



## 2023 Legislative Agenda

The Washington Association for Children and Families (WACF) represents nearly 50-member private agencies across the state that provide services at every point along the child welfare continuum. WACF works actively with our members to help strengthen families and champion bright futures for children and families across Washington State. WACF's work is to support and stabilize the provider community in order to have good outcomes for children and families

### Community-Based Child Placing Agencies

WACF strongly encourages the legislature to fully fund the cost of the caregiver placement support services. Community-Based Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) are excited to expand their critical and valuable services to all caregivers. CPAs are being asked to provide the high-quality support and services they provide for their families to all families, including those licensed by the state and kinship families. Providing effective support to caregivers is an important part of reunification, placement stability, retention and produces better outcomes for youth. Community based child placing agencies are uniquely positioned to provide individualized support to kinship.

To be able to effectively accomplish this work, CPAs will need to be fully funded after suffering from chronic underfunding for years.

Of particular importance is **increasing the licensing incentive payment** CPAs receive for licensing a family which includes payment for valuable work with the family during the licensing process to ensure, among other things, they are ready to receive a placement, provide support that each family needs and promotes placement stability and better outcomes for youth. Community-Based Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) provide valuable support services to caregivers, during the licensing process and after placement throughout the state.

We are requesting that the **caregiver placement support services** be well resourced, **including the licensing incentive payment increase of \$2105 per family licensed (\$1,075,000 for fiscal year 2021)** to ensure there are well-funded and stable providers to provide the supports state-wide to all families.

## Independent Living Services

Independent Living Services Providers (ILS) have been working closely with DCYF on a request for funding that would greatly expand the number of youth and the kinds of youth that could be served across the state. By the state taking this important step of funding this work, additional youth in need of these critical services will become eligible for services. As an example, state funding would allow youth exiting juvenile rehabilitation (JR) services to enjoy much-needed IL services. IL services can assist youth to obtain housing so that fewer youth do not exit care into homelessness. These services are designed to assist youth and young adults ages 15 - 23 in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. Independent Living Providers offer essential educational support, employment preparation, financial assistance and life skills training.

WACF strongly encourages the legislature to provide state funding for **Independent Living Services** \$14,429,000 (State) to increase the rate paid to Independent Living Providers to be able to expand much-needed services to youth who may be at **risk of exiting foster care into homelessness**.

### **For Additional Information, Please Contact**

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