



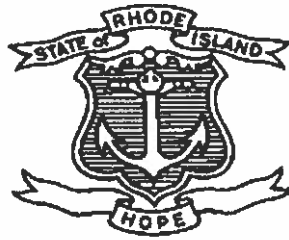
**SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE
FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO
SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK
EDUCATION AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE**

Final Report

Submitted: March 10, 2025

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Commission Members

- Representative Julie A. Casimiro, Chair – Democrat, District 31
- Representative Thomas E. Noret, Vice Chair – Democrat, District 25
- Dr. Mary Archibald
- Mr. Rick Brooks
- Mrs. Camille Capraro, Esq.
- Director Ashley Deckert
- Mr. Matthew Gunnip
- Ms. Coral Maack
- Mr. Nicholas Oliver
- Ms. Holly Pacheco
- Mr. Michael Peno
- Mr. Omar Reyes
- Dr. Samuel Terrazas

Dear Speaker Shekarchi:

I am pleased to provide you with the findings and recommendations of the Special Legislative Commission to Study the Feasibility of Utilizing Federal Title Iv Dollars to Support and Enhance Enrollment in Social Work Education At Rhode Island College (the “*Commission*”).

This Commission consisted of thirteen (13) members and included several dedicated professionals from the child welfare community, including those from the Department of Child, Youth, and Family (DCYF); Rhode Island College School of Social Work (RIC); the SIEU Local 580; Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and several others.

The Commission was convened to study the feasibility of creating a federal Title IV-E funded bachelors of social work (BSW) and masters of social work (MSW) program at RIC, in turn, creating a pipeline of social caseworkers and clinical caseworkers committed to working at DCYF for a number of years post-graduation.

Accordingly, the Commission heard and discussed various topics including: RIC’s ability to expand the School of Social work to include a Title IV-E program, various out-of-state university representatives who have successful Title IV-E education programs, DCYF’s need for social caseworkers and clinical caseworkers, the requirements for the respective positions, barriers graduates may face, and DCYF’s ability to accommodate a pipeline of RIC graduates.

This final report is a culmination of five (5) hearings that began in September 2024 and ended in February 2025. It contains information presented by various witnesses who testified before the Commission, as well as presentations made, which the Commission has reviewed.

I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the Commission for their willingness to take part in these discussions, and we appreciate the investment of the time and talent that they graciously provided.

Sincerely,


Julie A. Casimiro
Chair

Findings and Recommendations

The Commission studied the feasibility of utilizing federal Title IV dollars to support and enhance enrollment in social work education at Rhode Island College and, based on such study, testimony and material presented to it, and discussions by and amongst its members, the Commission provides findings and suggested actions including the following:

1. According to Section 474(a)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act, it provides that States with plans approved under Title IV-E shall be eligible to claim Federal financial participation (FFP) at 75 percent for the training, including both short-term training and long-term training at educational institutions, through grants to the institutions or by direct financial assistance to students enrolled in such institutions, of personnel employed or preparing for employment by the Title IV-E agency or by the local agency administering the Title IV-E plan.
2. **Rhode Island is the only Title IV-E funded state that neither claims Federal financial participation funding to implement a Title IV-E Child Welfare education program at an educational institution; nor, does Rhode Island claim Federal financial participation funding to educate current and future employees in order to secure an employment commitment.**
3. RI Title IV-E funds may be used to fund post-secondary social work programs at Rhode Island College (RIC), as well as potentially fund both bachelors of social work (BSW) and masters of social work (MSW) for current employees and future employees at DCYF.
4. DCYF is a Title IV-E agency. DCYF received approximately \$32 million in Title IV-E funds in fiscal year 2024. The funds were distributed to foster care programs, adoption assistance programs, guardianship assistance programs, and prevention services.
5. As of January 28, 2025, there are 42 vacancies at DCYF. Of those vacancies, two (2) are for “Social Caseworkers II” positions, requiring a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in social work, or a bachelor’s degree in psychology, sociology, child development or related fields. Additionally, there are three (3) vacancies identified as “Clinical Social Workers,” which a master’s degree in social work, or a master’s degree in psychology, sociology, child development or related fields is preferred.
6. According to RIC’s presentation on October 23, 2024, the College’s School of Social Work has an established relationship with DCYF. As of October 23, 2024, the College had six (6) BSW students and one (1) MSW student completing their field practicum with DCYF. On average, there are five (5) to ten (10) students interested in pursuing a child welfare track within their BSW or MSW programs.

Commission Findings and Recommendations (continued)

7. RIC may potentially build out a new social work program by, updating the child welfare course, developing one (1) new child welfare course, developing child welfare simulations, evaluate the need to hire adjunct faculty with child welfare expertise, as well as hire a project coordinator, and adjunct faculty to teach field practicums and advise students.
 - a. Upon further discussion with the Commission members, RIC suggested it proceed with DCYF to build a Fall 2026 Title IV-E education program, contingent on federal funding.
8. RIC estimates it would take one (1) academic year to complete the development of the new program, if they decide to do so.
9. The University of Texas – El Paso has a Title IV-E program, which provides MSW degrees to individuals already employed by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The Title IV-E program director found that attrition to DFPS with already employed individuals was much higher than recruiting students.
10. Similar to the University of Texas El Paso, RIC desires to grow its School of Social Work; thus, it may design a program with a stipulation that students, awarded Title IV-E funds to pay for a BSW and/or MSW, will commit to work for a Rhode Island Title IV-E agency upon graduation for a minimum of one (1) year for every one (1) academic year paid for using Title IV-E funds.
11. The Commission requests that RIC evaluate with their leadership the opportunity to develop a draft proposal detailing, but not limited to, the administrative costs, per pupil cost, any other program costs, and a potential stipend amount modeled after other state’s programs, to the House of Representatives.

Appendix A – Resolutions

(See Attached)

- 2024 – H 7627 SUBSTITUTE A
- 2025 – H 5045

2024 – H 7627 SUBSTITUTE A

LC005109/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE
ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT RIC

Introduced By: Representatives Casimiro, Noret, Serpa, Solomon, and Cruz

Date Introduced: February 15, 2024

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, In 1980, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Reform Act of 1980
2 (Public Law 96-272) was passed; and

3 WHEREAS, This Act created Title IV-E that allows state child welfare agencies to claim
4 and utilize federal financial participation (FFP) funds to augment training and educating of state
5 public child welfare workers; and

6 WHEREAS, The Act encouraged state/college partnerships to educate and elevate the
7 professional skills of social case workers, casework supervisors, child protective investigators,
8 child protective investigator supervisors and those interested in working in public child welfares;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, BSW/MSW education funded by Title IV-E of Social Security Act ("Title
11 IV-E Child Welfare Education") is an important incentive to encourage social workers to fill
12 critical vacancies serving Rhode Island's most vulnerable children and families; and

13 WHEREAS, Title IV-E Child Welfare Education aims to demonstrate a robust training
14 partnership between public college social work programs and public child welfare agencies to
15 recruit, develop and retain an educated, professional, stable, and committed workforce; now,
16 therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
18 consisting of thirteen (13) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the House of
19 Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the

1 Speaker of the House; two (2) of whom shall be members of SEIU Local 580, be appointed by
2 the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Director of Admissions at Rhode Island
3 College, or designee; one of whom shall be the Dean of the School of Social Work at Rhode
4 Island College, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the RIC School of Social Work,
5 to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a Senior Advisor to the
6 Governor, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Director of the
7 Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), or designee; one of whom shall be a
8 member of staff at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), to be appointed by
9 the Director of DCYF; one of whom shall be the Director of Workforce Development at the
10 Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), or designee; and one of whom shall
11 be the Director Adult Programs for the Office of Post-Secondary Education, or designee.

12 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study
13 commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing
14 authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator, provided that
15 the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader of the political party which is entitled to the
16 appointment, consents to the member of the general public.

17 The purpose of said commission shall be to study the feasibility of utilizing Federal Title
18 IV-E dollars to leverage and help enroll and graduate students in the field of social work in a state
19 college (Rhode Island College) in order to ultimately serve a Rhode Island state agency (DCYF).
20 The goal of providing this funding is to attract and retain front line staff for the Department of
21 Children Youth and Families.

22 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
23 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson.

24 Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

25 The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

26 All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,
27 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or
28 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

29 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters
30 for said commission; and be it further

31 **RESOLVED**, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
32 Office of the Governor and the House of Representative no later than February 11, 2025, and said

1 commission shall expire on April 9, 2025.

LC005109/SUB A

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF
UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE
ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT RIC

1 This resolution would create a thirteen (13) member special legislative study commission
2 whose purpose it would be to study the feasibility of utilizing Federal Title IV-E dollars to
3 leverage and help enroll and graduate students in the field of social work, and who would report
4 back to the House and Governor no later than February 11, 2025, and would expire on April 9,
5 2025.

