welfare caseworker.

- Identify key areas where technical assistance may be needed in this area.

Training represents a key area of effective casework; however, the unequal access and length of time associated with the current training program creates undue barriers to onboarding staff. While the largest counties within the state are provide their own individual CWRC staff, other counties are required to await training cycles, which creates delays in accessing required trainings. The Agency would benefit from an in-house training team and/or the option for virtual caseworker training that could expedite the required classroom time and allow for a more rapid introduction to field work, which provides a greater opportunity for learning and applying child welfare practice while also reducing strain on the existing casework staff. Providing the county with the ability to have newly caseworkers complete the required training modules via a self-paced, virtual option would expedite the onboarding process, reducing strain on existing staff and, hopefully positively impacting retention, as well as allowing new caseworkers earlier entry into the field where learning applications can be most effective. The agency would strongly support self-paced virtual caseworker training options.

1-3c. Service Array

Please respond to the following questions regarding the county's current service array and identification of gap areas that will be addressed through the plan:

- Through the data analysis and stakeholder discussions in the development of the plan, identify any strengths in existent resources and service array available to address the needs of the children, youth and families served.

WCCYS continues to utilize Program Specialist to ensure appropriate and adequate referrals to community-based service providers. This helps to ensure that appropriate services are implemented based on the assessed needs of the family as well as improved monitoring of utilization and efficacy of contracted services. The Agency has been able to successfully ensure that families involved in the child welfare system have rapid access to in-home services through our crisis supports as well as the absence of delays in implementing parenting classes and drug and alcohol supports. In addition, the utilization of the integrated Human Services model in identifying primary concerns for the family and pooling of resources across all county Human Services agencies, WCCYS has been able to utilize a cross-discipline approach to meeting the needs of the families served.

The prior NBPB submission included requests for additional support to parents and youth struggling with addiction that ultimately impact child welfare involvement. WCCYS is in the process of fulfilling the previous approved family support model, which will include a Certified Recovery Specialist and peer support to assist individuals in achieving and maintaining sobriety with the goal of improved outcomes relative to reunification, re-entry, and reduced relapse necessitating continued child welfare involvement.

- Identify information on any specific populations determined to be under served or disproportionately served through the analysis.

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The Agency has worked cooperatively with service providers to identify gaps in service delivery, including a lack of IDD supports for parents, JPO access to competency assessments, and services to support adolescent youth and foster parent acceptance of this age bracket. Consistent with the prior year's data, the agency continues to disproportionately serve low-income families who have inconsistent access to community supports due to funding and/or transportation related concerns. The economic diversity within Washington County remains vast and most families that require ongoing child welfare involvement and/or foster care placement are classified as low-income. Statistical analysis noted below also indicates that specific low-income communities account for the majority of all agency received referrals.

In regard to demographics, the 2020 U.S. Census indicates that the county's population is 88% Caucasian and 12% combined minority population. Data regarding agency referrals suggests that approximately 71% of families served were of Caucasian race and 29% classified as ethnic minority. During FY24-25, 38% of all children/youth in Agency custody were non-white. As noted, low-income communities and those of low socio-economic status are more likely to be referred to WCCYS and often lack natural supports and/or community resources which results in a higher risk of out-of-home placement.

- Identify service array challenges for the populations identified and describe the county's efforts to collaboratively address any service gaps.

Data indicates that the adolescent population, regardless of race, ethnicity, mental health history, or drug/alcohol history, are more likely to be placed in congregate care than younger children. This remains a concern for the Agency and administration is currently working with a local teen outreach provider to develop and implement a training program for our contracted foster care providers and their certified foster parents with the hope of increased foster care beds for adolescent youth. WCCYS anticipates this training opportunity for foster care providers and families will commence in October 2025 and data tracking will be implemented to evaluate efficacy as the program is implemented.

As previously noted, the Agency has worked with contracted service providers to implement parenting classes specifically modified to meet the specialized needs of our IDD population. This program is expected to commence in fiscal year 2025-26 and data analysis will occur quarterly to evaluate utilization and efficacy.

It would be unfitting to discuss challenges in populations served without a discussion relative to the systemic mental health needs of WCCYS served population. Although WCCYS continues to work collaboratively with the county Behavioral Health Developmental Services agency, there remains significant barriers to accessing mental health services including significant wait lists, limited service delivery, and an absence of local adolescent drug and alcohol treatment supports. These factors significantly impact the agency's ability to support children with mental health, Autism/developmental delays, IDD, and drug and alcohol needs and, in the absence of immediately available in-home supports, these children often experience crisis and subsequent child welfare involvement, including out-of-home placement, due to a lack of available supports within the BHDS system. This trend, when combined with limited foster homes willing to accept children and youth with these needs, has resulted in an increase in costly and specialized congregate care placements through the child welfare system.

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- Identify key areas in which technical assistance may be needed.

There are no identified technical assistance needs at this time. The implementation of a state-wide complex case referral system has been a welcome discussion/resource.

1.3g Substance Affected Infants (SAI) and Plans of Safe Care (POSC)

➡ Respond to the following questions:

- Describe how the CCYA collects data related to POSC in which the CCYA acts as the lead agency.

The Agency maintains a call screening log of all referrals received and the Research Analyst is able to track data relative to SAI referrals. The prior 2025-26 NBPB noted a total of 6 referrals in FY23/24 for children under the age of one year impacted by substance use. For FY 24/25 data indicates that 7 children under the age of one year were referred due to an impact of substance use. It is critical to note that parental substance use remains a top referral concern; however, medical professionals and/or Childline are not specially identifying children under 1 as SAI and, therefore, there is concern that 7 referrals is a gross underestimate of cases that could potentially be classified as SAI.

- Describe how the CCYA collects data related to POSC in which the CCYA does NOT as the lead agency.

The Agency does not have any system in place to identify or collect data relative to POSC where the Agency is not identified as the lead agency as these incidents are not reported to WCCYS.

- Describe how the CCYA works with other county offices and community-based agencies to disseminate information related to SAIs and POSC to physical health care and drug and alcohol treatment providers.

WCCYS continues to collaborate with our birthing hospitals as well as Washington Drug and Alcohol Commission, Early Intervention, and service providers throughout the county to address concerns related to SAIs and POSC; however, it is important to note that WCCYS receives limited referrals from Childline for SAIs. Most often, the data suggests that referrals are received as substance use by parent without the designation of SAI and therefore the number of SAIs is not entirely clear in the data reports.

- Describe how the CCYA engages other county offices and community-based agencies to support the on-going implementation of POSC.

The prior FY2025-26 NBPB noted Agency intent to implement POSC roundtable meetings with all system partners; however, this process was not implemented by the prior Administration. At this time, the Agency utilizes MDIT and complex case meetings in order to comprehensively address the needs of SAIs and ensure that, when received, referrals necessitating POSC are identified.

- Describe how the CCYA works with other county offices and community-based agencies to disseminate information related to the effect of prenatal exposure to substances and POSC to pregnant and parenting people and other caregivers.

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The Agency Community Outreach Liaison and Prevention staff regularly attend community resource opportunities throughout the County which includes dissemination of informational brochures regarding the impact of exposure to alcohol/substances on infants. In addition, Washington County Drug and Alcohol Commission (WDAC) conducts regular community outreach and educational sessions. During FY24/25 Washington County hosted the Opioid Symposium/Road to Recovery to collaborate with a wide array of community stakeholders regarding the impact of Opioid Use Disorder on children and families and this event is scheduled to take place again in FY25/26. Birthing hospitals serving Washington County residents also provide information relative to prenatal exposure to substances.

Describe any other anticipated practice and/or fiscal impact of this provision.

As noted in the previous NBPB, there is not consistent Childline utilization of SAI designation on received referrals which negatively impacts the Agency's ability to determine and track POSC. As a result of the limited referrals with this designation, additional resource or funding needs are difficult to assess.

Identify areas of technical assistance needed by the CCYA related to POSC.

There are no identified technical assistance needs identified within the CCYA; however, improved consistency from Childline and/or medical professionals regarding the designation of SAI would be beneficial for data tracking and fiscal planning purposes.

1-3j. Family First Prevention Services Act

⇒ Respond to the following questions:

Title IV-E Prevention Services Program

Describe the CCYAs engagement with community-based service providers regarding the selection and implementation of EBPs, regardless of their allowability under the Title IV-E Prevention Program.

WCCYS continues to promote family well-being and child safety through a wide array community-based service. At the present time, WCCYS currently utilizes contract service providers to deliver EBPs regardless of eligibility under Title IV-E. Currently, WCCYS contracts for 6 of 8 EBPs including Parents as Teachers (PAT), Homebuilders, Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Triple P, Healthy Families America (HFA), and Family Functional Therapy (FFT). In addition, the contracted service provider who will be delivering IDD parenting to this specialized population will utilize Incredible Years as the curriculum; however, the pace will be slower to meet the specialized learning needs of our IDD population.

Describe any barriers/challenges experienced by the CCYA in claiming Title IV-E reimbursement for prevention services. How is the CCYA working to address those barriers/challenges?

Early in FY2024/25, the Agency experienced disruption in fiscal staff and, as a result, a new fiscal team member has assumed responsibility for Title IV-E reimbursement management,

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which has necessitated a period of learning. In addition, changes to the interpretation of the regulation and guidelines, acquired through quarterly audit, has created challenges to claiming reimbursement. The current administration is working with the Program Specialist to enhance the definition of eligibility and develop improved clarity as related to Title IV-E eligibility for prevention services. The fiscal team could benefit from additional training relative to Title IV-E reimbursement.

- Community Pathways support the delivery and planning for evidence-based prevention services for a child who does not have an open case with the child welfare agency and does not require immediate child welfare intervention but meets Pennsylvania's definition of Candidate for Foster Care. County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) must determine candidacy and eligibility for the selected prevention service. The CCYA may contract with approved community-based providers to develop or approve a child-specific prevention plan, provide prevention plan case management, conduct ongoing safety and risk monitoring and assessments, and/or deliver approved evidence-based prevention services as agreed upon in their contract. Processes set up by CCYAs must be reviewed and approved by OCYF. Share whether this is an option the CCYA is considering.

Washington County is not interested in development of a Community Pathways process. At this time, WCCYS remains responsible for determining who is a candidate for foster care, prevention services, child safety, fiscal compliance, and monitoring of services.

- Identify any areas of technical assistance that the county may need in this area.

WCCYS has not identified any technical assistance needs in this area at the present time.

1-3p. Assessing Complex Cases and Youth Waiting for Appropriate Placement

- Please respond to the following questions regarding your county's local processes related to assessing service level needs for complex case children and youth:

What is the cross-agency process developed in your county to support children and youth when the needs identified require the expertise of multiple systems? Please include information related identification of partner agencies who are a part of the county's integrated children's service planning team, the referral process and identification of team leads. Does your county have a dedicated employee who coordinates and/or facilitates planning efforts across all systems? If yes, how is that position funded and where is the position housed?

Washington County has implemented an integrated Human Services model that allows for effective collaboration from all agencies under the Human Services umbrella including Aging, Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, CYS, Housing and Homelessness, and Veteran's Affairs. Through the integrated model, WCCYS benefits from the ability to request and schedule multi-disciplinary team meetings to address the holistic needs of the families served. This team approach aides in identifying an agency lead, based on the identified root cause of referral. In addition, as appropriate, team members from JPO and Washington Drug and Alcohol Commission can participate in the scheduled meetings. WCCYS benefits from a designated Centralized Intake Coordinator within the Department of Human Services in order to assist in holistic assessment regarding the needs of community members and coordinate MDT

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meetings upon request. In addition, WCCYS has an identified Clinician through the county DHS to provide mental health consultant, treatment planning, and referral support to WCCYS staff. These individuals all serve on MDT meetings and serve as a support to child welfare staff. This process also helps to ensure that families are connected to all necessary resources available to reduce the need for continued child welfare involvement.

Agency staff continue to participate in monthly complex case meeting with the Managed Care Organization to identify potential placements/supports for youth with complex needs and/or those discharging from inpatient mental health systems. While these meetings have been beneficial, concerns remain evident relative to the lack of community-based mental health supports available to meet the discharge recommendations. As a result, youth with complex needs are often left hospitalized beyond their planned discharge date, are discharged without appropriate supports in place, and/or enter child welfare placement when families are unwilling to accept a return home without the physician recommended supports. WCCYS acknowledges the support and opportunities for open dialog amongst county child welfare professionals and providers provided through our regional office; however, at this time, the lack of available services within the mental health system continues to negatively impact child welfare.

Identify how the county has engaged systems outside of the county human services system, including for example the education and physical health systems, in this cross-agency planning process. How is child specific information shared across systems?

Depending upon the specific circumstances, collaborative meetings can include educational staff, medical professionals, and community-based service providers as part of the above-referenced MDT process. In addition, as noted earlier, the current Administration has implemented improved communication with all local school districts in order to improve collaboration related to school-age youth and plan for educational needs of the children served. The Agency's Educational Liaison continues to support Best Interest Determination (BID) meetings and include educational professionals in team planning efforts.

In FY 2024-25, how many children were served through your county complex case planning process?

At this time, a structured tracking system for complex case meetings has not been solidified. WCCYS and/or BHDS can initiate a request for complex case meetings. BHDS then initiates coordination of the meeting, invites participants, and assist in open discussion regarding the identified complex needs. An estimated 440 number of complex case meetings have been identified as completed in FY24-25; however, WCCYS and BHDS team members are exploring improved tracking strategies to improve data accuracy.

What creative processes or services has your county developed to meet the needs of the complex children in your care?

As noted above, the utilization of the MDT meetings available as part of the integrated Human Services model within the county has been beneficial in evaluating and planning for complex youth; however, admittedly, the availability and wait lists for identified services can present barriers to effectively meeting the identified needs of complex youth. WCCYS has approved additional contracts with various providers across the state as new specialized placement options become available as an additional option for youth with complex needs who require out-

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of-home placement. In addition, WCCYS has expressed support and interest in becoming a pilot partner for a state-wide complex case referral process that could provide access to additional placement resources for our youth. WCCYS also contracts with the local teen outreach center to provide Teen Link support for our adolescent youth, which has indicated positive results through peer-to-peer connections and access to a variety of pro-social supports connected to the teen center.

Identify any areas of technical assistance the county may need in development, or improvement, of its cross-system integrated children's team.

No identified technical assistance has been identified at this time.

