

2024 Budget Priority Family Preservation Services

The Washington Association for Children and Families (WACF) represents community-based agencies across Washington state. WACF's work aims to support and stabilize the provider community to ensure positive outcomes for all children, youth and families.

What is Needed?

Stabilize the availability of family preservation services (FPS). WACF strongly encourages the legislature to fund FPS **\$2.9 million**. Failing to do so limits the ability of community-based agencies to maintain providing FPS.

Family Prevention Services

Washington's Family Preservation Services (FPS) program was set in statute by the legislature in 1996 to protect children's health and safety by providing in-home services that strengthen families and reduce unnecessary out-of-home placement. **FPS preserves families to prevent removal, stabilize placement and support a successful transition when reunification occurs.** Characteristics of the program include:

- Safety planning that addresses drugs and alcohol abuse, including fentanyl;
- Flexibility to tailor services to meet the needs of each family;
- 24/7 availability to families;
- Highly trained counselors to meet the mental health needs of the family; and
- Enhance connections with community resources.

Many years of State evaluations have shown that FPS can reduce family risk factors, increase safety, reduce referrals to Child Protective Services, and increase family connections to community resources. Federal and state legislation, as well as DCYF planning, calls for the use of in-home services to safely reduce out of home care and successfully reunify families. In the face of an anticipated increase in need for services, financial data provided by community agencies shows that they cannot continue to provide FPS at the current rate. A significant number of agencies have already stopped providing FPS due to financial losses at the current rate.

The most significant barrier to maintaining the availability of FPS is the low vendor rate. Providers cannot pay enough to attract highly trained therapists and retain staff. DCYF and CIHS contractors believe this increase will help retain staff to maintain service availability and ask the legislature to fund the rate increase to support this valuable work.

For Additional Information, Please Contact

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