=====
LC005109/SUB A
=====

2025 -- H 5045

LC000564

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXTENDING THE REPORTING DATE OF THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO
SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT RIC

Introduced By: Representatives Casimiro, and Noret

Date Introduced: January 15, 2025

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

1 RESOLVED, That the special legislative commission created by resolution No. 348
2 passed by the House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2024, and approved June 6,
3 2024, entitled "House Resolution Creating a Special Legislative Commission To Study the
4 Feasibility of Utilizing Federal Title IV Dollars to Support and Enhance Enrollment in Social
5 Work Education at RIC, is hereby authorized to continue its study and make a report to the House
6 of Representatives on or before March 6, 2025; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the time for reporting authorized by resolution No. 348 passed by the
8 House of Representatives at its January session, A.D. 2024, and approved June 6, 2024, be and
9 the same is hereby rescinded.

LC000564

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

HOUSE RESOLUTION

EXTENDING THE REPORTING DATE OF THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO
SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT RIC

- 1 This resolution would extend the reporting date of the Legislative Commission to Study
- 2 the Feasibility of Utilizing Federal Title IV Dollars to Support and Enhance Enrollment in Social
- 3 Work Education at RIC from February 11, 2025, to March 6, 2025.

LC000564

Appendix B - Meeting Agendas and Presentations

1. September 17, 2024

- a. Agenda (See Attached)

2. October 23, 2024

- a. Agenda (See Attached)

i. Presentations:

- 1. Dr. Samuel Terrazas, Dean of the RIC School of Social Work
- 2. Dr. Mary Archibald, Assistant Professor, RIC School of Social Work

3. November 13, 2024

- a. Agenda (See Attached)

i. Presentations:

- 1. Lisa Nelson, Department of Children, Youth, and Families Services
- 2. Brian Peterson, Department of Children, Youth, and Families Services

4. December 11, 2024

- a. Agenda (See Attached)

b. Presentations:

- i. Anthony Thornton, University of Texas El Paso
- ii. Erica Balderrama, University of Texas El Paso

5. February 3, 2025

- a. Agenda (See Attached)

Appendix B - Meeting Agenda
September 17, 2024

**SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE
FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS
TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL
WORK EDUCATION AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE**

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, September 17, 2024

TIME: 3:00 PM

PLACE: RI State House, Room 101

AGENDA:

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Election of Chair and Vice Chair
- III. Introduction of Members
- IV. Discuss Enabling Resolution
- V. Discuss Suggestions for Future Presentations
- VI. Next Meeting Date
- VII. Adjournment

COMMISSION INFORMATION

For information on commissions, **CLICK HERE**.

If you have any questions, please contact Tara Lombardi at tlombardi@rilegislature.gov or 401-222-6649.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The General Assembly strives to make the legislative process accessible to all. Anyone needing an accommodation to attend or testify at a commission meeting, contact Stacy Custer at scuster@rilegislature.gov or 401-222-7904 at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

TELEVISION AND LIVESTREAMING

The meeting may be televised by Capitol Television on Cox Communications, channels 15 and 61 for high definition; i3 Broadband (formerly Full Channel) on 15; and Verizon, on channel 34. Livestreaming is available at <https://www.rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx>.

Appendix B - Meeting Agenda and Presentation
October 23, 2024

SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, October 23, 2024

TIME: 3:00 PM

PLACE: RI State House, Room 101

AGENDA:

- I. Call Meeting to Order and Attendance
- II. Presentation from Rhode Island College
 - Dr. Samuel Terrazas, Dean of the RIC School of Social Work
 - Dr. Mary Archibald, Assistant Professor, RIC School of Social Work
- III. Discussion and Questions on Rhode Island College Presentation
- IV. Discussion of DCYF Presentation in November
- V. Next Meeting Date – November 13, 2024, 3:00 PM.
- VI. Adjournment

No Public Testimony will be accepted at this meeting.

COMMISSION INFORMATION

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Title IV-E Commission
Rhode Island College School of Social Work
Responses to Commission Questions
10/23/24

1. Please describe the existing relationship RIC has with DCYF, if any, such as the internship to workforce program and its successes and challenges.

RIC/SSW - RIC/SSW existing relationship with DCYF is that we currently have 6 Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) and 1 Master of Social Work (MSW) students completing their field practicum at DCYF.

We also partner with DCYF in designing and offering training for new DCYF employees at RIC SSW. We work directly with Stan Brajer (DCYF employee) who is located on our campus in the SSW building.

2. If RIC is able to/how RIC would accommodate an influx of social work students? What is an ideal number of additional students that they could serve?

RIC/SSW - The SSW undergraduate BSW program has the capacity to add an additional 30 – 40 students into the existing number of new students entering the BSW program. New social work students come with many interests and areas of practice they pursue; child welfare tends to interest approximately 5 – 10 students each year at RIC.

We do not believe there will be a substantial influx of students and estimate that we will continue to attract between 5 – 10 students.

The ideal number of students in the program would be based on many factors mainly in DCYF's ability to host students and provide them with the required learning experiences needed to complete their degrees. Our accreditation body Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) sets clear educational standards for social work students, which include specific requirements in field education including:

- **1 hour per week professional/academic supervision by a BSW or MSW with 2 years post-social work degree employment**
 - **A BSW social worker can only supervise a BSW student**
- **Oversight and the opportunity to function as a professional social worker for approximately 14 hours per week over 15 weeks per semester**
- **420 hours over an academic year fall and spring**

CSWE Website <https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/>

3. How would RIC build out the new program and what would be the timeframe for such program?

RIC/SSW - RIC SSW would build out the new program by:

- **Updating a current child welfare course**
- **Developing one new child welfare course**
- **Develop Child Welfare simulations (*We are currently developing the use of virtual reality simulations in Spanish and could potentially include Title IV – E students*)**
- **Hiring adjunct faculty with child welfare expertise**
- **Hiring a project coordinator**
- **Hiring adjunct faculty to teach field practicum seminar and advise students.**
- **Review our current BSW and MSW curriculum and enhance the child welfare content.**
- **The timeframe for a startup Title IV-E program would be one academic year**
- **To estimate the cost of building out the program more information is needed**

4. When would it be beneficial to offer scholarships/grants to students to entice them to pursue a degree in social work and work for DCYF?

In preparation for the launch of the program we believe that promoting the scholarships as soon as funding is allocated, and the program is approved would promote interest in the Title IV-E program at DCYF. With a goal of informing potential students at least 6 months before classes begin with the caveat that they are also applying to RIC and the SSW.

It would also be beneficial to promote the Title IV-E scholarships as part of our recruiting and outreach efforts throughout the year and place the information on our school's website.

Our scholarship process is centralized and must follow our college policies, federal loan regulations and our internal processes. In general, funds must be available to students before fall courses begin so they can enroll in their courses.

5. Would there be a guaranteed Rhode Island DCYF commitment?

RIC/SSW – In consultation with the President's Office the college is unable to commit to supporting the project with funding. Dr. Warner expressed interest in the program and the School of Social Work can work with DCYF to develop the academic elements of the program if funding becomes available.

Appendix B - Meeting Agenda and Presentation
November 13, 2024

SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, November 13, 2024

TIME: 3:00 PM

PLACE: RI State House, Room 135

AGENDA:

- I. Call Meeting to Order and Attendance
- II. Presentation from Department of Children, Youth, and Families Services
 - Lisa Nelson, Department of Children, Youth, and Families Services
 - Brian Peterson, Department of Children, Youth, and Families Services
- III. Discussion and Questions
- IV. Next Meeting Date – December 11, 2024, 3:00 PM.
- V. Adjournment

No Public Testimony will be accepted at this meeting.

COMMISSION INFORMATION

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If you have any questions, please contact Tara Lombardi at tlombardi@rilegislature.gov or 401-222-7845.

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Commission to Study Utilizing Title IV-E to Support Social Work Education at Rhode Island College

RI Department of Children, Youth & Families

November 13, 2024

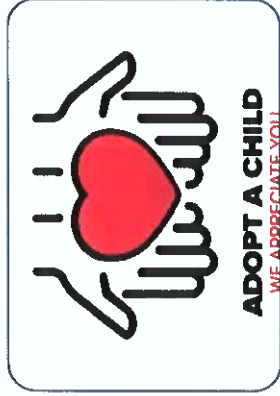
RHODE
ISLAND

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

Overview and Specifics for Rhode Island

Title IV-E: Federal Payments for Foster Care, Prevention, and Permanency

All payments are reimbursements for a portion of eligible costs actually incurred.



Foster Care

Federal reimbursement for the cost of providing foster care to eligible children who are removed from their home and placed in foster care.

Adoption Assistance

Payments to adoptive families to help them care for eligible children whose particular needs would otherwise make it difficult to place them with adoptive families.

Guardianship Assistance

Payments to families who have become legal guardians of eligible children.