1-3r. Family Reunification Services

➤ Respond to the following questions:

What are the current services and activities provided to support family reunification efforts?

WCCYS continues to contract for a wide array of services to support family reunification including visit coaching, Homebuilders, Triple P, and Functional Family Therapy in an effort to assist families in reunification efforts. WCCYS also works collaboratively with other Human Services agencies to address identified needs including mental health, aging services to support grandparents/kinship caregivers eligible for aging supports, and drug and alcohol supports. Our contracted providers offer an array of supportive programs, and the Program Specialist can pair families, based on identified needs, with the most appropriate community service to aide in successful reunification. Although WCCYS has contracted for aftercare services to assist family's post-reunification, there has been limited availability of this service due to provider constraints and staffing. WCCYS has worked with additional providers throughout the FY2024/25 to ensure that aftercare services are an available referral service. WCCYS anticipates implementation of consistent aftercare service delivery for FY2025/26 and has established contracts with additional providers.

WCCYS continues to support the efforts of our JPO relative to available services to prevent delinquency placement through Teen Outreach programs, Family Behavior Therapy, Family Preservation, Outside In Drug and Alcohol, Innersight Bridges, and local mental health providers. In addition, shared access to programming to deliver emergency/crisis intervention services to prevent placement are accessible based on the identified child/family need. WCCYS and JPO have developed a positive working relationship to collaborate on shared cases to ensure all family needs are effectively addressed in the family plan.

The Agency continues to provide education to all stakeholders relative to the difference between safety and risk in effort to improve reunification timelines. In that regard, there are times when the legal community shares a different understanding of safety versus risk, which can result in external resistance to reunification processes. It is hoped that as the Agency continues to enhance relationships with the local legal community, improved understanding can yield positive outcomes for timely reunification.

What were the total costs of services and activities to provide family reunification services in SFY 2024-25?

The total cost of reunification services was \$21,700,000 in FY24-25.

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Section 2: General Indicators

2-1: County Fiscal Background

- Indicate whether the county was over or underspent in the Actual Year and reasons why.

WCCYS was slightly underspent during the actual year. As noted above both the Administrator and Deputy Director positions were vacant for approximately five months, leaving those salaries unspent. In addition, caseworker vacancies/turnover and failure to reach staff complement during the actual year reduced overall spending. The Agency continues to improve onboarding and recruitment of new staff with the hope that during Implementation Year, there will be a positive impact on fulfillment and retention of staff.

- Is over or underspending anticipated in the Implementation Year? Explain why.

The Agency does not anticipate being significantly under or overspent during Implementation Year. At this time, the revised recruitment, selection of potential candidates, recruitment, and fulfillment of leadership roles should improve overall staffing. WCCYS continues to monitor the flow of referrals, utilization of reunification services, and fixed costs to ensure accurate budget predictions.

- Address any changes or important trends that will be highlighted as a resource need through an ADJUSTMENT TO EXPENDITURE submission.

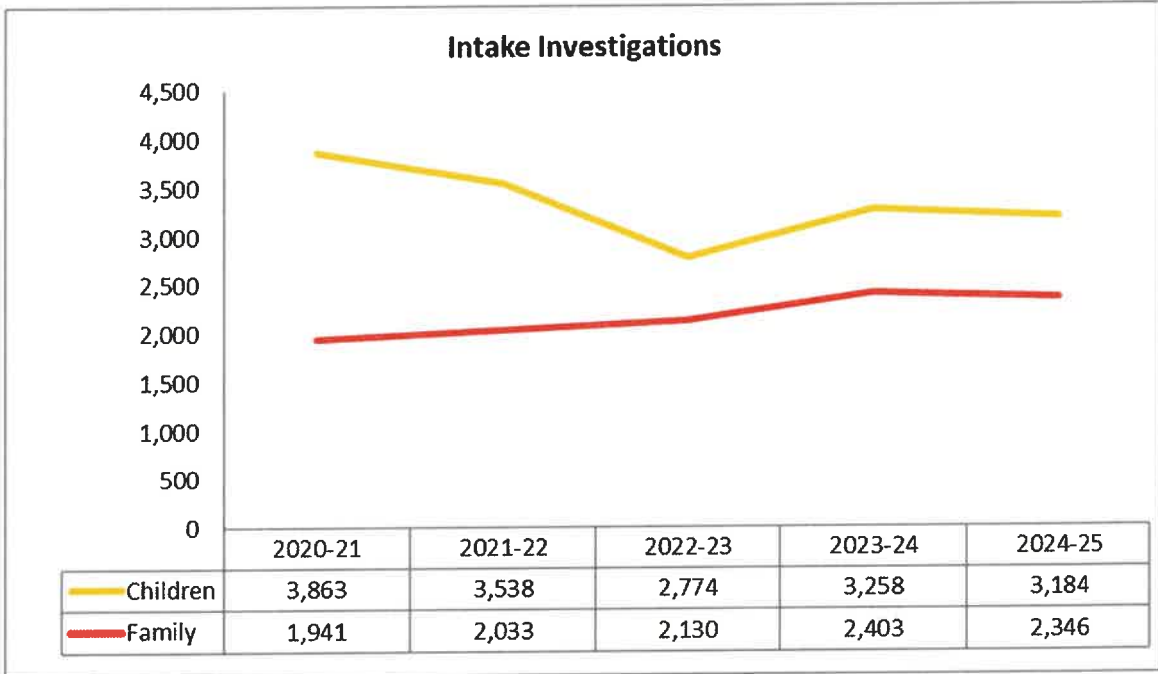
Factors impacting resource needs and changes to trends have been discussed throughout the executive summary.

JPO is requesting additional groups for the youth that are not currently involved in LEADER/Jobs. We would run these groups through the Probation Prevention Services Center. These groups will occur, on average, one time per month and we would estimate them to cost \$250 each. These additional groups are being requested so that we can expand the services provided to all youth involved in the juvenile justice system in Washington, PA. The groups we are looking at expanding are anger management, teen issues, cyber safety, family group, independent living, drug and alcohol, and mental health related groups. We are requesting an additional \$15,000.00 to make this expansion.

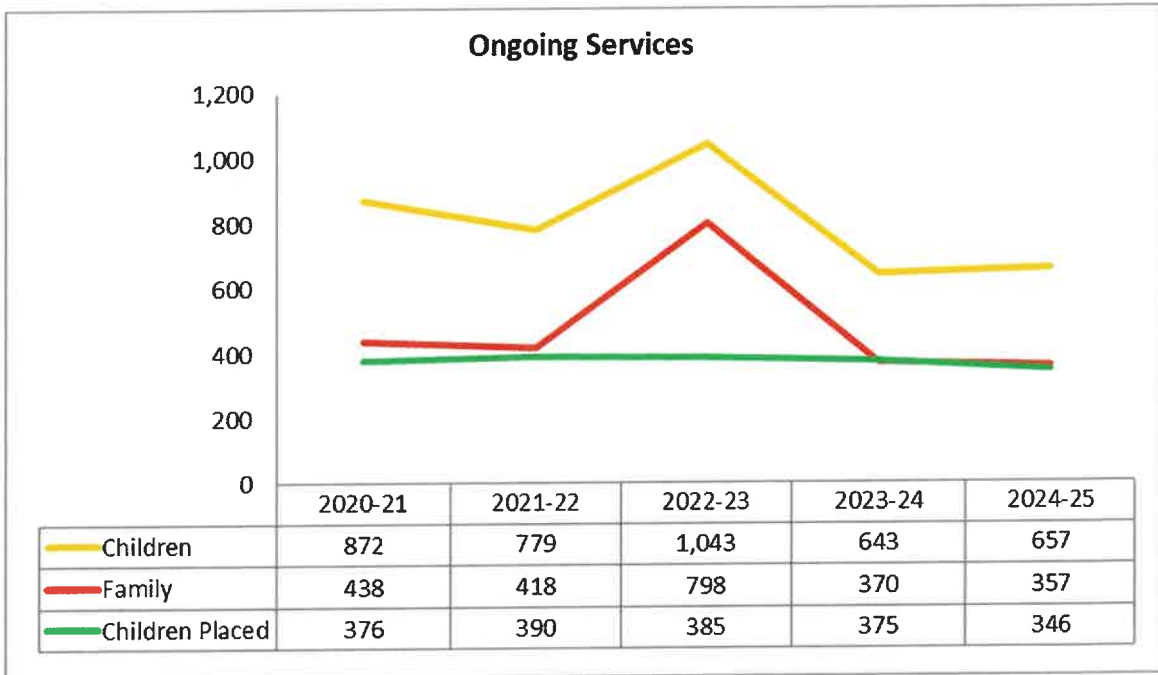
- **PLEASE NOTE: Capture any highlights here that are not addressed in the Program Improvement Strategies narrative (Section 2-4)**

2-2a. Intake Investigations

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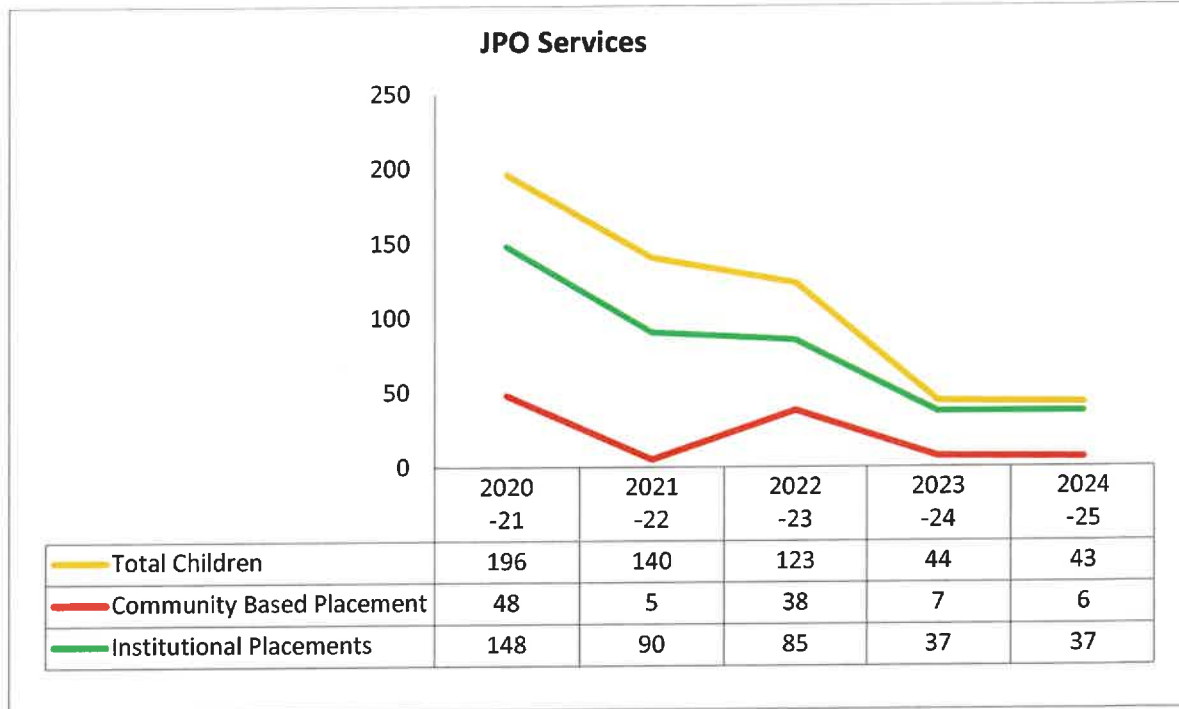
2-2a. Ongoing Services



2-2a. JPO Services

Insert the JPO Services Chart (Chart 3).

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A juvenile justice system trend is the use of community-based services and programs to prevent the need for out-of-home placement. JPO has addressed these concerns by increasing referrals to outpatient providers and in-home services.

Another important trend is the continued struggle with mental health services for youth in need within the community. Most youth entering the juvenile justice system have some type of mental health diagnosis. Many times, this diagnosis is mistreated and sometimes, the youth are resorting to their own methods of treatment, oftentimes self-medicating to address the concern. Many of our families also struggle with mental health and don't have the resources available to fully address their concerns, and therefore, not seeking treatment for their child either. Innersight has been able to significantly decrease the length of time from referral to evaluation. The average time to open a referral was 38 days. Delays are often due to family circumstances such as work, transportation, or family obligations. The average length of treatment was 98 days. Treatment is conducted in person and via telehealth when necessary. Medication evaluations are conducted when recommended through the clinical assessment. They have filled the gap in obtaining mental health services for some of our most complex cases. There were 71 referrals made to this fiscal year. Of the newly enrolled clients, nine were referred for clinical assessment to include a medication assessment, thirty-seven for clinical assessment only, nine for counseling and medication management and six for counseling only.

Over the past several years, JPO's priorities have changed and have been reflected in programming. For FY 25/26, the department will continue implementation and development of the juvenile prevention services center and continue efforts to enhance education and services surrounding prevention and diversion in Washington County. Juvenile Probation has made great progress in furthering efforts surrounding prevention and diversion in Washington County. Throughout FY 26/27, JPO will continue to work diligently to expand services to stakeholders to prevent youth from becoming involved in, or furthering their involvement in, the juvenile justice system.