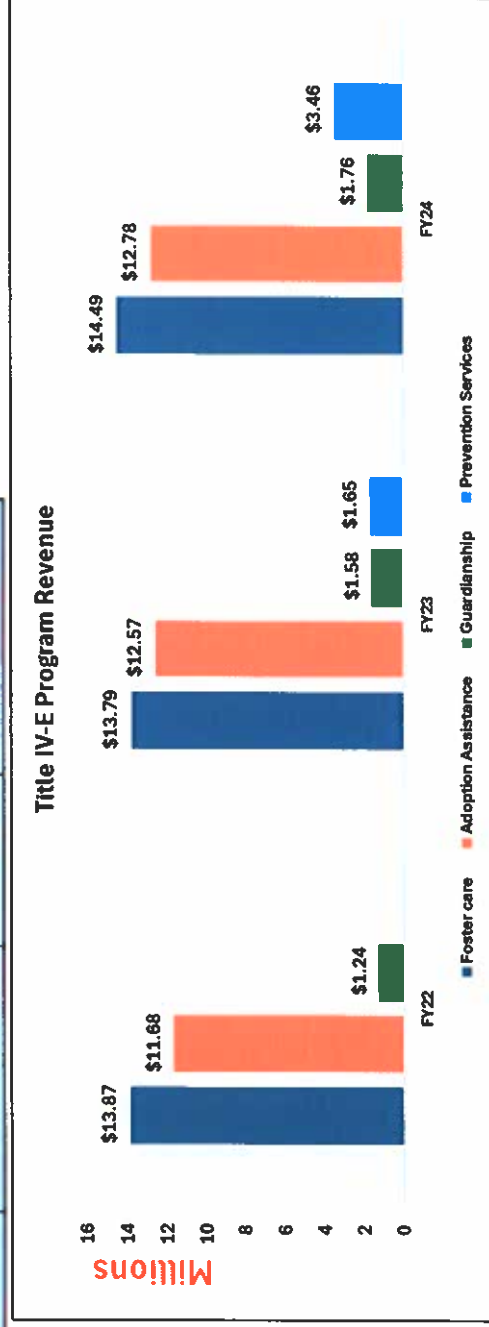
Prevention Services

Support for certain evidence-based services for eligible children that prevent them from entering foster care by allowing them to remain in their own home.

Title IV-E Funding in RI

IV-E Program Revenue	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Foster Care	13,866,569	13,792,147	14,489,258
Adoption Assistance	11,680,205	12,570,587	12,780,206
Guardianship Assistance	1,242,400	1,582,947	1,755,375
Prevention Services*	-	1,649,931	3,457,400
Total	26,789,174	29,595,612	32,482,239

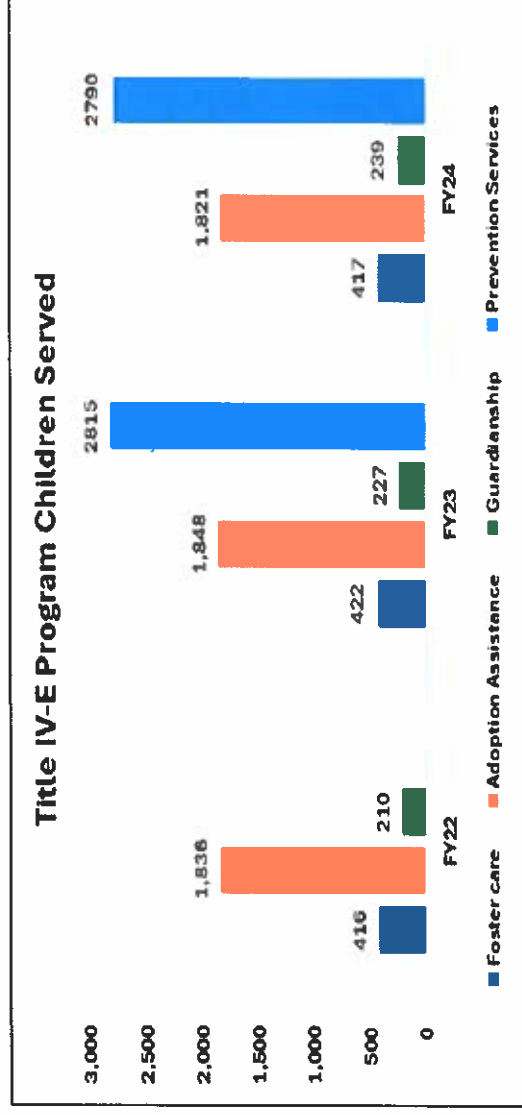
* Claiming started 10/1/2022. Therefore, the data for FY 2023 reflects 75% of the fiscal year.



Title IV-E Funding in RI: Number of Children Served

IV-E Program Children Served	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Foster Care	416	422	417
Adoption Assistance	1,836	1,848	1,821
Guardianship Assistance	210	227	239
Prevention Services**	-	2815	2790
Total	2,463	2,497	2,477

** Claiming started 10/1/2022. Therefore, the data for FY 2023 reflects 75% of the fiscal year.



Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)

Enacted in 2018, this allowed Title IV-E funding for in-home prevention services for the first time.

Two buckets of funding:

1. Transition Grant – for start-up costs incurred between 10/1/19 and 9/30/25, which include:
 - Engaging a third-party (Public Consulting Group) to assist in plan and program development.
 - Modifying the internal practice and data software system (RICHIST) to implement the program.
 - Purchasing training materials for staff and families.
2. Prevention Services Programs – through FY2026; to address the needs of a child, parent, or caregiver.
 - Services must be directly related to the safety, permanence, or well-being of the child, **or** to preventing the child from needing to enter foster care.
 - Funding is permitted for up to 12 months once the child is deemed eligible. (Additional funding is case-by-case.)
 - Specific programs approved: Functional Family Therapy; Homebuilders; Multisystemic Therapy; Parent Child Interaction Therapy; Motivational Interviewing; and Familias Unidas.

Workforce Pipeline

Attract, Train, Support, Retain.

1. Recruitment and early engagement
 - Target outreach; early exposure; clear pathways
2. Offer comprehensive training programs
 - Specialized training programs; mentorship and coaching; ongoing professional development
3. Employee well-being
 - Support systems; flexible work options; workload management
4. Advancement and recognition
 - Career ladder; public recognition and awards

These foundational elements are already in place. Any expansion or revision could take up to six months, after approval and financial appropriation (if necessary).

Additional Title IV-E Funding Needed

Challenging to quantify, as it depends on several key factors:

- Title IV-E funds are reimbursements for costs incurred.
 - Any new programs would be paid for first by new general revenue from the State.
 - Federal reimbursement ranges from 50% to 100% of eligible costs incurred, depending on the program.
- Programs such as education stipends require detailed review of course materials and curriculum, as well as analysis of employee retention metrics and child/family outcomes.
 - All costs of an education program may not be eligible for reimbursement.
 - Title IV-E provides 75% federal reimbursement for allowable training costs.
 - Costs to a state would include tuition, course materials, administrative/faculty.
 - Best estimates indicate a 5- to 7-year timeline for measuring success of such a program.
 - Initial development/recruitment (6-12 months); time to complete a cohort (1-3 years, depending on the degree obtained); preliminary employee retention metrics (available beginning with year 3, depending on degree); measuring outcomes for families (additional 1-3 years depending on degree).

Discussion/Questions



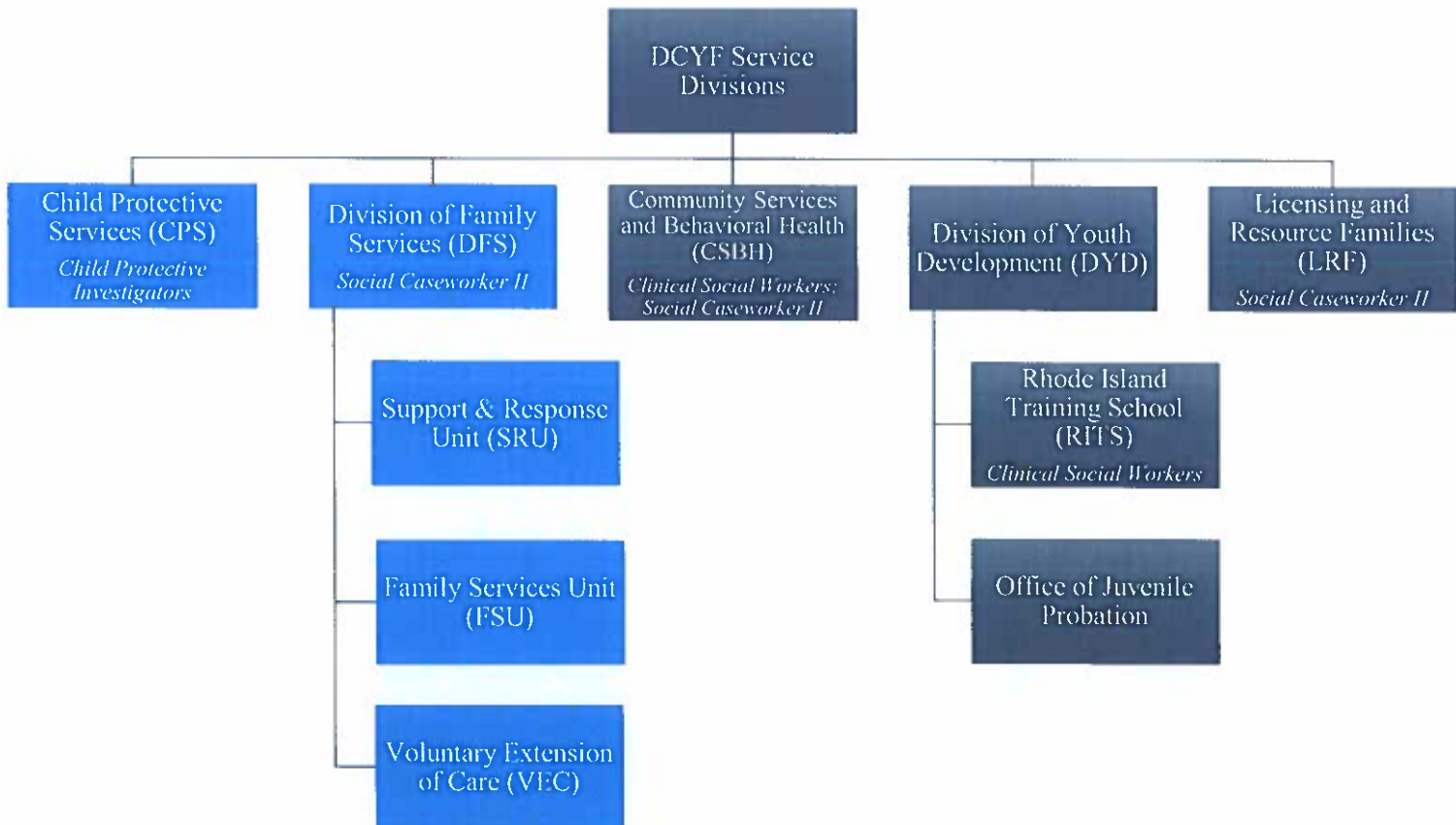
**RI Department of Children, Youth & Families
Post-Presentation Follow-Up Answers**