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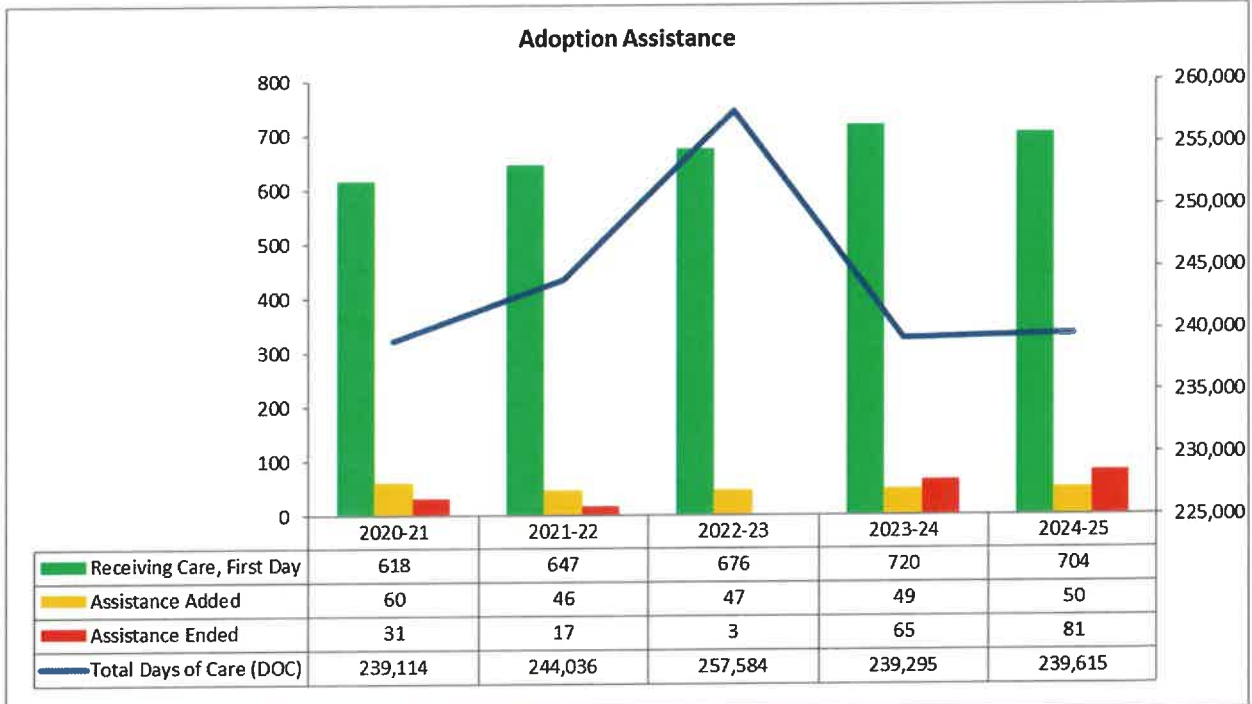
Juvenile Probation also developed and implemented a Structured Decision-Making Intake Protocol to be followed by all probation officers when a juvenile receives a new charge. This protocol ensures that all youth are offered the same opportunities for prevention and diversion from the juvenile justice system. This protocol has been utilized when making disposition decisions on all youth receiving allegations through Juvenile Probation.

For FY 24/25, JPO continued to utilize the Peer Jury Program to divert youth from formal adjudication. All high schools in Washington County participate in the peer jury program. This year, there were 52 cases disposed of by the Peer Jury Program. Of the 52 cases, 10 remain open for supervision, 29 were issued a warn and reprimand, 40 were closed successfully, 1 did not participate, and 0 were unsuccessful. Dispositions include warning and reprimand, 60-day contracts, 90-day contracts, and 120-day contracts. Upon closure, these cases are eligible for expungement if there are no other incidents resulting in an allegation being filed for 6 months' time.

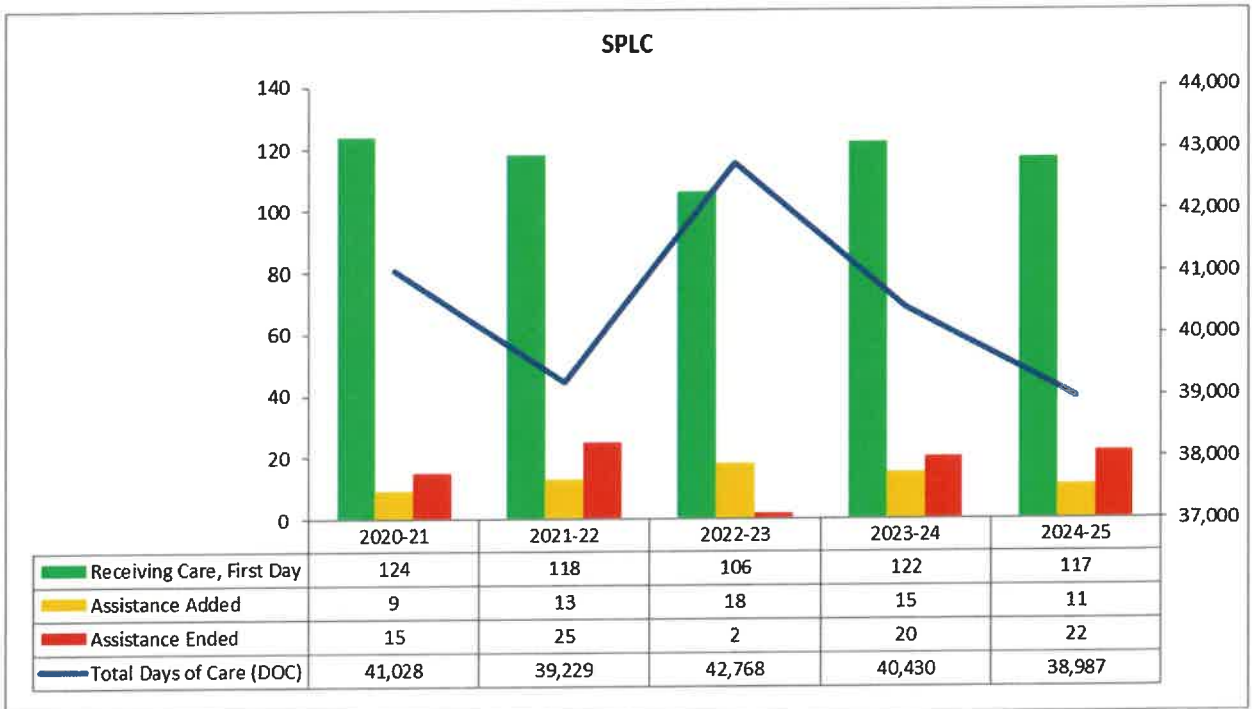
Washington County Juvenile Probation continues to utilize previously implemented procedures and policies aimed at reducing out-of-home placements. Key among these is the LEADER program, along with placement and placement aftercare meetings within the department. It was recognized that juveniles were being escalated into LEADER prematurely, often without first exhausting in-home preservation and treatment services. To address this, each probation officer must present their placement recommendation to at least two management team members. If prior services or sanctions have not been fully attempted, the team collaborates to identify alternative service options before approving LEADER placement. This same process applies when recommending residential care. These measures have contributed to a decline in placements over the past six years. From a high of seventy placements in FY 17/18, numbers have steadily decreased, aided by expanded use of community-based services. For FY 24/25, LEADER, JOBS, and placement meetings continued as essential checkpoints prior to recommending increased levels of supervision or placement. Placement aftercare meetings are routinely held before youth are released from facilities, with increased collaboration and participation from local school districts compared to prior years. Placement numbers have remained low over recent years with a total of 22 (6%) in FY 24/25. This reflects sustained departmental awareness and use of in-home and community-based service options. Joint efforts with Children and Youth Services (CYS) continue to expand available services and improve staff knowledge regarding appropriate interventions and interagency resources.

2-2b. Adoption Assistance

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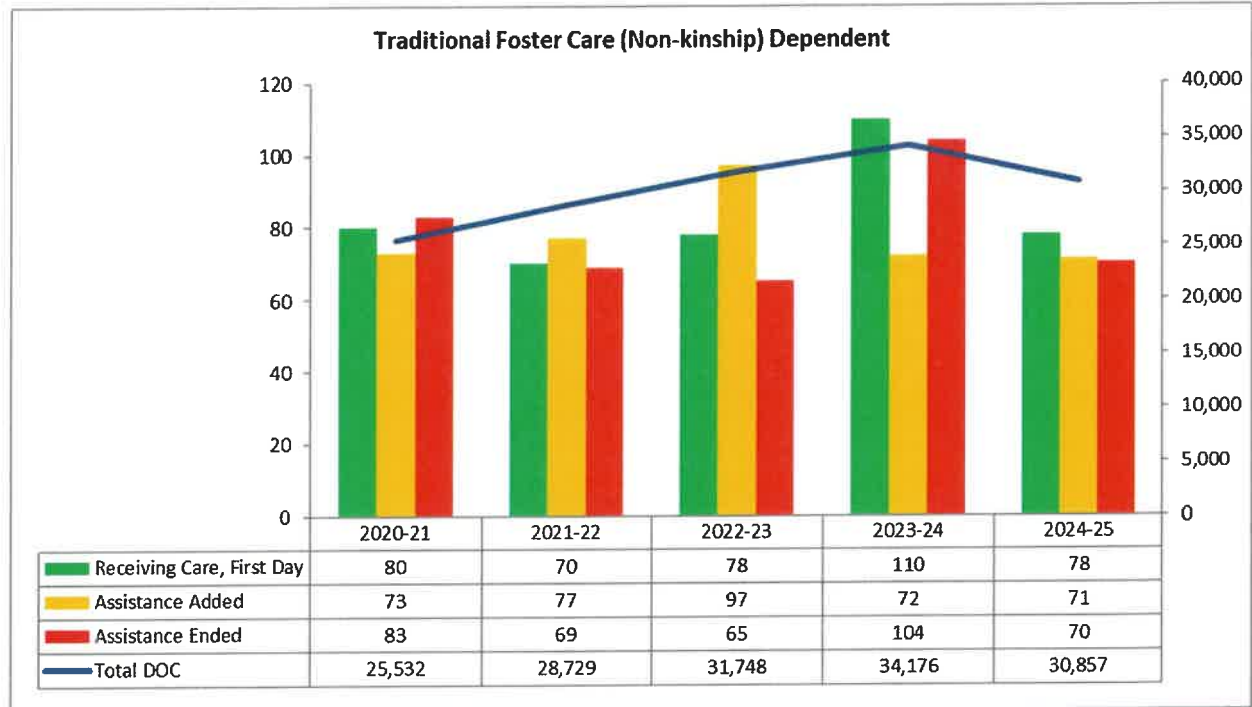


2-2c. Subsidized Permanent Legal Custody (SPLC)

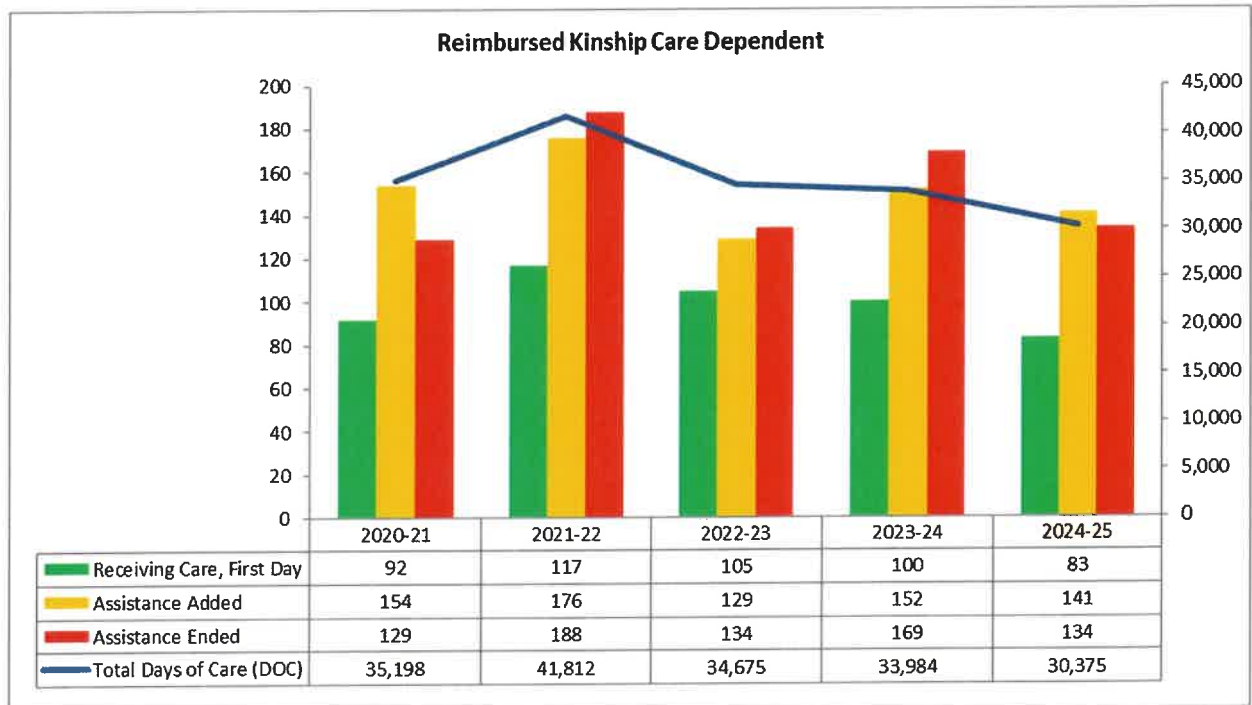


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

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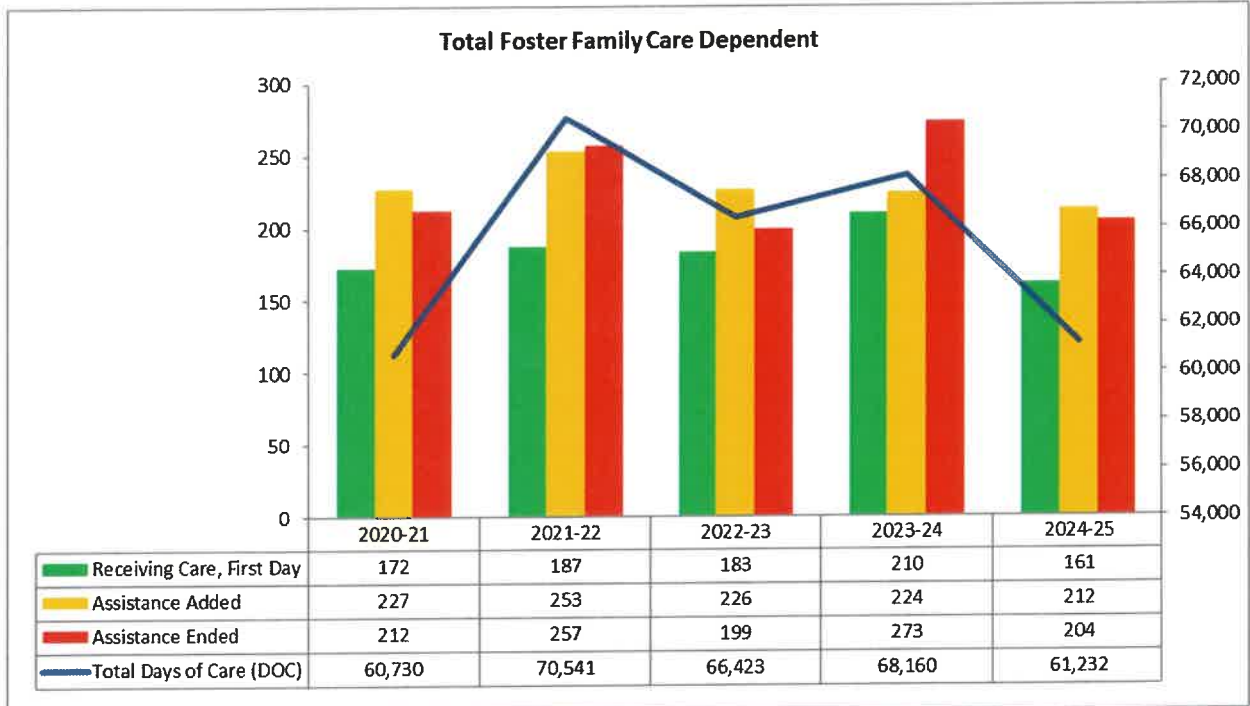


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

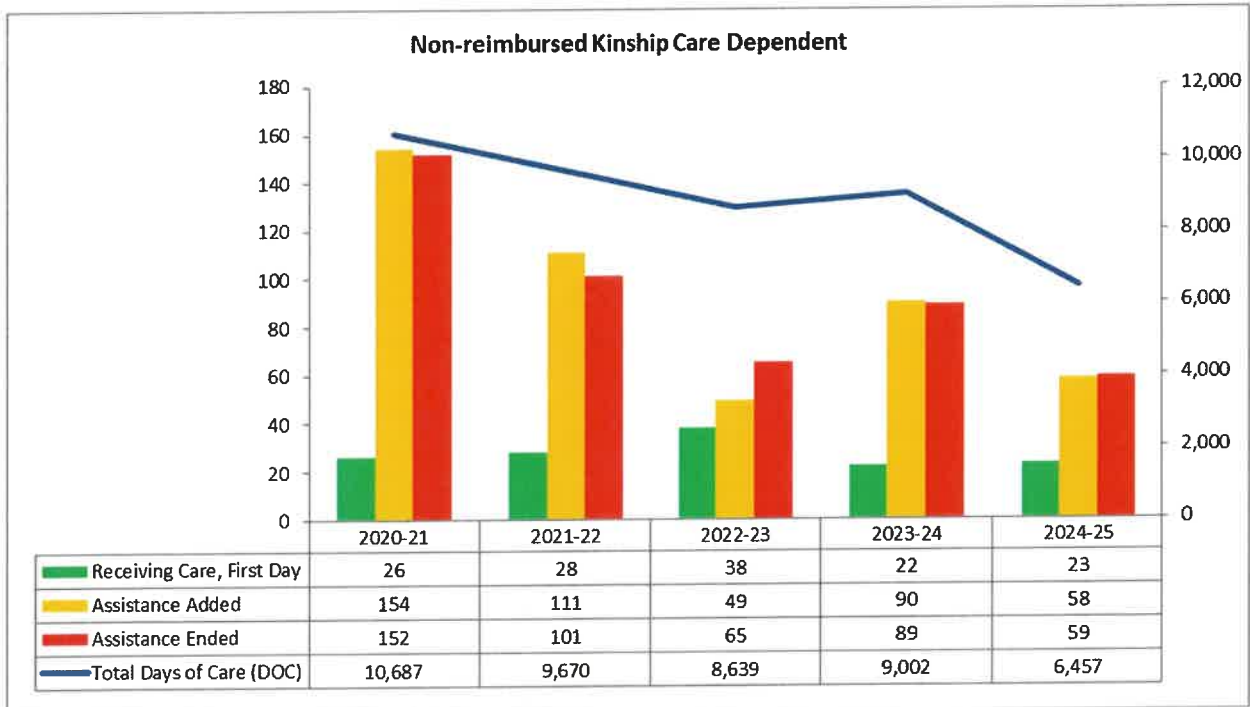


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

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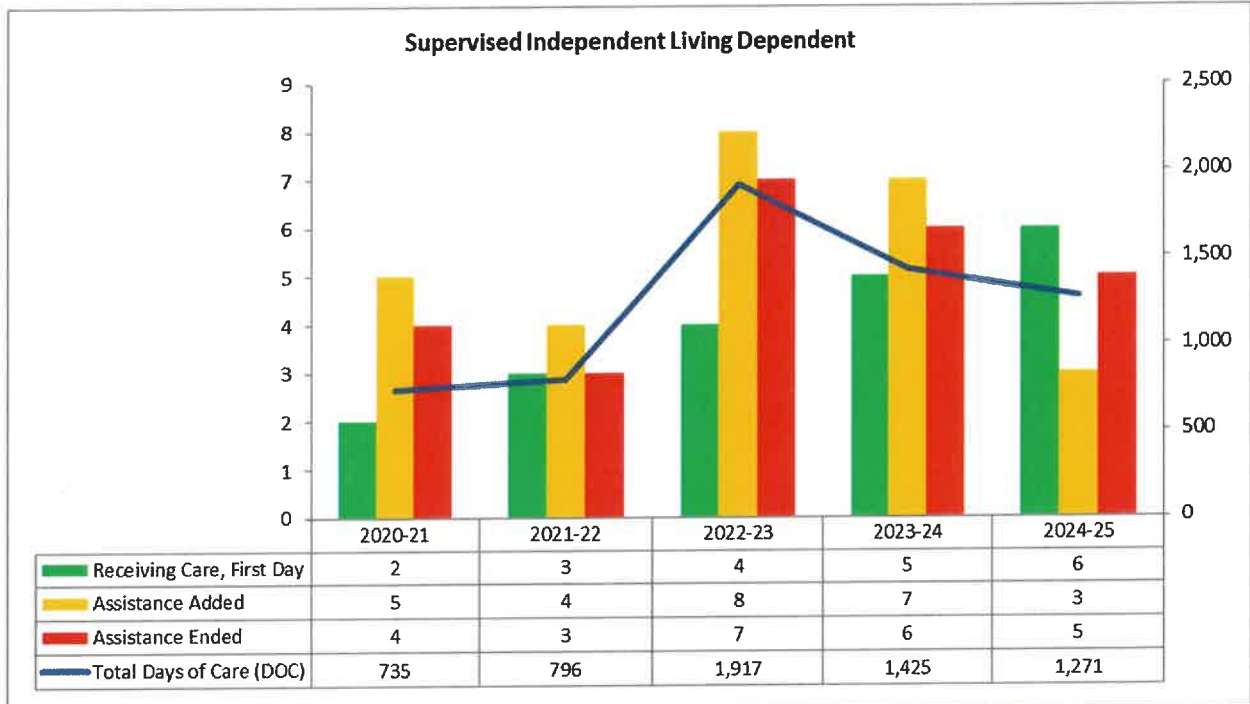


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

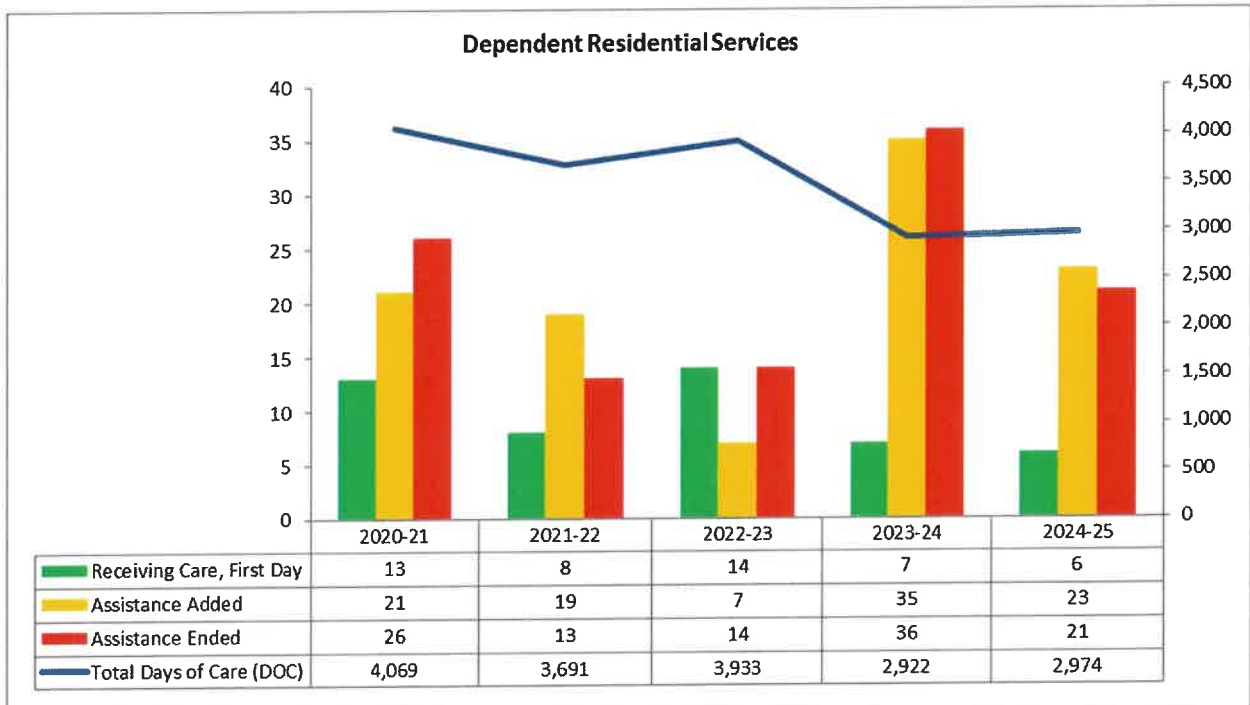


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

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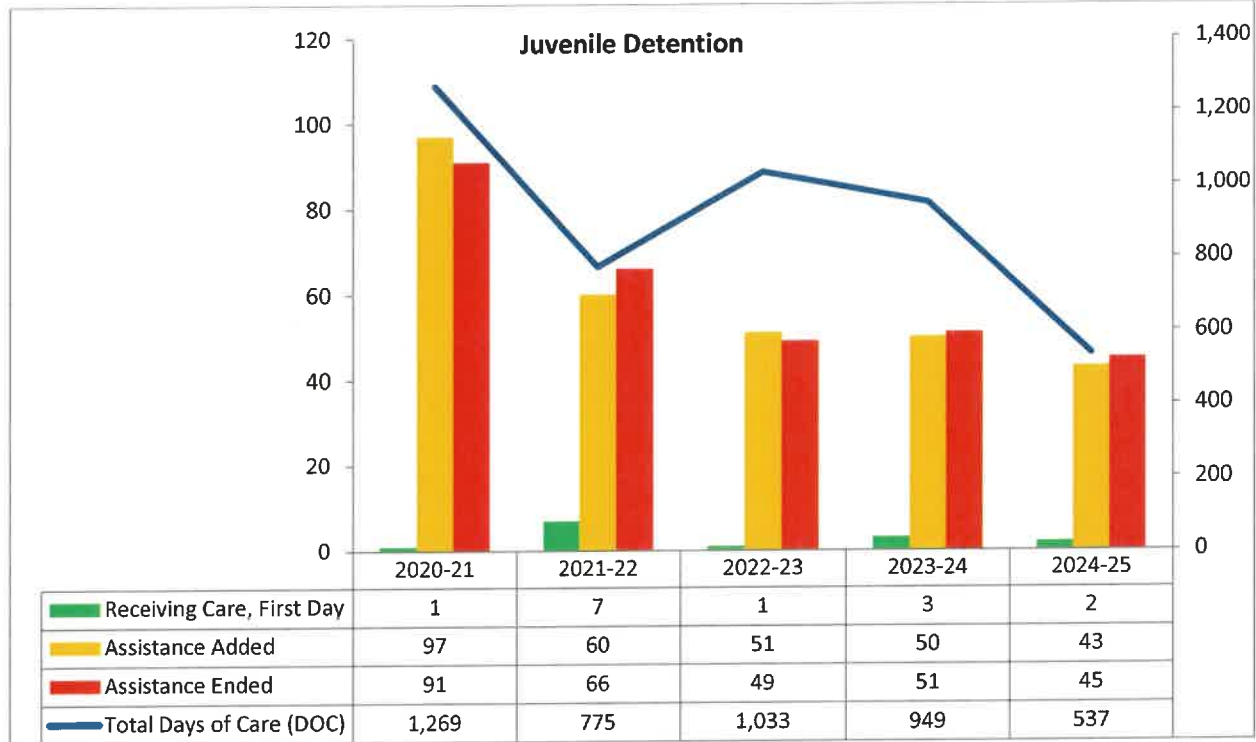


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

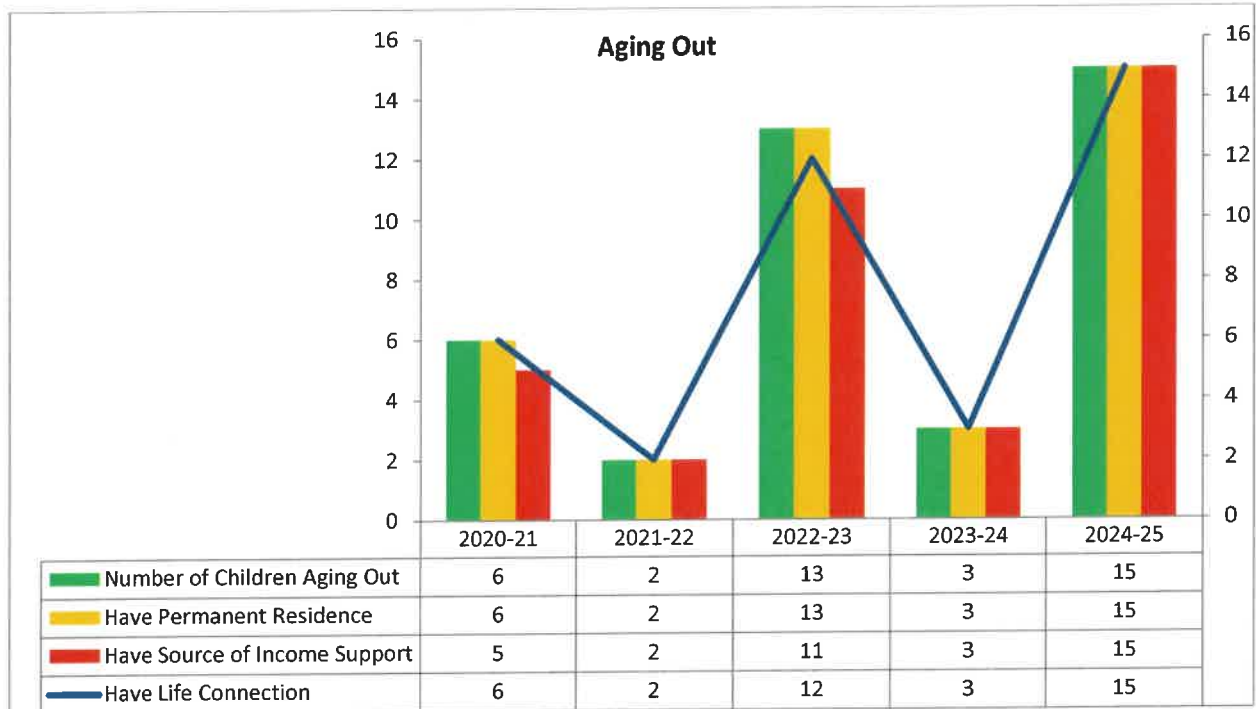


2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

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2-2e. Aging Out



2-2f. General Indicators

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2-2: General Indicators

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County Number: 63

Class: 4

Note: % Change and CAGR are calculated using the oldest reported figure (not 0) and the most recent fiscal year.