To: House Policy
From: The Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF)
Re: Responses to follow-up questions from Title IV-E Commission Meeting on 11/13/24
Date: 12/4/2024

Please note that these responses offer broad explanations regarding how DCYF is structured, the roles of various divisions, how federal programs work, etc. Of course, nuances and exceptions may exist within certain topics, so if there are specific concepts or scenarios in mind that are not contemplated by these responses, please do not hesitate to inquire further.

- Please provide a Child Welfare Division job definition chart. There may be some confusion amongst the Commission members on exactly what the differences are between a “Social Worker,” “Clinical Social Worker,” “Social Caseworker,” and “Child Protective Investigator.” The terms have all been used interchangeably; however, we know there are differences, and the terms are not exactly synonymous. Therefore, can the Department provide a definitional sheet with each job title within the Child Welfare Division, with a definition, skills required, education required, and any other major distinctions?**

Answer: There is no singular Child Welfare Division at DCYF. The divisions within DCYF are broken into two main categories: service (or “practice”) divisions and central management (or “support”) divisions. This question refers to jobs that are found within the DCYF Service Divisions, which are set forth in the chart below. (An organizational chart showing the Central Management Divisions is also attached in response to Question 3.)



While the work of CPS and DFS—in light blue for quick reference—is traditionally what individuals consider “child welfare,” they are still separate divisions at DCYF. Additionally, as the chart indicates, “Clinical Social Worker”—often considered part of “child welfare” work—is not a position found in either CPS or DFS. Therefore, to avoid confusion, DCYF will not refer to a “child welfare” division or divisions. Instead, DCYF will use the

umbrella term “Service Divisions” and specify a particular division, where appropriate, when answering these follow-up questions.

Next, it is important to clarify the “social caseworker” terminology. The official job title of social caseworkers at DCYF is “Social Caseworker II.” There are “Social Caseworker” positions in the State of Rhode Island, but they are housed exclusively at the Department of Human Services and will not be discussed in these responses.

The job descriptions for Child Protective Investigator (CPI), Social Caseworker II (SCWII), and Clinical Social Worker (CSW) positions at DCYF are attached to these responses. There is nothing provided for “Social Worker,” as this job title does not exist as an official position with DCYF. For quick reference, below is a side-by-side comparison of some of the requirements/duties for CPIs, SCWIIIs, and CSWs:

	CPI	SCWII	CSW
Education	Bachelor’s Degree in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work • Psychology • Sociology • Human Services, or • Criminal Justice 	Bachelor’s Degree in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work • Psychology • Sociology • Child Development, or • Related field 	Master’s Degree in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Work, or ↓
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 years in human services casework. • Experience working with families. • Experience providing services related to child welfare and safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years in family and children services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any combination of education/experience that shall be the substantial equivalent of a master’s degree.
Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen, investigate, and assess child safety in response to reports alleging maltreatment. • Investigate reports of maltreatment by obtaining information from phone calls, interviews, and other records. • Properly evaluate information obtained to determine whether a child is safe. • Engage—via phone, face-to-face, in writing, etc.—with children, families, medical personnel, schools, law enforcement, the Courts, other divisions at DCYF, and state agencies to gather and explain critical information related to child maltreatment investigations and/or the findings of an investigation. • When appropriate, to develop safety plans with a family and their support system (extended family, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide culturally sensitive social services to a diverse population of children and their families, which may include physical, behavioral, and/or emotional support. • Identify and provide services to meet the needs of the child/family, which may include in-home services, foster care placement, adoption, transportation, etc. • Form a psycho-social history and case plan to either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help child/family examine and solve his/her own problems, or ○ Determine appropriate plan to care for and treat the child/family. • Re-evaluate child’s safety, needs of the child/family, and services being provided to ensure effectiveness. • Use resources creatively and enlist cooperation of other agencies to meet unique needs and provide individual care. • Institute and revise case plans and goals as needed for children and their families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply social casework techniques, as a member of a clinical team with medical and para-medical professionals, to diagnose and treat persons in a clinical setting. • Meet the social, emotional, or environmental needs of persons through individual casework or group therapy. • Collaborate and/or consult with psychiatrists or other professional personnel on discharge and after-care planning. • Provide social work consultation to medical professionals such as physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, nutritionists, physical therapists, etc. who are collectively working to return person to a normal and effective living pattern.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift assignments could include nights and weekends. 		
Knowledge or Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with social casework techniques and community services. • Strong interview, engagement, and assessment skills. • Ability to apply those skills to gather information from children, families, and other sources to inform decisions regarding child safety. • Communication skills to explain safety decisions to families, supervisors, Family Court, and other stakeholders. • Ability to de-escalate situations. • Ability to manage high-risk situations, work independently, and manage unanticipated emergencies. • Knowledge of child development; mental and behavioral health disorders, including anxiety, depression, ADHD, and substance use; and issues such as domestic violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of social casework techniques. • Ability to apply them effectively. • Skill in identifying and analyzing social problems and treatment of those problems to help preserve family life, protect children, and develop substitute care (if necessary). • Knowledge of various factors that contribute to personal maladjustment/dependency, impair parental functions, and affect familial relationships (social, cultural, ethnic, and economic factors) • Ability to establish and maintain working relationships with internal/external groups and individuals. • Knowledge of community resources offering specialized services to children/families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough knowledge of clinical social casework techniques • Skill in applying them in collaboration with medical and para-medical professionals to diagnose and treat patients as part of a clinical team. • Knowledge of community resources available for patients undergoing treatment. • Knowledge of normal emotional reactions to illness and medical care (regression, anxiety, dependency, etc.). • Knowledge of which reactions impact a patient's acceptance and use of medical care, and an ability to identify those reactions in patients (feelings about authority, dealing with frustration, acceptance of limitations, adaptability to change, etc.).

Very generally, CPIs do investigations, and SCWIIIs handle the case once the investigation is completed. A CSW may get involved as *part* of a case that the SCWII is working on if a clinical diagnostic/treatment point of view is appropriate, but a CSW does not get assigned to every case at DCYF.

2. As of this month, how many people are needed within the Child Welfare Division? Please provide a total number and a breakdown of how many in each job level are needed.

Answer: DCYF has 714.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, and 656 of those FTEs are filled. In other words, there are 58.5 vacancies currently at DCYF.

As mentioned above, there is no Child Welfare Division. Therefore, the chart on the next page addresses vacancies across DCYF's five Service Divisions. The data highlights the three positions at issue (CPI, SCWII, and CSW), as well as some direct supervisors, and it provides examples of other positions that are vacant. The examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list of vacancies within those divisions.

This data is current as of November 15, 2024:



<p>CPI Total FTEs: 70 Vacancies: 9</p> <p>CPI Supervisor Total FTEs: 18 Vacancies: 2 <i>Update: vacancies filled; new hires started 12/1/24</i></p>	<p>SCWII Total FTEs: 187 Vacancies: 6</p> <p>Casework Supvsr. Total FTEs: 46 Vacancies: 1</p> <p><i>Other vacancies:</i> • <i>Child Support Tech.</i></p>	<p>CSW Total FTEs: 5 Vacancies: 3</p>	<p>CSW Total FTEs: 5 Vacancies: 1</p> <p><i>Other vacancies:</i> • <i>Cottage Manager</i> • <i>Teacher</i> • <i>Cook's Helper</i></p>	<p>SCWII Total FTEs: 31 Vacancies: 0</p> <p><i>Other vacancies:</i> • <i>Jr. Human Services Policy & Systems Specialist</i></p>
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There are 22 specific vacancies identified in this chart. Aside from those, there are 36.5 vacancies remaining for the entire department—across both the Service and Central Management Divisions. Examples of some of the vacancies that exist in the Service Divisions are listed above under “other vacancies”.¹

3. Please provide the Department’s most recent organizational chart.

Answer: Attached to these responses is a very high-level chart showing all DCYF divisions. The Service Division chart provided above identifies which divisions employ the positions that have been the subject of this Commission’s follow-up questions (CPI, SCWII, and CSW).² Below is a brief and general description of what each of the five Service Divisions does:

CPS: Investigates reports of child maltreatment. Where no maltreatment is found, but the investigation showed that a family could still use help in some way, this division will refer families to community-based services for things like treatment or behavioral support where there is no identified safety threat to children.

DFS: Is made up of the three units described below.

SRU: Inquiries to the DCYF “Warm Line” are handled by SCWII in this unit. Families working with these caseworkers are not considered “active” with DCYF in the traditional sense that there has been no confirmed child maltreatment. This unit connects families with services to get the support they need to prevent maltreatment from occurring, which may cause children to enter the system more “formally.”

FSU: SCWII in this unit handle cases after a CPS investigation determines that there is an impending danger to a child within a family, or if a SCWII in SRU determines that a family needs more ongoing support. Caseworkers work with families to develop and execute a plan that will create a safe and permanent environment for children and youth. The three “permanent” options for children are: staying/reunifying with their family, guardianship (either a relative who is not the child’s parent or other person who is not a blood relative at all), and adoption.

¹ Since it has been established that the term “Child Welfare Division” may cause confusion, DCYF only provided examples of “other vacancies” in the Service Divisions for the sake of time, especially because those jobs have not been the subject of this Commission’s follow-up questions. If the Commission would still like an exact count of vacancies in all five divisions, please advise.

² Those positions are not found in any of DCYF’s Central Management Divisions.

assistance for their foster care, adoption, or guardianship.⁶ All Title IV-E funds come in the form of reimbursements for eligible expenses incurred.

A. Title IV-E: Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)⁷

The FFPSA focuses on preventing children from entering foster care by providing services to children and families where the child is at risk of maltreatment or being removed from their home. Eligibility criteria for children and families include:

- **Children at Risk of Foster Care Placement:** The child must be at imminent risk of entering foster care but be able to remain safely in their home (biological, adoptive, or guardianship) if preventive services are provided.⁸ Youth already in foster care who are pregnant or parenting are also eligible.
- **Services Provided:** FFPSA provides funding for evidence-based services such as mental health programs, treatment for substance misuse, parenting skills, and other interventions that improve family functioning. These services may be provided to the child or the child's family.

B. Title IV-E: Foster Care

This program provides federal funding to states to assist with the care and placement of children who are removed from their homes and placed into foster care. Eligibility for Title IV-E Foster Care funding includes:

- **Removal from Home:** The child must be removed from the home due to abuse, neglect, or other safety issues.
- **Safety and Well-Being:** The child must be placed in a licensed foster care setting that meets state safety and well-being standards.
- **Income and Financial Need:** The child's biological family must be under the income and resource limits articulated in Rhode Island's 1996 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) state plan. *(As stated in the 11/13/24 meeting, a three-person household in Rhode Island must receive less than \$544/month in income and have less than \$10,000 in total assets for the child to be eligible for this funding.)*
- **Age:** Generally, foster care assistance is provided to children under the age of 18, with extensions for youth aging out (up to age 21) under certain circumstances.

C. Title IV-E: Adoption Assistance⁹

The Adoption Assistance program provides federal financial assistance to adoptive parents of children who were previously in foster care and are being adopted, with a focus on children with special needs. Eligibility requires that a child has "special needs," which are further defined below.

- **There are four ways a child can be eligible for assistance under this program:**
 - Eligibility for Foster Care: The child was eligible for Title IV-E Foster Care assistance (*income and resource limits from Rhode Island's 1996 AFDC state plan*), and the child has special needs;
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI): The child is eligible for SSI benefits, and the child has special needs;

⁶ For clarity, the information provided describes federal eligibility requirements. Rhode Island may have expanded eligibility requirements for some programs, allowing more families to receive certain assistance, but that assistance would not receive Title IV-E reimbursement—it would be funded exclusively by the state.

⁷ Additional information, including links to the text of the law and program instructions, can be found [here](#).

⁸ Per the Children's Bureau, which is an office of the Administration for Children and Families, imminent risk of entering foster care is, "without regard to whether the child would be eligible for foster care maintenance payments..." meaning that the later-referenced AFDC income and resource limits do not apply here. See sec. [475\(13\)](#) of the FFPSA.

⁹ More detail is in the Children's Bureau's Child Welfare Policy Manual section on Adoption Assistance, [here](#).

- **Minor Parent:** The child's parent is a minor, and the child has special needs; or
- **Prior Eligibility for Adoption Assistance:** If a child was adopted and received this assistance, but the adoption was later dissolved or the adoptive parents die, the child may continue to be eligible for adoption assistance, as long as there is a determination that the child has special needs.
- **Special Needs Determination:** The child must meet a special needs criterion, examples of which include:
 - Age (over age 9 in Rhode Island).
 - Mental or physical disability, including emotional or behavioral issues.
 - Children who are part of sibling groups that are placed together.
 - Children who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups. This reflects the challenges children may face when seeking adoption placements that align with their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

D. Title IV-E: Guardianship Assistance¹⁰

This program provides federal funding to support children placed with a relative or non-relative¹¹ who becomes the child's legal guardian. Eligibility criteria for guardianship assistance include:

- **Children in Foster Care:** The child must be placed in foster care for at least six months with the prospective guardian.
- **No Alternative Permanency:** Efforts to reunite the child with the biological parents or adoption must be unsuccessful or not feasible.
- **Best Interest:** The child must have a strong attachment to the prospective guardian, and the guardian must be willing and able to care for the child permanently.
- **Eligibility for Foster Care:** The child was eligible for Title IV-E Foster Care assistance (*income and resource limits from Rhode Island's 1996 AFDC state plan*) at the time they were placed with the prospective guardian.

6. What kind of data is the Department required to collect for the Children's Bureau for the Family Prevention Service Program? Please provide the first 30-day dataset (October 1, 2024 – November 1, 2024) for the Family Prevention Services Program.

Answer: Broadly speaking, Rhode Island will be submitting data on the following:

- The number of children/families who are eligible for the Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) program and are receiving services under their individualized FFPSA prevention plan.
- Qualitative data capturing whether the evidence-based programs/services are being implemented with fidelity.
- The number of children who have remained in their home at the 12- and 24-month marks after establishing their FFPSA prevention plan.

States are required to submit data to the Children's Bureau on a bi-annual basis that coincides with the federal fiscal year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30). DCYF will be reporting data for each of the six programs that were submitted and approved as part of this new federal initiative. Some of the data is the same across all programs, and some of it is program

¹⁰ See general program description, [here](#).

¹¹ This program refers to "relative guardians;" however, states have discretion for how they define a "relative" for purposes of receiving this assistance. In addition to extended family, "relatives" may also include friends. See [Policy Manual](#) Q&A #9.

specific.¹² For this year—the first year that the FFPSA is in effect—please see below for specific collection dates and reporting deadlines:¹³

Data Collection Period	Data Submission Due
October 1, 2024-March 31, 2025	May 15, 2025
April 1, 2025-September 30, 2025	November 14, 2025

As there is no requirement that states compile or report data monthly, there is no 30-day dataset available to provide here. Further, the FFPSA programs only began on October 1. Therefore, much of the data is not—and unfortunately cannot—be known at this time, which makes it difficult to try to create a 30-day dataset specifically to respond to this question. To illustrate this, please see below for an example using one program: Functional Family Therapy (FFT). (Emphasis added.)

Features

- 12-14 therapy sessions over three to five months.
- Primarily for youth aged 11-18 years, who have been referred for behavioral or emotional problems by juvenile probation, mental health professionals, a school, DCYF, or other child welfare partners.

Outcomes Expected to Improve

Data from the program provider is expected to show the following:

- Increased percentage of youth in school/working.
- Reduction in percentage of youth whose behavior intensifies.
- Increased competency in managing common child behavior problems and developmental issues.
- Decrease in youth behavioral problems.

Internal data from DCYF will be used to monitor the following:

- Percent of youth on juvenile probation with decreased recidivism.
- Percent of youth living at home at the 12- and 24-month marks after establishing their FFPSA prevention plan.
- Percent of youth whose families, at the 12- and 24-month marks after establishing their FFPSA prevention plan, have not been subsequently indicated for maltreatment.

This example illustrates the challenges associated with creating a 30-day dataset. The program takes up to five months to complete, and two of the data points DCYF will be using to measure program effectiveness cannot be obtained until seven and 19 months beyond that. However, DCYF will be working with the entities running these programs on a regular basis to monitor implementation and mid-stream or “partial” outcomes, to the extent measuring such outcomes is feasible. For example, with the FFT program, the provider will issue reports to DCYF highlighting implementation fidelity, outcomes, strengths, and areas of improvement on a quarterly basis.

In light of the above, if there are additional questions about any FFPSA data, DCYF would be happy to discuss how to best review it with the Commission going forward to ensure that the data is both available and useful.