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2-2a. Service Trends

Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Intake Investigations							
Children	3,863	3,538	2,774	3,258	3,184	-17.6%	-4.7%
Family	1,941	2,033	2,130	2,403	2,346	20.9%	4.9%
Ongoing Services							
Children	872	779	1,043	643	657	-24.7%	-6.8%
Family	438	418	798	370	357	-18.5%	-5.0%
Children Placed	376	390	385	375	346	-8.0%	-2.1%
JPO Services							
Total Children	196	140	123	44	43	-78.1%	-31.6%
Community Based Placement	48	5	38	7	6	-87.5%	-40.5%
Institutional Placements	148	90	85	37	37	-75.0%	-29.3%

2-2b. Adoption Assistance

Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Adoption Assistance							
Receiving Care, First Day	618	647	676	720	704	13.9%	3.3%
Assistance Added	60	46	47	49	50	-16.7%	-4.5%
Assistance Ended	31	17	3	65	81	161.3%	27.1%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	239,114	244,036	257,584	239,295	239,615	0.2%	0.1%

2-2c. SPLC

Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship							
Receiving Care, First Day	124	118	106	122	117	-5.6%	-1.4%
Assistance Added	9	13	18	15	11	22.2%	5.1%
Assistance Ended	15	25	2	20	22	46.7%	10.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	41,028	39,229	42,768	40,430	38,987	-5.0%	-1.3%

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2-2d. Placement Data							
Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Traditional Foster Care (non-kinship) - Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	80	70	78	110	78	-2.5%	-0.6%
Assistance Added	73	77	97	72	71	-2.7%	-0.7%
Assistance Ended	83	69	65	104	70	-15.7%	-4.2%
Total DOC	25,532	28,729	31,748	34,176	30,857	20.9%	4.8%
Traditional Foster Care (non-kinship) - Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended						0.0%	0.0%
Total DOC						0.0%	0.0%
Reimbursed Kinship Care - Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	92	117	105	100	83	-9.8%	-2.5%
Assistance Added	154	176	129	152	141	-8.4%	-2.2%
Assistance Ended	129	188	134	169	134	3.9%	1.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	35,198	41,812	34,675	33,984	30,375	-13.7%	-3.6%
Reimbursed Kinship Care - Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended						0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)						0.0%	0.0%
Foster Family Care - Dependent (Total of 2 above)							
Receiving Care, First Day	172	187	183	210	161	-6.4%	-1.6%
Assistance Added	227	253	226	224	212	-6.6%	-1.7%
Assistance Ended	212	257	199	273	204	-3.8%	-1.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	60,730	70,541	66,423	68,160	61,232	0.8%	0.2%
Foster Family Care - Delinquent (Total of 2 above)							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Non-reimbursed Kinship Care - Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	26	28	38	22	23	-11.5%	-3.0%
Assistance Added	154	111	49	90	58	-62.3%	-21.7%
Assistance Ended	152	101	65	89	59	-61.2%	-21.1%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	10,687	9,670	8,639	9,002	6,457	-39.6%	-11.8%
Non-reimbursed Kinship Care - Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended						0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)						0.0%	0.0%
Alternative Treatment Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended						0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)						0.0%	0.0%
Alternative Treatment Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added						0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended						0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)						0.0%	0.0%

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Dependent Community Residential							
Receiving Care, First Day	8	10	11	18	13	62.5%	12.9%
Assistance Added	16	18	20	28	29	81.3%	16.0%
Assistance Ended	14	17	13	33	26	85.7%	16.7%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	3,096	4,066	3,920	7,507	5,746	85.6%	16.7%

Delinquent Community Residential							
Receiving Care, First Day	6	3	6	2	4	-33.3%	-9.6%
Assistance Added	23	17	4	8	3	-87.0%	-39.9%
Assistance Ended	26	14	8	6	3	-88.5%	-41.7%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	1,687	1,327	1,955	906	2,042	21.0%	4.9%

Supervised Independent Living Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	2	3	4	5	6	200.0%	31.6%
Assistance Added	5	4	8	7	3	-40.0%	-12.0%
Assistance Ended	4	3	7	6	5	25.0%	5.7%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	735	796	1,917	1,425	1,271	72.9%	14.7%

Supervised Independent Living Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	2	1	0	1	-50.0%	-20.6%
Assistance Added	3	3	1	1	2	-33.3%	-9.6%
Assistance Ended	1	4	2	0	1	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	314	620	274	99	115	-63.4%	-22.2%

Juvenile Detention							
Receiving Care, First Day	1	7	1	3	2	100.0%	18.9%
Assistance Added	97	60	51	50	43	-55.7%	-18.4%
Assistance Ended	91	66	49	51	45	-50.5%	-16.1%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	1,269	775	1,033	949	537	-57.7%	-19.3%

Dependent Residential Services							
Receiving Care, First Day	13	8	14	7	6	-53.8%	-17.6%
Assistance Added	21	19	7	35	23	9.5%	2.3%
Assistance Ended	26	13	14	36	21	-19.2%	-5.2%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	4,069	3,691	3,933	2,922	2,974	-26.9%	-7.5%

Delinquent Residential Services							
Receiving Care, First Day	9	10	4	6	8	-11.1%	-2.9%
Assistance Added	46	23	14	10	17	-63.0%	-22.0%
Assistance Ended	45	29	12	8	22	-51.1%	-16.4%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	2,214	1,404	1,496	1,902	1,703	-23.1%	-6.3%

Secure Residential (Except YDC)							
Receiving Care, First Day	1	2	1	0	1	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	3	2	0	2	0	-100.0%	-100.0%
Assistance Ended	2	3	1	1	1	-50.0%	-15.9%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	250	812	27	381	33	-86.8%	-39.7%

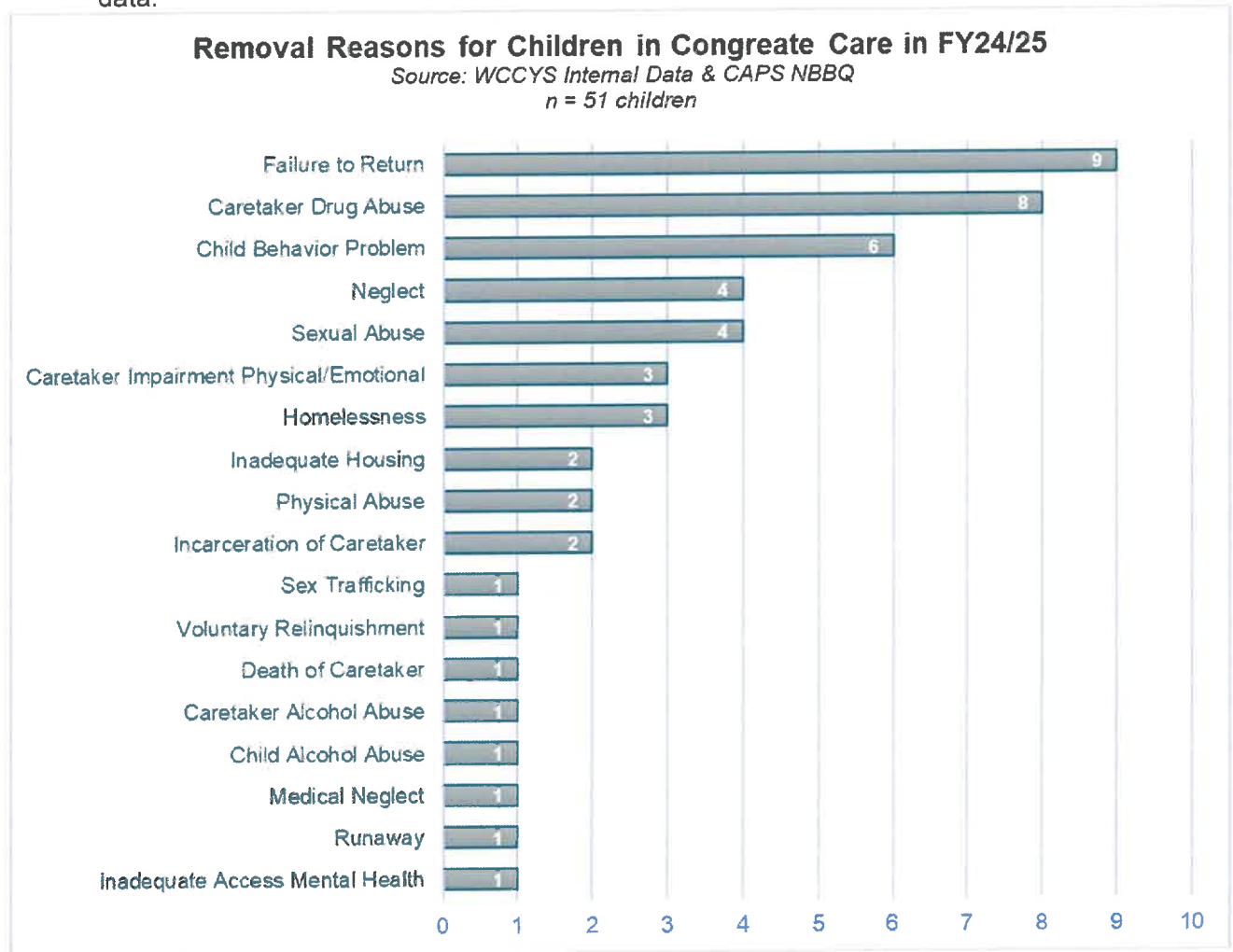
Youth Detention Center / Youth Forestry Camps							
Receiving Care, First Day	1	1	0	2	1	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	1	2	3	1	1	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	1	3	1	2	1	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	151	418	601	527	377	149.7%	25.7%

2-2e. Aging Out Data							
Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Aging Out							
Number of Children Aging Out	6	2	13	3	15	150.0%	25.7%
Have Permanent Residence	6	2	13	3	15	150.0%	25.7%
Have Source of Income Support	5	2	11	3	15	200.0%	31.6%
Have Life Connection	6	2	12	3	15	150.0%	25.7%

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2-2g. through 2-2i. Charts

- NOTE: The section is optional and applies to CCYAs and/or JPOs.
- NOTE: If inserting charts, identify the data source and parameters and include only one chart per page.
- ❑ Insert up to three additional charts that capture the drivers of county services and supports the county’s resource request. For example, these charts may be related to prevention or diversion activities or may be specific to areas or demographics that are driving influences on county resources and practices.
- ❑ Counties may use data charts as provided by PCG or any other county data available. County specific charts outside of PCG data charts must clearly identify the source of the data.



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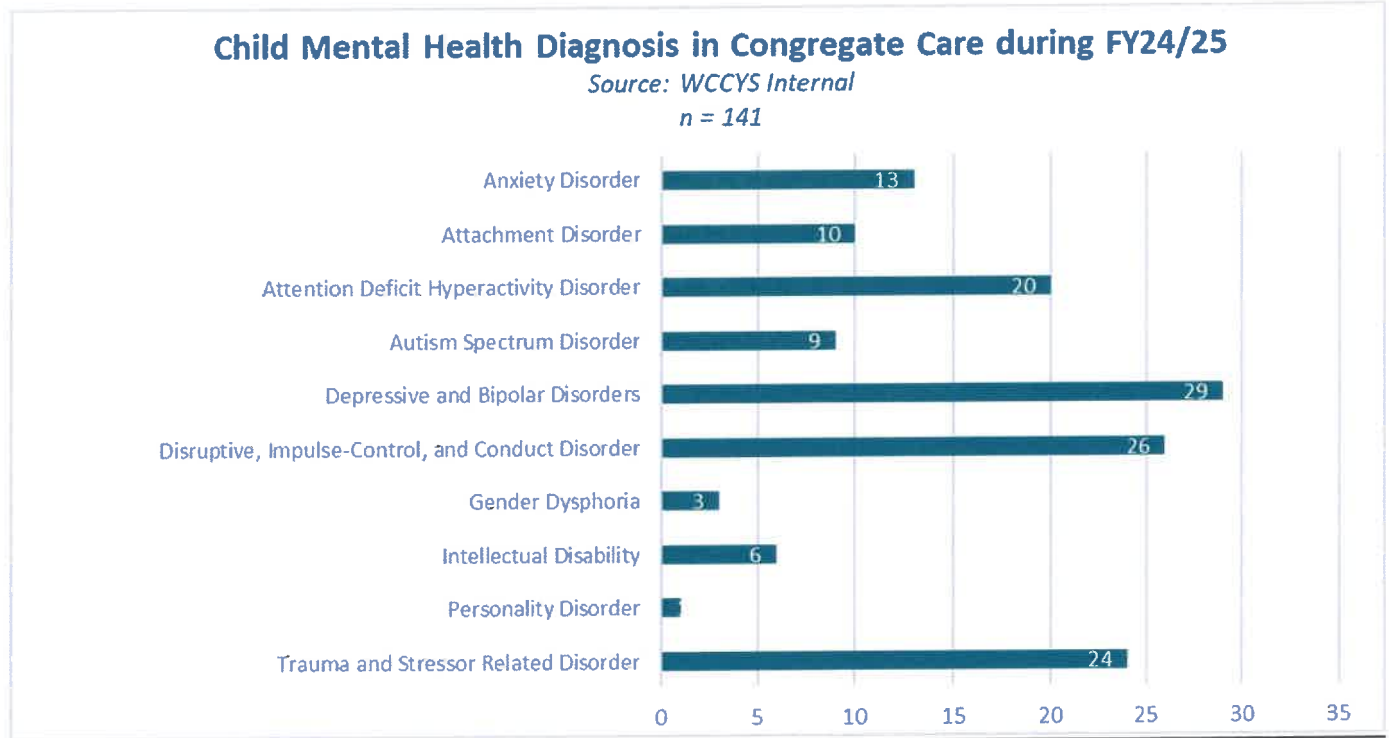


Chart Analysis for 2-2a. through 2-2i.