¹² For details on each program, including the specific data that will be evaluated for each, see DCYF’s Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan, (electronic version found at the bottom of [this](#) page), “Table 3. Evidence Based Services and Programs Detailed”; PDF pp. 24-35; specifically, the rows entitled “Outcomes Expected to Improve” and “CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) and Fidelity Monitoring” for each program. [Functional Family Therapy, pp. 25 and 26; Parent Child Interaction Therapy, pp. 26 and 27; Homebuilders, pp. 28 and 29; Multisystemic Therapy, pp. 29 and 30; Motivational Interviewing, pp. 31 and 32; Familias Unidas, pp. 34 and 35.]

¹³ See *Title IV-E Prevention Program Data Submission Timelines*, [Technical Bulletin #2](#), page 3.

7. **What are the barriers that the Department is anticipating to encounter with this Title IV-E workforce pipeline program and how does the Department plan to address them? For example, the two-year work experience requirement prevents graduates coming from the proposed Title-IV-E program from graduating and going directly to work for DCYF. What would it take to establish a different standard as part as a one-year experience requirement, or a direct school to employment pipeline, instead of the two-year requirement?**

Answer: As mentioned in the question, the element requiring two years of work experience to become a SCWII is an administrative barrier to having a direct school-to-employment pipeline for that position. If students do a relevant internship during school, that will count toward this work requirement, but it is unlikely that students would obtain two full years of relevant experience through internships, alone. Changing that requirement would go through the Department of Administration. It would also be appropriate to discuss such a change with Union leadership.

While the CSW position prefers an advanced education, it does not have a similar condition that individuals have a certain amount of work experience after graduation to apply.

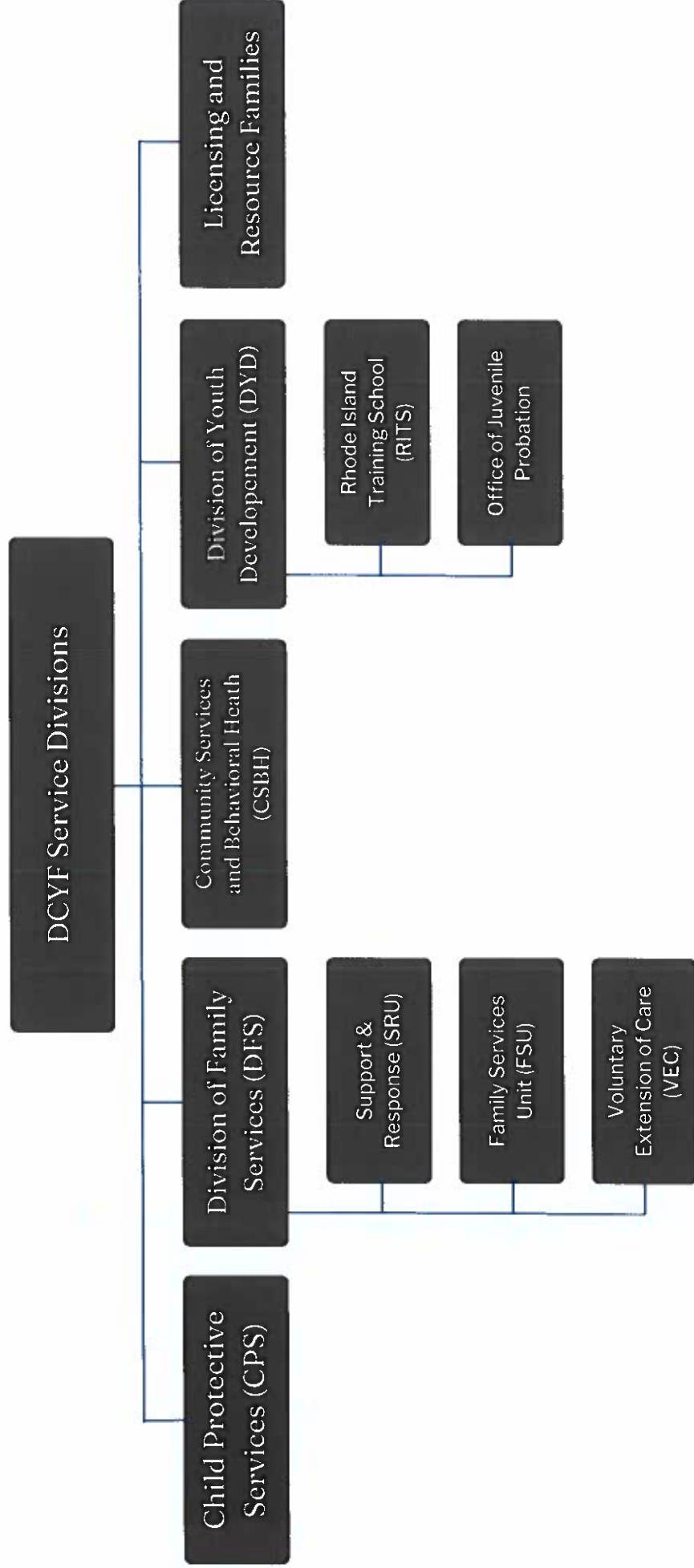
8. **What are the steps the Department plans to take to reapply in FY 2025 for FY 2027 through FY 2032? What is the timeline for an updated five-year plan?**

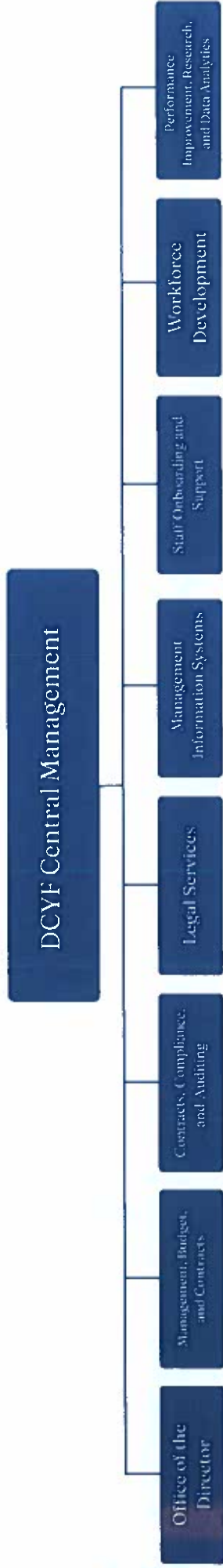
Answer: For clarity, Title IV-E funding is not a grant; it comes in the form of reimbursements for costs actually incurred. Therefore, the process for obtaining this funding is more akin to “ongoing submissions” made to the federal Medicaid office. There is no periodic reapplication process for this funding as it relates to the foster care, adoption, or guardianship programs.

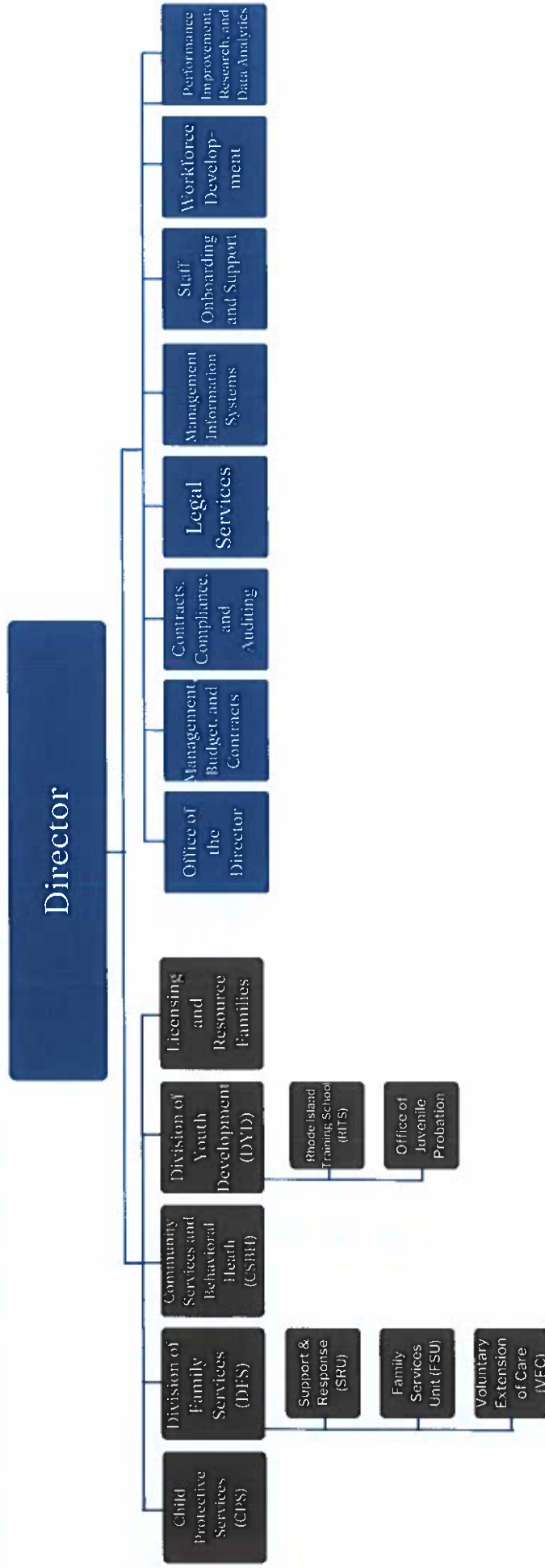
As for the FFPSA—the new Title IV-E funding program for prevention services—DCYF will await notice from the federal government that the program will be renewed and adhere to their instructions concerning what the next cycle’s application process must entail.

For this first period of FFPSA funding, DCYF developed a five-year prevention services plan (hyperlinked in footnote 12) that had to be approved by the Administration for Children and Families. DCYF also established a Family First Advisory Team comprised of key community partners, organizations, and state agencies to provide consultation and advice on what the vision for preventive services should look like in Rhode Island. Unless the renewal instructions vary significantly, DCYF anticipates following a similar process.

RI Department of Children Youth & Families Organization Chart







RI Department of Children Youth & Families
Clinical Social Worker Job Description

CLASS TITLE: CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

Class Code: 02822200

Pay Grade: 27A

EO: B

CLASS DEFINITION:

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: To apply social casework techniques, in collaboration with medical and para-medical professions, in the diagnosis and treatment of patients or persons in a clinical setting in a hospital, or in a state-wide mental health or state-wide public health program with the objective to remove or alleviate social, emotional, or environmental problems of patients and promote their return to a normal and effective pattern of living; and to do related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Works under the general supervision of a casework superior, or psychiatrist, or program chief from whom general and specific work assignments and instructions are received; work is reviewed for the application of accepted social casework techniques and results obtained.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: As assigned, may supervises social caseworkers, undergraduate/ graduate student and clinical assistants.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED:

To apply social casework techniques, in collaboration with medical and para-medical professions, in the diagnosis and treatment of patients or persons in a clinical setting in a hospital, or a state-wide mental health or state-wide public health program, or in other clinical settings; to apply such techniques with the objective to remove or alleviate, through individual casework or group therapy, those social, emotional or environmental problems so as to promote the recovery of such patients or persons and facilitate their return to a normal and effective pattern of living.

As a member of a clinical team, to participate in diagnostic and technical conferences with casework superiors, a psychiatrist, physician or program chief, or other professional personnel, for cooperative planning and treatment to meet the needs of patients or persons which involve or include social, emotional, or environmental as well as the medical aspects of medical care; to provide casework treatment directed towards helping the patient or person to accept the diagnosis of his illness or problem and participate in and respond to medical treatment measures.

As required, to consult with a psychiatrist or psychologist when serving as a member of a clinical team on: the assignment of new patients and their later diagnosis and treatment, and on pre-discharge and after-care planning when released from a hospital or clinic.

To provide follow-up services in assisting patients or persons, or their relatives, with personal or environmental difficulties which are centered around the illness, or which interfere with obtaining maximum benefits from medical, surgical, or psychiatric care.

To establish effective working relationships with staff members and supervisors and with representatives of pertinent community agencies; to have available knowledge of community resources for use in the treatment and follow-up services for patients or their relatives.

To provide social work consultation to staff members, including physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and as required to nurses, nutritionists, physical therapists and other personnel, working towards the objective of the recovery and return of patients or persons to a normal and effective pattern of living.

To prepare anamneses of cases with findings and evaluation of the relationship and interaction between the patient's social situation and his psychiatric-medical problem and to formulate initial and ongoing psycho-social diagnosis of such patient.

To do related work as required.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT:

KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES: A thorough knowledge of clinical social casework techniques and skill in their application in collaboration with medical and para-medical professions, in the diagnosis and treatment of patients or persons to remove or alleviate social, emotional, attitude or environmental problems in order to promote their return to a normal and effective pattern of living; a working knowledge of the normal emotional reactions to illness and medical care, such as regression, anxiety, dependency, etc.; a working knowledge of those reactions which effect the patient's acceptance and use of medical care as related to his own personality such as his own reactions to authority, his way of meeting frustration, acceptance of limitations, and adaptability to change; a working knowledge of community resources available for the use of patients or persons under treatment; the ability to apply such knowledge effectively as a member of a clinical team; and related capacities and abilities.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

EDUCATION: Such as may have been gained through: possession of a Master's Degree in Social Work from an accredited institution of higher education.

Or, any combination of education and experience that shall be substantially equivalent to the above education.

Class Revised: July 30, 1989

Editorial Review: 3/15/03

RI Department of Children Youth & Families
Social Worker II Job Description

CLASS TITLE: SOCIAL CASEWORKER II

Class Code: 02822400
Pay Grade: 24A
EO Code: B

CLASS DEFINITION:

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: To perform casework duties and responsibilities of a specialized nature; and/or to be assigned to a special area of service in child and family services and family preservation, family support and/or family reintegration; such assignments can be considered unique for various reasons such as geographical location, irregular hours of work, and the nature of the work which could include: to appear and present material at Court hearings and trials; to exercise basic computer skills; to maintain and improve skill level through ongoing relevant training and education; and to do related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Works under the general supervision of an appropriate supervisor with some latitude for the exercise of initiative and independent action; work is reviewed and evaluated for conformance with the application of effective social work principles and practices, Departmental policy and state and federal law and regulations.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: Restricted to giving instruction and direction to case aide technician, clerical and support staff. May be required to assume supervisory responsibility for a limited period of time such as: vacation, sick leave, or other short term.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED:

To perform casework duties and responsibilities of a specialized nature; and/or to be assigned to a special area of service in child and family services and family preservation, family support and/or family reintegration; such assignments can be considered unique for various reasons such as geographical location, or irregular hours of work, and the nature of the work which could include: to appear and present material at Court hearings and trials; to exercise basic computer skills; to maintain and improve skill level through ongoing relevant training and education.

To provide social services to a culturally diverse population of children and their families; to be responsible for family and children services, requiring a high degree of social work skill in the identification and analysis of social problems and treatment of individuals and families towards the goals of self-help, rehabilitation and preserving family life, the protection of children and the development of substitute care including permanency of children.

To be responsible for providing culturally sensitive specialized child welfare and family preservation services which may include intensive services to children and families in their own home, foster care placement, to the physically, behaviorally, and/or emotionally challenged, and protective services, or other related services such as adoption and transportation of clients.

To participate in special projects which are developed by the agency for the purpose of studying and evaluating special problem areas and/or agency practice and policy in order to improve agency service.

To secure relevant information accurately and completely through the social study process in order to form a psycho-social history and case plan so that the client is helped to become engaged in an examination and solution of his/her problems, or to determine the appropriate and culturally sensitive plan for care and treatment for the child and the family.

To make creative use of available resources and enlist the cooperation and understanding of other social agencies for the meeting of unusual, unique and/or special needs or individual care.

To exercise a wide degree of independent judgment, decision, and action on an ongoing, regular basis.

To re-evaluate the level of safety, the needs of and services being provided to clients in order to ensure their effectiveness and cultural sensitivity.

To institute and revise assistance or services plans promptly as needed, or to change treatment plan(s) and goals for children and their families.

To maintain case records and documentation according to Department standards and policies.
To do related work as required.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT

KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES: A thorough knowledge of social casework principles, practices, and techniques and the ability to apply these effectively; a thorough knowledge of individual physical emotional and behavior patterns as well as the social, cultural, ethnic, and economic factors that contribute to personal maladjustment and dependency and the forces that effect interpersonal and interfamilial relationships and impair parental functions; a thorough knowledge of the wide variety of the diverse population (i.e.: cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and alternative lifestyles) serviced by state agencies and departments and the ability to apply this knowledge effectively; a working knowledge of the provisions of federal and state laws relating to the performance of caseworker duties and responsibilities of an extraordinary nature; and/or to be assigned to children and family preservation services; knowledge of resources in the community offering specialized services to children and their families, particularly the voluntary services; the ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with individuals and groups within and outside the agency; basic computer skills including keyboarding, use of a mouse device, and word processing; and related capacities and abilities.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Education: Such as may have been gained through: possession of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in sociology, or psychology, social work, child development, or a related field; and

Experience: Such as may have been gained through: two years experience in the field of family and children services. Special requirement: maintain a valid drivers license.

Class Revised: December 29, 2002

Editorial Review: 3-15-2003

RI Department of Children Youth & Families Child Protective Investigator Job Description

CLASS TITLE:

CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATOR

Class Code: 02825100

Pay Grade: 26A

EO Code: B

CLASS DEFINITION:

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES: To receive, screen, evaluate, investigate and assess child safety in response to reports alleging child abuse and/or neglect; take the necessary steps as required to ensure child safety and well-being and to complete related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED: Works under the general supervision of a superior with some latitude for the exercise of initiative and independent judgement in performance of investigations; work is reviewed and monitored in process, through telephonic device or other similar means, and upon completion through submitted reports and conferences for results obtained in conformance to accepted professional investigative standards, principles, practices and techniques with an emphasis on child protective services, as well as federal and state laws and departmental policies, procedures and goals.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED: As required, may supervise the work of clerical and data entry staff assigned to assist.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED:

To receive, screen, evaluate, investigate and assess child safety in response to reports alleging child abuse and/or neglect; take the necessary steps as required to ensure child safety and well-being and to complete related work as required.