➤ **NOTE:** These questions apply to both the CCYA and JPO.

- Discuss any child welfare and juvenile justice service trends and describe factors contributing to the trends noted in the previous charts.

In FY24-25 WCCYS saw a relatively stable number of referrals for intake investigation compared to FY23-24; however, the number of days in placement and overall need for ongoing service intervention has decreased. As related to WCCYS, the success of our prevention unit as well as utilization of Crisis Rapid Response and FGDM services has provided opportunities for families to utilize natural supports as well as community resources that has helped to maintain stability in families necessitating ongoing services. At this time, substance use by parent continues to be the primary reason for referral to the Agency and accounts for nearly 40% of all referrals.

JPO services have also remained stable between FY224-24 and FY24-25.

- Describe what changes in agency priorities or programs, if any, have contributed to changes in the number of children and youth served or in care and/or the rate at which children are discharged from care.

As noted, although WCCYS has previously contracted with service providers to provide parenting education to intellectually disabled parents, the service has not been implemented

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due to provider challenges. The current administration has successfully worked with a provider to implement an evidence-based parenting curriculum paired with hands-on learning activities and reduced curriculum pace in effort to support our intellectually disabled population.

WCCYS has been successful in utilizing prevention/diversion supports for families who may not require on-going services but rather necessitate connection to community supports and/or require an isolated need to care for their children. Collaboration with community-based service providers, utilization of the Centralized Intake Unit Coordinator, and community outreach has helped to prevent the need for increased families require on-going services through the child welfare system.

It is important to note that complex mental health/behavioral health needs of adolescents have negatively impacted placement numbers and associated costs. In that regard, there have been multiple instances of WCCYS being contacted after a parent fails to participate in after-care planning/discharge from inpatient treatment centers. It is important to note that when the strained mental health system cannot identify the recommended level of care for inpatient discharge planning, they make a referral to child welfare, and the agency is often left in a position to take custody leaving children placed in either high cost centers and/or congregate care where they continue to lack access to the recommended mental health support.

- Provide a description of children/youth placed in congregate care settings.

The Agency's congregate care youth remain consistent with prior years and are characterized as adolescent youth as well as youth with significant mental/behavioral health needs and substance use needs. The Agency continues to collaborate with private providers regarding strategies to increase foster homes willing to accept youth within these classifications; however, at this time, the data indicates little to no progress in this area. Adolescent youth are often placed in congregate care due to an inability to identify foster homes willing to accept youth in this age bracket. In addition, youth with mental health diagnoses, Autism, and substance use disorders are declined by foster care providers and, ultimately, are placed in congregate care as a result. While the Agency attempts all possible kinship options, many of these youth lack supportive family relationships or individuals willing to accept placement and support their high level of need.

Data analysis indicates that a total of 51 youth were placed in congregate care in FY24-25 with 45% being male and 35% female. Out of the 51 youth, 59% were Caucasian, 14% were African American, and 25% were multi-racial. Thirty-one out of 51 youth had an IEP, 7 were identified as intellectually disabled, and 94% had at least one mental health diagnosis. An additional 14 youth had a substance abuse history. The agency provided Independent Living services to 41/51 youth and 48/51 were receiving some level of mental health therapy including 40/51 (78%) being prescribed psychotropic medication as part of their treatment modality. In considering permanency outcomes, 16 youth reached less than desirable permanency relative to 10 youth seeking emancipation and 10 youth (only 20%) being discharged from congregate care to a family-like placement setting.

- ⇒ Consider the children and youth who have the following characteristics, by race, age, and gender:
 - *Intellectual disability or autism;*
 - *A behavioral health impairment;*

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- *A physical disability;*
- *Involvement with JPO; and*
- *Identify as LGBTQ.*

Identify the service and treatment needs of the youth counted above with as much specificity as possible.

☞ The below questions may assist in development of a response:

- *What are the service and treatment needs?*
- *Why can those services and treatment needs not be met in the community?*
- *What barriers exist to accessing service and treatment needs in the community?*

Rapid access to recommended mental health/behavioral health support and adolescent substance abuse treatment remains a targeted area of need impacting youth served by the Agency. In that regard, other human services systems, particularly, mental/behavioral health services lack placement options for youth exiting inpatient stays with discharge recommendations for Residential Treatment Facility (RTF), which ultimately results in those youth being referred to the child welfare system. In addition, long wait lists for access mental/behavioral health and/or developmental/Autism supports, often leaves families without the necessary interventions to support the child in the home setting leading to crisis and, ultimately, referral to child welfare. Overall, children with significant mental health, substance use, Autism, or complex medical needs present placement challenges. In addition, the Agency continues to experience significant barriers to placement options for youth aged 12 years and above simply to age and a lack of foster homes willing to accept youth in this age bracket. Current administration continues to work collaboratively with various community-based service providers as well as the county BHDS to identify available resources for these youth; however, lengthy wait times continue to negatively impact overall child well-being and necessitates further Agency involvement.

Please describe the county's process related to congregate care placement decisions.

☞ The below questions may assist in development of a response:

- *What policies are in place to guide decision making?*
- *Who oversees and is part of the decision?*
- *Are youth involved in the decision-making? If so, how?*
- *How is the decision reviewed?*

WCCYS utilizes team planning and collaboration in all placement decisions. Complex case meetings and the use of the multi-disciplinary meetings available through Washington County's integrated Human Services Department has allowed for collaboration; however, access to mental/behavioral health services as well as adolescent substance abuse treatment options are driving factors for congregate care placement. While WCCYS continues to pursue all available placement options, our older complex youth continue to find themselves in congregate settings due to lack of resources. Casework Supervisors and Managers have regular meetings with caseworkers to evaluate any/all placement resources prior to accepting congregate care placement.

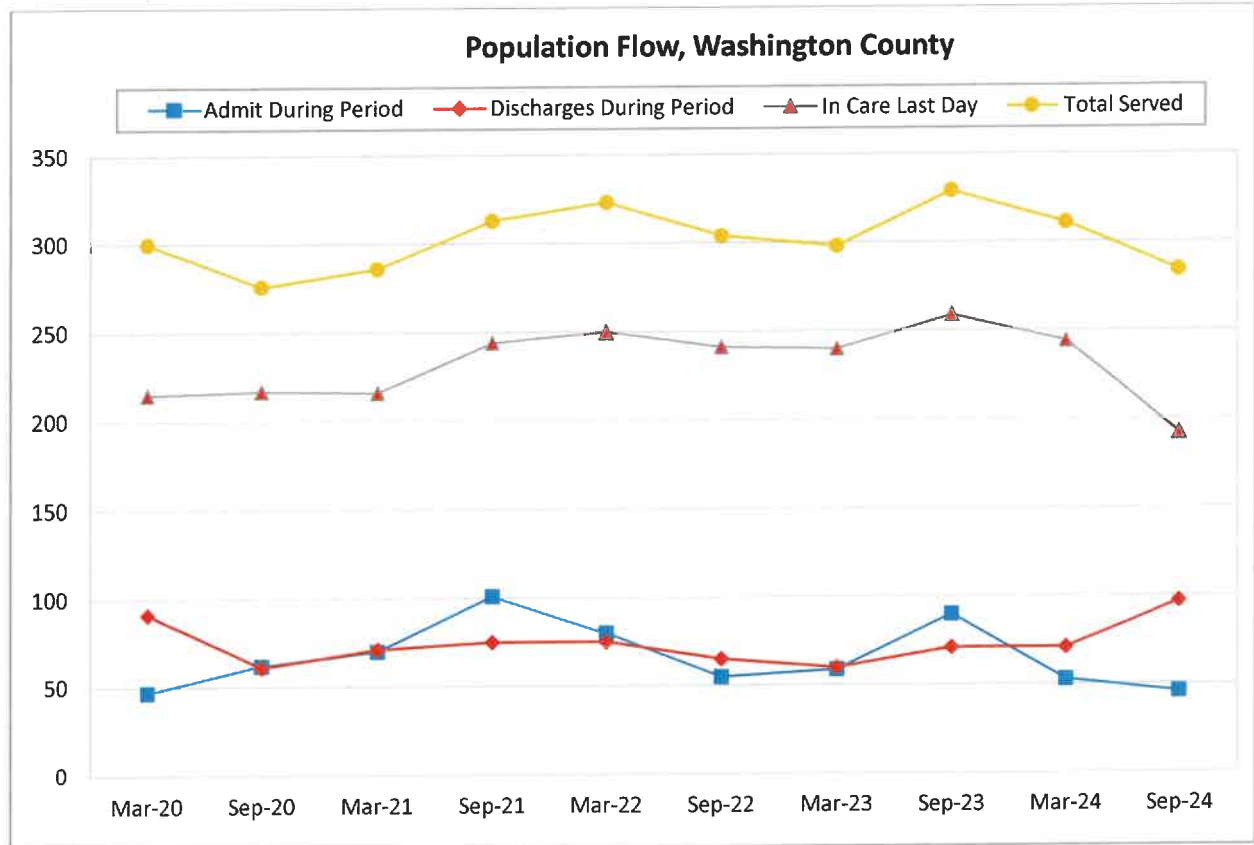
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- ❑ How has the county adjusted staff ratios and/or resource allocations (both financial and staffing, including vacancies, hiring, turnover, etc.) in response to a change in the population of children and youth needing out-of-home care? Is the county's current resource allocation appropriate to address projected needs?

Utilization of high-cost congregate care facilities tends to fluctuate throughout the year. The Agency has been able to financially meet the increased costs associated with youth in specialized placement. Due to the previously discussed staffing concerns, caseworkers typically rotate conducting visits to children placed in congregate care centers that require excessive travel. While this is not ideal relative to caseworker – youth rapport, it has been necessary to meet regulatory visit requirements while balancing available staff.

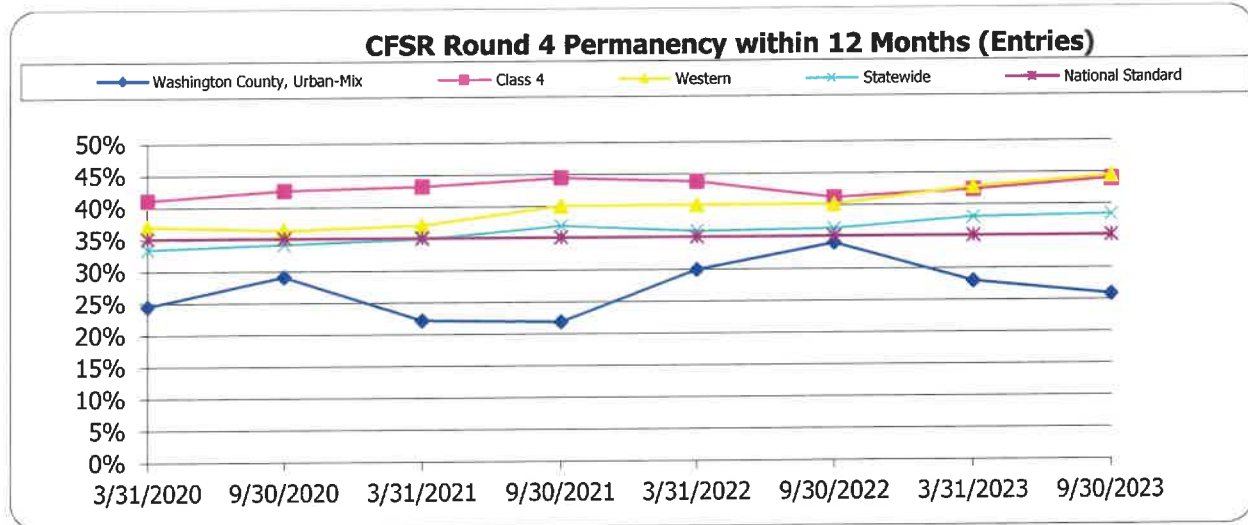
2-3a Population Flow

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2-3b Permanency in 12 Months (Entry)

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	3/31/20	9/30/20	3/31/21	9/30/21	3/31/22	9/30/22	3/31/23	9/30/23	3/31/24	9/30/24
Washington County, Urban-Mi	25%	29%	22%	22%	30%	34%	28%	26%	*	*
Class 4	41%	43%	43%	45%	44%	41%	42%	44%	*	*
Western	37%	36%	37%	40%	40%	40%	43%	45%	*	*
Statewide	34%	34%	35%	37%	36%	36%	38%	38%	*	*
National Standard	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	35%	*	*

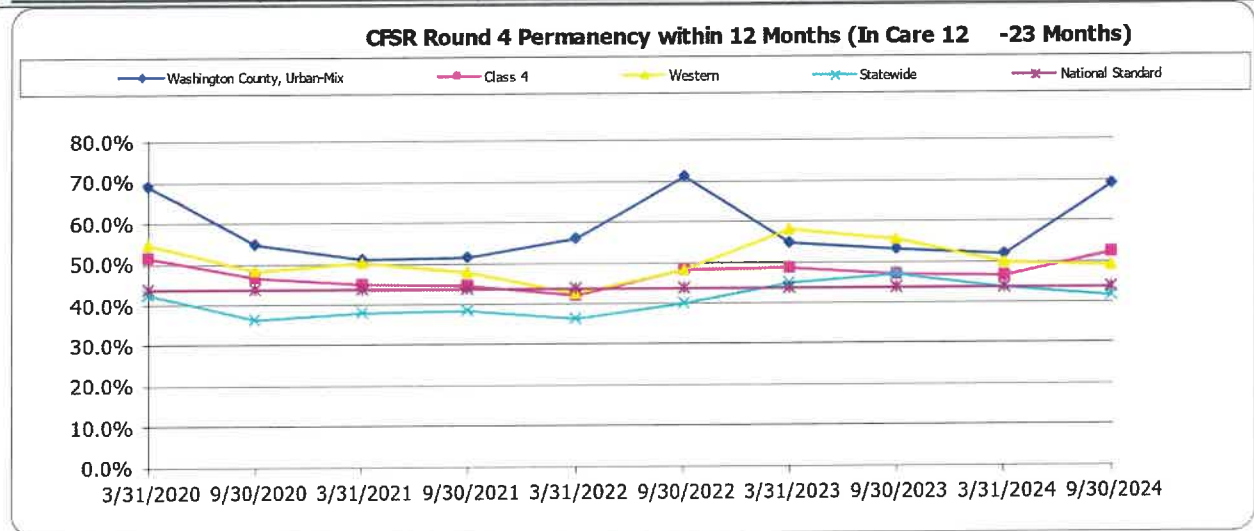
This indicator reports on the percentage of children and youth who enter care in a 12-month period and discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care. The national performance standard is 35%. A higher performance of the measure is desirable in this indicator.

Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

As of the data through 9/30/23, WCCYS did not meet national performance standard. Data as of 9/30/2023 suggests that WCCYS met permanency within 12 months of entering care in only 26% of youth; however, there are several impactful factors as related to this data. It is important to note that given the primary cause of referral continues to be 40% parental substance use and the nature of substance use relative to cycles of relapse-recovery significantly impacts overall efforts at permanency, including reunification goals. Removal due to parent or child drug and/or alcohol use is an area in which WCCYS does not meet national standards and, again is reflective of the relapse-recovery cycle associated with addiction. Lastly, the Agency does not make the final determination regarding Change of Goal decisions and the dependency court system ultimately makes a final determination regarding matters of permanency. There are instances in which the court, based on available data, supports continued efforts towards reunification that could ultimately not be successful and, in the end delay permanency, due to an extended effort at reunification. The Agency continues to share with the court a preference for reunification, when feasible, and therefore, there are families that require additional time and/or effort based on their efforts at rectifying the safety concern. The county dependency court nor the Agency currently support expedited efforts to reach less than favorable permanency goals, such as PLC/SPLC in order to reach case closure within 12 months.

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2-3c. Permanency in 12 Months (in care 12-23 months)



Click to Paste Chart

	3/31/20	9/30/20	3/31/21	9/30/21	3/31/22	9/30/22	3/31/23	9/30/23	3/31/24	9/30/24
Washington County, Urban-Mi	69.2%	54.7%	51.2%	51.6%	55.9%	71.1%	54.8%	52.9%	52.0%	69.1%
Class 4	51.4%	46.7%	44.9%	44.4%	42.0%	48.3%	48.7%	47.1%	46.6%	52.2%
Western	54.9%	48.2%	50.4%	47.6%	42.4%	48.3%	58.2%	55.6%	49.9%	49.2%
Statewide	42.3%	36.5%	38.0%	38.5%	36.2%	39.8%	44.9%	46.8%	43.7%	41.5%
National Standard	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%	43.8%

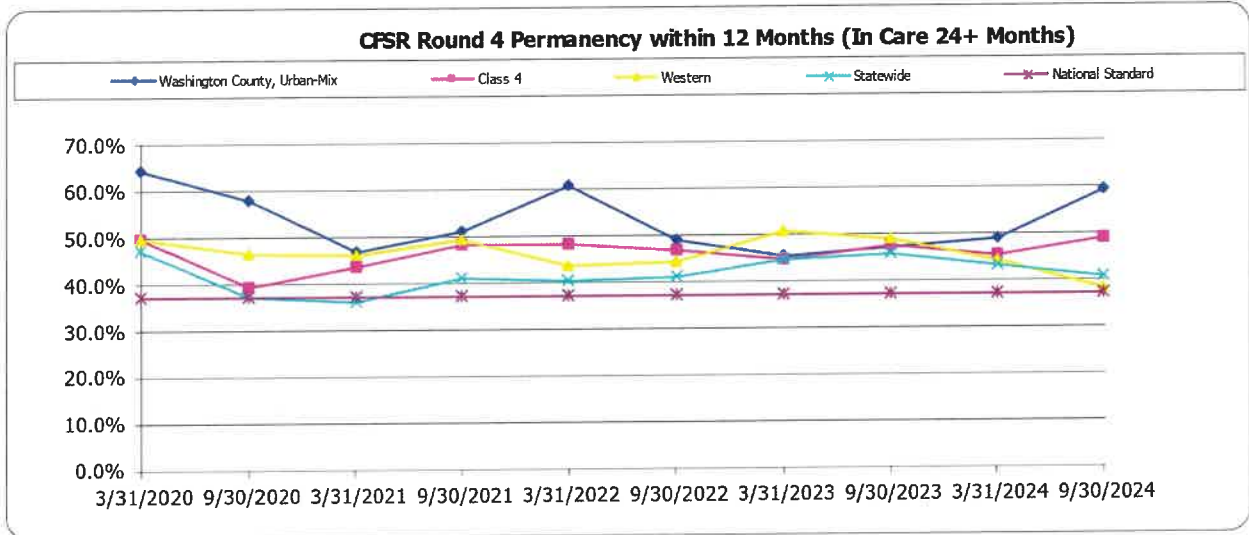
This indicator measures the percent of children and youth in care continuously between 12 and 23 months that discharged within 12 months of the first day in care. The national performance standard is 43.8%. A higher percentage is desirable in this indicator.

Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

WCCYS is exceeding the national standard (43.8%) in achieving permanency between 12-24 months. As of September 20, 2024, WCCYS achieved permanency for youth in care between 12-23 months on 69% of cases.

2-3d Permanency in 12 Months (in care 24 Months)

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	3/31/20	9/30/20	3/31/21	9/30/21	3/31/22	9/30/22	3/31/23	9/30/23	3/31/24	9/30/24
Washington County, Urban-Mi	64.3%	57.9%	46.9%	50.9%	60.8%	49.0%	45.2%	47.1%	48.9%	59.3%
Class 4	49.7%	39.3%	43.5%	48.3%	48.4%	46.9%	44.6%	47.7%	45.4%	49.1%
Western	49.6%	46.6%	46.0%	49.2%	43.5%	44.3%	50.9%	49.0%	44.3%	38.3%
Statewide	47.1%	37.2%	36.0%	40.9%	40.5%	41.2%	44.7%	45.8%	43.4%	40.8%
National Standard	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%	37.3%

[Click to Paste Chart](#)

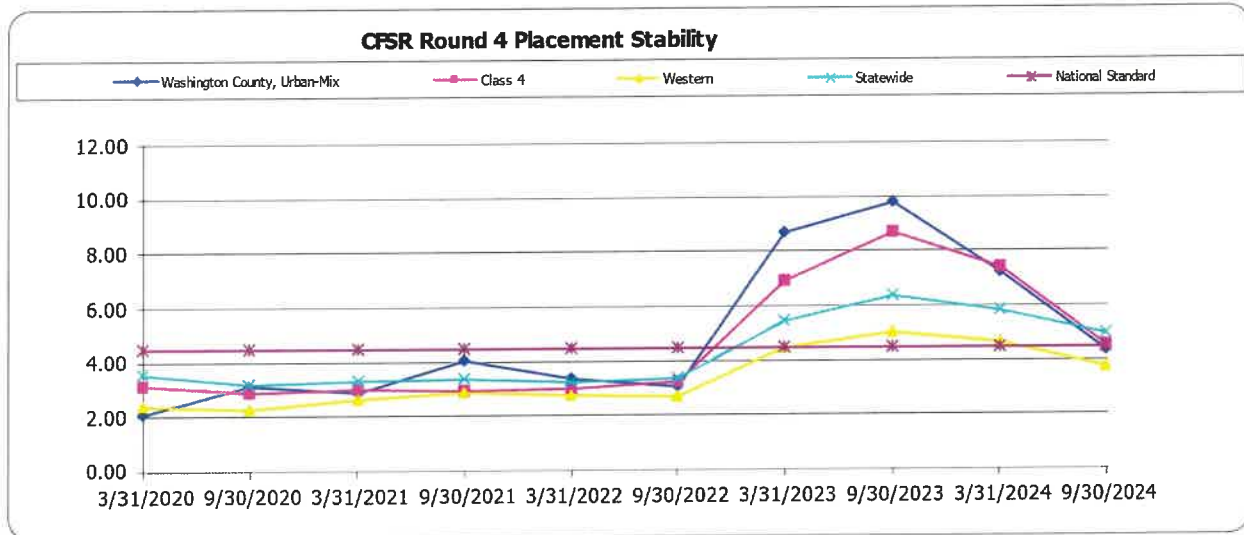
This indicator measures the percent of children who had been in care continuously for 24 months or more discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day in care. The national performance standard is 37.3%. A higher percentage is desirable in this indicator.

Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

WCCYS exceeds national standard (37.3%) relative to permanency in 12 months (in care for 24 months) by achieving success at a rate of 59%.

2-3e Placement Stability (Moves/1000 days in care)

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	3/31/20	9/30/20	3/31/21	9/30/21	3/31/22	9/30/22	3/31/23	9/30/23	3/31/24	9/30/24
Washington County, Urban-Mi	2.07	3.10	2.84	4.02	3.33	3.05	8.69	9.84	7.25	4.36
Class 4	3.09	2.89	3.00	2.93	2.96	3.25	6.95	8.71	7.41	4.53
Western	2.35	2.26	2.59	2.84	2.74	2.66	4.48	5.00	4.62	3.72
Statewide	3.54	3.15	3.29	3.33	3.25	3.38	5.46	6.35	5.82	4.93
National Standard	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48	4.48

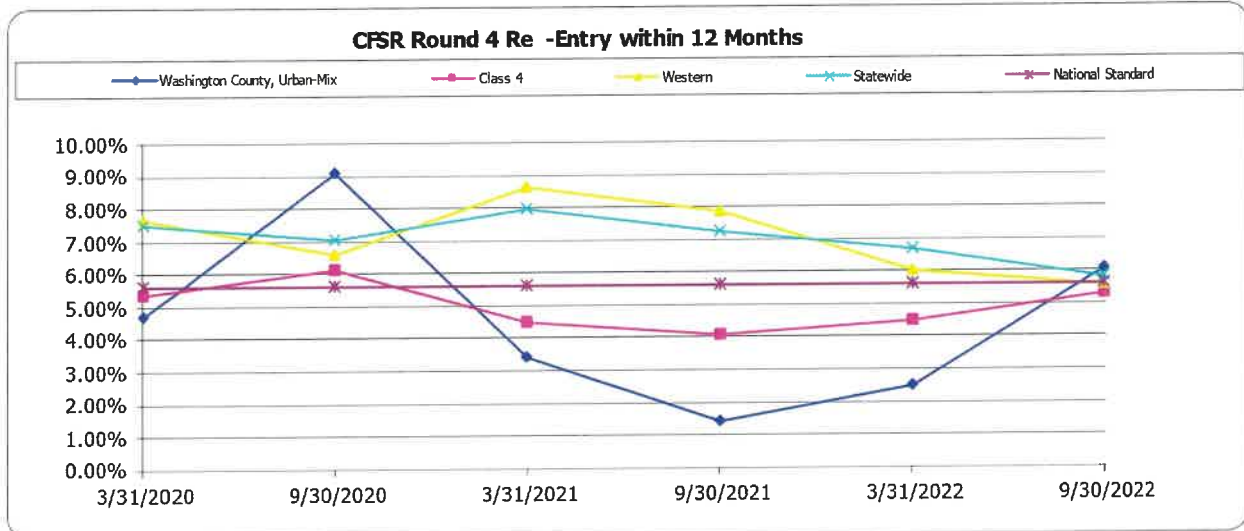
This indicator measures the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care for children and youth who enter care. The national performance standard is 4.48 moves. A lower number of moves is desirable in this indicator.

Does the county have less placement moves than the national performance standard?

WCCYS is exceeding national standards in this area. The national standard is 4.48 moves per 1,000 days in care and WCCYS is averaging 4.36 moves per 1,000 days in care. Further exploration of the data identifies the highest level of moves for youth between the ages of 13-15 with an average of 7.3 moves per 1,000 days of care. Youth aged 16-17 years of age average 5.51 moves per 1,000 days in care. This is consistent with above discussed difficulty locating and maintaining placement for adolescent youth.

2-3f Re-entry (in 12 Months)

WASHINGTON COUNTY



Click to Paste Chart

	3/31/20	9/30/20	3/31/21	9/30/21	3/31/22	9/30/22
Washington County, Urban-Mi	4.71%	9.09%	3.39%	1.39%	2.47%	6.10%
Class 4	5.34%	6.11%	4.50%	4.06%	4.49%	5.28%
Western	7.68%	6.61%	8.62%	7.87%	6.01%	5.55%
Statewide	7.48%	7.02%	7.99%	7.28%	6.70%	5.84%
National Standard	5.60%	5.60%	5.60%	5.60%	5.60%	5.60%

This indicator measures the percent of children and youth who re-enter care within 12 months of discharge to reunification, live with a relative, or guardianship. The national performance standard is 5.60%. A lower percentage is desirable in this indicator.

Is the county's re-entry rate less than the national performance standard?

WCCYS is above the national performance standard at 6.10% re-entry rate compared to the national standard of 5.60% as of September 30, 2022. The CFSR Round 4 data indicate significant increase in rates of re-entry between March 31, 2022, and September 30, 2022 (2.47% to 6.10%) with a total of 4 youth re-entering care following a total of 76 reunifications. This includes 1 sibling group of 2 youth. It is important to note that the provided data package includes re-entry data through September 30, 2023, and indicates that WCCYS is exceeding national standards in this area with a re-entry rate of 5.26%, which is below the national standard.

Washington County, Urban-Mix									
Class 4									
Western		2020	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022	2023	2023
		31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep	31-Mar	30-Sep
County:	Total Permanency within 12 Months	85	66	59	72	81	82	62	76
	Re-Entry within 12 Months of Discharge	4	6	2	1	2	5	5	4
	Percent	4.71%	9.09%	3.39%	1.39%	2.47%	6.10%	8.06%	5.26%

WASHINGTON COUNTY

2-4 Program Improvement Strategies

For FY 2026-27, counties will fully evaluate their performance in achieving permanency and stability for children and youth who enter placement. The analysis of current practices and services toward meeting the national performance standard for timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability in placement will identify areas in which targeted program improvement is warranted. This analysis will also help to identify areas of technical assistance needed at the county level to address challenges identified. In addition, the areas of technical assistance identified on the county level across all counties in the commonwealth will help to identify areas that need addressed through a statewide focus. As part of the analysis, counties should take a holistic view of the data available to them, including information in the data packages provided, county-specific data, general indicators, etc.