To receive calls and conduct phone interviews and review records to obtain critical information and apply the criteria for a CPS investigation in order to determine the disposition of CPS reports to the Child Abuse Hotline.

To clearly document all referrals/complaints in accordance with DCYF policies and procedures related to the processing of CPS reports.

To effectively engage children/families, community partners and others through face-to-face contact in the field, written correspondence, and phone contact in order to gather information in accordance with DCYF's Vision and Mission, Policies, Practice Model and procedures related to Child Protective Investigations.

To effectively interview families, providers, and collateral participants to gather critical information.

To apply the information to make accurate determinations relative to child safety and well-being.

When appropriate, to develop viable safety plans by effectively engaging families and their supports to mitigate identified safety threats.

To make referrals to community-based prevention services as needed.

To identify behavioral changes needed to achieve child safety and well-being and make referrals to community services as appropriate.

In addition to engaging with children and families, this position requires collaboration with medical personnel, schools, community service providers, law enforcement, RI Courts, other divisions of DCYF and other state agencies.

To provide and prepare documents for submission to RI Family Court and law enforcement, to provide testimony before the Court to support safety decisions and findings.

To perform related work as required.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT:

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CAPACITIES: Strong engagement, interview and assessment skills and the ability to apply these skills effectively to gather critical information from children/families and other sources. The ability to de-escalate situations; strong communication skills with the ability to engage children/families in their

homes and in the community to gather accurate information to inform child safety decisions and to clearly articulate these safety decisions to families, supervisors, RI Family Court and other stakeholders; strong writing skills to document investigative findings, assessments and court documents as required. Ability to effectively work as a member of a team; the ability to be flexible and manage unanticipated emergencies. Knowledge of child development, behavioral health and disorders including but not limited to substance use disorders and domestic violence; a familiarity of the principles, practices, and techniques of social work including Child Welfare and Child Protection. Familiarity with community services and systems; the ability to maintain the confidentiality of all investigations; Experience and skills related to computer, internet, and data entry to search data bases and enter case notes; the ability to accept and seek direction, identify critical information and accurately share information with supervisors; experience, knowledge and sensitivity related to diverse populations, cultural competency and race equity; related capacities and abilities. The position requires the ability to effectively manage high risk situations and work independently; shift assignments could include nights and weekends.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Education: Possession of a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Human Services, Criminal Justice and;

Experience: 2-3 years of full-time employment in a private or public agency in the field of human services casework with experience assessing and working with families and providing direct services in the community related to child welfare, child safety and child well-being.

Condition of Employment: Must possess and maintain a valid Motor Vehicle Operator's license. Subject to background clearances.

Class Created: December 11, 1983

Editorial Review: 3/15/03

Class Revised: January 17, 2023

Appendix B - Meeting Agenda and Presentation
December 11, 2024

**SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE
FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS
TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL
WORK EDUCATION AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE**

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, December 11, 2024

TIME: 3:30 PM

PLACE: RI State House, Room 101

AGENDA:

- I. Call Meeting to Order and Attendance
- II. Title IV- E Program Presentation
 - Anthony Thornton and Erica Balderrama, University of Texas El Paso
- III. Commissioner's Questions and Comments
- IV. Next Meeting Date
- V. Adjournment

No Public Testimony Will Be Accepted At This Meeting

COMMISSION INFORMATION

For information on commissions, [CLICK HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Tara Lombardi at tlombardi@rilegislature.gov or 401-222-6649.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The General Assembly strives to make the legislative process accessible to all. Anyone needing an accommodation to attend or testify at a commission meeting, contact Stacy Custer at scuster@rilegislature.gov or 401-222-7904 at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting.

TELEVISION AND LIVESTREAMING

The meeting may be televised by Capitol Television on Cox Communications, channels 15 and 61 for high definition; i3 Broadband (formerly Full Channel) on 15; and Verizon, on channel 34. Livestreaming is available at <https://www.rilegislature.gov/CapTV/Pages/default.aspx>.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

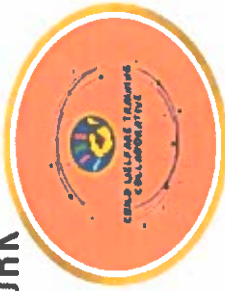


Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Collaborative

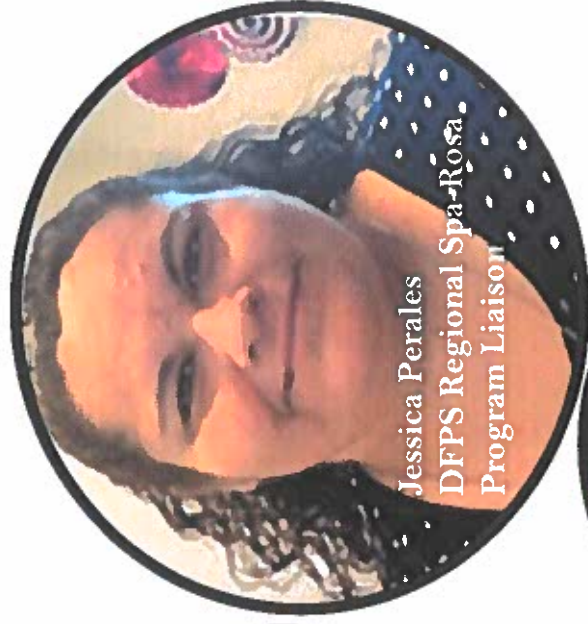
Presented by: Anthony Thornton, LCSW
and Erica Balderrama, LMSW



UTEP
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK



Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services



Jessica Perales
DFPS Regional Spa-Rosa
Program Liaison



Latasha Green, LMSW
Project Analyst



Dr. Hyejin Jung
Associate Professor
MSW Program Coordinator
IV-E Principal Investigator



Erica Balderrama, LMSW
BSW Program Coordinator
Clinical Instructor
IV-E Co-Principal Investigator



Anthony Thornton, LCSW-AZ
Project Coordinator

Program Structure

Program Design:

- How is the Title IV-E Child Welfare Program at UTEP structured?
- What are the key components of the training curriculum, and how do they align with federal requirements?



Program Overview

University of Texas at El Paso
(UTEP) Department of Social Work.
Child Welfare Training Collaborative (CWTC)

CWTC is a partnership built between UTEP
the Texas Department of Family and
Protective Services (DFPS).

CPS employees
Master of Social Work (MSW) degree
Foster parent training



Program Overview

Student recruitment

3 CPS staff trainings

2 foster parent trainings



Program Structure

Student Participation:

- What are the eligibility requirements for students to participate in the program?
- How does the program recruit and retain students, particularly those committed to public child welfare careers?



Program Impact

Support for Students and Graduates:

- What types of support (e.g., mentorship, stipends) are provided to students during their education?
- How are graduates supported as they transition into the workforce?



Program Impact

Workforce Development:

- How has the program impacted workforce development in child welfare?
- Are there measurable improvements in recruitment, retention, and job performance of graduates?



Funding and Resources

Federal Funding Utilization:

- How does the program maximize Title IV-E funding?



Scalability and Replication

Applicability to Rhode Island:

- What lessons from your experience could be most relevant to a smaller state?



Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Advice for Starting the Program:

- If you were starting the program from scratch, what would you do differently?
- What best practices would you recommend Rhode Island



Lessons Learned and Best Practices

Potential Barriers:

- What resistance or challenges did you encounter and how did you address them?



Thank you
Gracias

Questions?



Appendix B - Meeting Agenda
February 3, 2025

**SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE
FEASIBILITY OF UTILIZING FEDERAL TITLE IV DOLLARS
TO SUPPORT AND ENHANCE ENROLLMENT IN SOCIAL
WORK EDUCATION AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE**

NOTICE OF MEETING

DATE: Monday, February 3, 2025

TIME: 2:30 PM

PLACE: RI State House, Room 101

AGENDA:

- I. Call Meeting to Order and Attendance
- II. Discuss Suggested Findings
- III. Adjournment

No Public Testimony Will Be Accepted At This Meeting

COMMISSION INFORMATION

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Appendix C - Written Testimony and Material

These documents have been posted in the Special Legislative Commission to Study the Feasibility of Utilizing Federal Title IV Dollars to Support and Enhance Enrollment in Social Work Education at Rhode Island College section of the Commission/Task Forces tab of the State of Rhode Island General Assembly website:

<https://www.rilegislature.gov>

1. October 23, 2024 - Presentation Documents

- a. Title IV-E Commission Question Responses

2. November 13, 2024 – Presentation Documents

- a. RI Department of Children, Youth & Families PowerPoint
- b. RI Department of Children Youth & Families Post-Presentation Answers
- c. RI Department of Children Youth & Families Organization Chart
- d. RI Department of Children Youth & Families Clinical Social Worker Job Description
- e. RI Department of Children Youth & Families Social Worker II Job Description
- f. RI Department of Children Youth & Families Child Protective Investigator Job Description

3. December 11, 2024 – Presentation Documents

- a. University of Texas El Paso PowerPoint