As part of the data packages, counties were also provided data regarding:

- re-entry and reunification for dependent children and youth only (no SCR);
- children whose placement stay was 30 days or less;
- the number of children entering foster care for the first time who were in previous adoptions; and
- removal reasons for children and youth in placement.

Counties that do not meet or exceed national performance standard must identify program improvement strategies based on their analysis. Based on the county analysis of the data presented in 2-2a through 2-2i and 2-3a through 2-3f, as well as other county data reviewed, counties may also choose to consider other areas in which program improvement strategies have been identified. The following questions and steps outlined below will assist counties in identifying priority outcomes and identification of practice improvement strategies.

1. ANALYSIS

The analysis phase consists of two iterative steps: data analysis and root cause analysis. Initial data analysis can begin the root cause analysis process and the root cause analysis process often requires additional data analysis as one continues to seek more information about why a problem exists.

In addition to utilizing the analysis of the national performance standard for timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability in placement, the county should consider conducting additional analysis to define problems to be addressed. The county may consider conducting analysis to determine if children and youth who do not achieve permanency in 12 months, do not have placement stability (less than four moves), and do not re-enter care differ from those who DO. The following questions should be considered in this analysis.

- a. Are there any distinctions in age, gender, race, disabilities, etc.?

As previously noted, adolescent youth in general often face complex needs that ultimately impacts permanency and reunification. In addition, limitations relative to long waits for community-based supports continues to negatively impact both entries as well as permanency goals for adolescent youth.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

- b. Are there differences in family structure, family constellation or other family system variables (for example, level of family conflict, parental mental health & substance use)?

Consistent with the prior year's data, youth removed primarily due to parental substance use continued to experience greater delays in reunification relative to the complex nature of addiction and the known cycle of relapse-recovery that can delay/negatively impact reunification timelines. When a family is engaged and actively participating in treatment both WCCYS and the local dependency court recognize the cyclical nature of the disease and will continue to work cooperatively towards reunification during recovery-relapse cycle.

- c. Are there differences in the services and supports provided to the child/youth, family, foster family or placement facility?

WCCYS has recently finalized the FEI plan through collaboration with the local dependency court. It is hoped that as the finalized plan is implemented in the coming year, there can be increased collaboration relative to identifying natural family supports in cases of elevated risk and/or safety related concerns. In addition, WCCYS continues to utilize Crisis Rapid Response and Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to locate natural supports that can assist the family. During FY24-25, WCCYS was able to provide 48 CRR meetings conferences to assist families in identifying natural supports and increasing their involvement in ensuring safety for their children.

- d. Are there differences in the removal reasons for entry into placement?

Consistent with the prior year, parental substance use remains the primary source of referral to WCCYS, accounting for nearly 40% of all referrals during FY2024-25. A review of the available data indicates that during FY2022-23 a total of 130 entries were due to parent substance or alcohol use of which only 28 (21%) reached reunification within 12 months. Again, the cycle of relapse-recovery as related to overcoming addiction directly impacts the agency's ability to reunify children in <=12 months.

- e. Are there differences in the initial placement type?

As previously discussed, older children (age 12+) are more likely to be placed in congregate care than younger youth. In addition, if the youth is also experiencing mental health and/substance use needs, this further complicates any placement options outside of congregate care.

The results of the data analysis will lead the county in further root cause analysis in which root causes are identified.

- a. What are the resulting root causes identified by the county analysis.

WCCYS continues to link families struggling with addiction to all available resources and potential treatment options. Caregivers experiencing parental impacts as a result of active substance use are consistently referred for level of care assessments and the dependency court does closely monitor progress. In an effort to decrease length of time in placement, the current administrator and dependency court staff have piloted several cases that includes court reviews every 30 days in an effort to keep parents engaged in their treatment, expedite visitation as appropriate, and attempt to reunify families. In addition, adding a Certified Recovery Specialist

WASHINGTON COUNTY

who can also assist families in accessing assessments, connection to long-term recovery supports, and lived experience in overcoming addiction, is hoped to positively impact reunification timelines.

2. PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED:

Copy and complete the table below as needed to describe the strategies the county will implement to achieve each desired outcome related to the root causes identified above. Provide rationale for how each strategy will contribute to the achievement of each outcome. Several strategies may be identified for each outcome. Communication with staff and partners should be considered critical action steps, as should the analysis of county and provider capacities in implementing change.

Outcome #:

Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	Improve reunification rates for substance use removals
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Identified in prior NBPB and being implemented for FY2025-26
Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	Hire CRS: within 2 months 30-day court reviews (as selected by administration/court)
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	Rates of reunification w/in 12 months Length of time in placement Re-entry rates
Evidence of Completion:	See above
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	Financial support for addiction recovery supports
Current Status:	In interviewing process for implementation
Monitoring Plan:	Quarterly data tracking for above indicators
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	None

For Program Improvement Areas that were identified in the FY 2025-26 NBPB Submissions, please review them and incorporate the ones that fit with one or more of the outcomes identified above. This approach encourages development of a single plan which encompasses all your improvement efforts.

Section 3: Administration

3-1a. Employee Benefit Detail

WASHINGTON COUNTY

- Submit a detailed description of the county's employee benefit package for FY 2024-25. Include a description of each benefit included in the package and the methodology for calculating benefit costs.

Please see attached Excel document titled Washington County Benefit Package.

3-1b. Organizational Changes

- Note any changes to the county's organizational chart.

Please see attached organizational chart.

3-1c. Complement

- Describe what steps the agency is taking to promote the hiring of staff regardless of whether staff are hired to fill vacancies or for newly created positions.

As noted above, WCCYS is working with the county Human Resources Department to explore the possibility of merit-based hire as opposed to civil service. In addition, one of the Casework Managers has been assigned the special duty to locate and attend various college career fairs and opportunities to speak at colleges/universities with social work programs.

- Describe the agency's strategies to address recruitment and retention concerns.

WCCYS is working with the county Human Resources Department to explore the possibility of merit-based hire as opposed to civil service. In addition, one of the Casework Managers has been assigned the special duty to locate and attend various college career fairs and opportunities to speak at colleges/universities with social work programs. The entire interview process has been redeveloped by the current administrator, and, in addition, agency on-boarding has been revamped to ensure new hires have adequate exposure to all concepts of caseworker roles/responsibilities in an effort to reduce vacancies. As noted, WCCYS is requesting financial support to provide therapeutic and trauma informed care to staff to assist with improved coping skills to manage the vicarious trauma associated with child welfare work.

Section 4: Required & Additional Language

↻ 4-1a. Assurances

The following pages include assurance forms to be completed by counties. These forms are:

- Assurance of Compliance/Participation
- Documentation of Participation by the Judiciary
- Assurance of Financial Commitment and Participation

The following forms must be signed and submitted electronically via the Send Secure Submissions folders on DocuShare.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

**ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE/PARTICIPATION FORM
DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUVENILE COURT**

The Assurance of Compliance/Review Form provided in this bulletin must be signed by the County Executive or a majority of the County Commissioners, the Juvenile Court Judge(s) or his/her designee, the County Human Services Director, the County Children and Youth Administrator, and the County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and submitted with the FY 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan and Budget submission.

The Assurance of Compliance/Review Form has two signatory pages. The first page is for the County Human Services Director, the County Children and Youth Administrator, the County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and the Juvenile Court Judge(s) or his/her designee. This page must be submitted at the time of the county's implementation plan and needs based plan submissions. The second page is for the signatures of the County Executive or a majority of the County Commissioners. It must be submitted at the time of the county's financial budget submission and must contain the financial commitment of the county.

COUNTY: Washington

These assurances are applicable as indicated below.

XX Fiscal Year 2026-27 Children and Youth Needs-Based Plan and Budget Estimate; and

XX Fiscal Year 2025-26 Children and Youth Implementation Plan

Note: A separate, signed Assurance of Compliance/Participation form must accompany the Children and Youth Implementation Plan and the Needs-Based Plan and Budget when they are submitted separately. This Assurance of Compliance/Participation form cannot be modified or altered in any manner, or the Children and Youth Implementation Plan and the Needs-Based Plan and Budget will not be accepted.

COMMON ASSURANCES

I/We hereby expressly, and as a condition precedent to the receipt of state and federal funds, assure that in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955 as amended, and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (Contract Compliance Regulations):

1. I/We do not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability:
 - a. In providing services or employment, or in our relationship with other providers;
 - b. In providing access to services and employment for handicapped individuals.
2. I/We will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination.

I/We assure that these documents shall constitute the agreement required by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. § 672 (a)(2) for foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal guardianship payments.

I/We assure:

- The County Children and Youth Agency and Juvenile Probation Office have the responsibility for placement and care of the children for whom Title IV-E foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal guardianship payments are claimed;
- The County Children and Youth Agency/Juvenile Probation Office will provide each child all the statutory and regulatory protections required under the Title IV-E agency, including permanency hearings, case plans etc.;
- The agreement between the Office of Children, Youth and Families and the County Children and Youth Agency/Juvenile Probation Office shall be binding on both parties; and
- The state Title IV-E agency shall have access to case records, reports, or other informational materials that may be needed to monitor Title IV-E compliance.

I/We understand that any Administration for Children and Families disallowance incurred as a result of county noncompliance with Title IV-E prevention, foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, subsidized permanent legal custodianship, or Title IV-E administrative claim requirements will be the responsibility of the county.

I/We assure that all information herein is true to the best of my/our knowledge and belief based on my/our thorough review of the information submitted.

EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES

In addition to the Common Assurances,

I/We assure that I/we have participated in the development of the Plan, agree with the Plan as submitted and that all mandated services if funded by the Plan will be delivered.

I/We assure that these Plans comply with the "Planning and Financial Reimbursement Requirements for County Children and Youth Social Services Programs" as found in 55 PA Code Chapter 3140.

I/We assure that, when approved by the Department of Human Services, the attached Children and Youth Implementation Plan and Needs-Based Plan and Budget, including any new initiatives, additional staff and/or increased services and special grants that are approved, shall be the basis for administration of public child welfare services for all children in need under Article VII of the Public Welfare Code, 62 P.S. § 701 et seq., as amended.

I/We assure that, where possible, the county will cooperate with state efforts to maximize the use of federal funds for the services in this Plan.

I/We assure that all contracts for the provision of services addressed herein will require the providers to comply with Chapter 49 provisions (contract compliance regulations).

I/We assure that expenditure of funds shall be in accordance with these Plans and estimates, and Department of Human Service regulations.

I/We assure that services required by 55 PA Code 3130.34 through 3130.38 will be made available as required by 55 PA Code 3140.17 (b)(2).

I/We assure that the capacity of both the county and the providers has been assessed and it is my/our judgment that it will be adequate to implement the Plan as presented.

I/We assure all Title IV-E foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payment eligibility requirements are met for the specified children, not merely addressed by the agreement.

I/We assure that the County Children and Youth Advisory Committee has participated in the development of this Plan and has reviewed the Plan as submitted.

I/We assure that representatives of the community, providers, and consumers have been given the opportunity to participate in the development of this Plan.

I/We assure that the county programs that affect children (e.g., Mental Health, Intellectual Disabilities, and Drug and Alcohol) have participated in the development and review of this Plan.

I/We understand that the accompanying budget projections are based on estimates and that the amounts may change when the state budget is adopted and final allocations are made.

I/We understand that substantial changes to the Plans subsequent to Departmental approval must be submitted to the Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families for approval.

I/We assures the Plan was made available for public comment prior to submission and that any comments were considered before the Plan was submitted. I/We assure that all new Guardians Ad Litem (GAL) have/will complete the pre-service training prior to being appointed to represent a child. If the GAL has not completed the pre-service training, costs incurred for representation of children by this GAL will not be claimed.

I/We assure that the County Children and Youth Agency is in compliance with all credit reporting agency requirements regarding the secure transmission and use of confidential credit information of children in foster care through electronic access for operation by counties where no agreement exists between the county and credit history agency. This also includes limiting online access to users approved by the Office of Children, Youth and Families for the explicit use of obtaining credit history reports for children in agency foster care.

**COUNTY ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE AND PARTICIPATION
DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUVENILE COURT**

**THE SIGNATURES OF THESE COUNTY OFFICIALS REPRESENTS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY
COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE COMMON AND EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN THE
PRECEEDING PARAGRAPHS**

County Human Services Director



John Tamiggi

8.10.25
Date

County Children and Youth Administrator



Jessica Spahr

8-7-25
Date

County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer



John Ridge

8-8-2025
Date

DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUDICIARY

In addition to the Common Assurances:

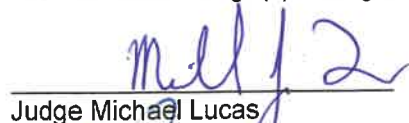
I/We assure that I/we had the opportunity to review, comment, and/or participate to the level desired in the development of the Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

I/We assure that the plan accurately reflects the needs of children and youth served by the juvenile court.

I/We assure that the Juvenile Probation Office has actively participated in the development of the Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

Judicial Comments:

Juvenile Court Judge(s)/ Designee



Judge Michael Lucas

8/8/25
Date



Judge Jesse Pettit

8/8/2025
Date

COUNTY ASSURANCE OF FINANCIAL COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

THE SIGNATURES OF THESE COUNTY OFFICIALS REPRESENTS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE COMMON AND EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN THE PRECEEDING PARAGRAPHS AS WELL AS COUNTY COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE THE LOCAL FUNDS SPECIFIED IN THE PLAN AS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN THE MATCHING STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS BASED ON THE COUNTY'S PROPOSAL. THE LOCAL FUND COMMITMENT AS PROVIDED IN THE COUNTY'S PROPOSAL TOTAL \$ 6,200,000.

Signature(s)

Washington County Board of Commissioners

By: 
Nick Sherman, Chair

By: 
Electra Janis, Vice Chair

By: 
Larry Maggi, Commissioner

Attest: 
By:
Cynthia B. Griffin, Chief Clerk

Approved as to Form and Legality:

By: 
Gary Sweat, Solicitor

Per Minute No. _____

Dated: _____