



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #220

Child and Family Service Review Program Enhancement Plan (DCF -- Children and Families)

[LFB 2009-11 Budget Summary: Page 125, #2 and Page 148, #16]

CURRENT LAW

In August, 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) conducted a comprehensive review of Wisconsin's child welfare program. DHHS conducted this federal child and family services review (CFSR) in all 50 states over a three-year period. All 50 states failed some portion of the review. The CFSR is an examination of a state's conformance with federal requirements under Titles IV-B (general child welfare) and IV-E (foster care/out-of-home placements) of the federal Social Security Act. The review examined 14 aspects of the state program, including seven outcome measures relating to safety, permanency, and well-being of children, and seven systemic factors relating to the overall capacity of the state program to serve children and families.

The CFSR consisted of: (a) an on-site review of 50 cases in three counties, which were intended to represent performance across the state; (b) focus groups with key stakeholders; (c) analysis of program outcome data; and (d) a state self-assessment. The on-site portion of the review included an examination of individual cases and discussions with stakeholders in Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Outagamie Counties and was conducted by a team of federal and state reviewers at each of the three locations. The individual case reviews involved analyzing case files and interviewing family, social workers, service providers, out-of-home care providers, and legal advocates.

Overall, DHHS determined that Wisconsin was not in substantial conformance with six of the seven outcome factors and with four of the seven systemic factors.

DHHS required Wisconsin to develop a program enhancement plan (PEP) to address each item of nonconformance. The PEP establishes measurable goals for improving child

welfare program outcomes and systemic aspects of program capacity to deliver services statewide. The state must implement the action steps in the PEP over a two-year period and show progress toward the improvement goals during the period. Wisconsin's plan was approved in November, 2004.

DHHS will conduct another CFSR in 2010, to assess the extent of the system improvements, as agreed upon in the PEP. If, during that CFSR, the state is found to be in nonconformance, DHHS can assess financial penalties against the funds received by the state under Titles IV-B and IV-E.

If a penalty is assessed, it is assessed against a pool of federal funds that includes a state's Title IV-B award and 10% of a state's Title IV-E claims for administrative costs in the years subject to penalties. For each item for which a state is found to be in nonconformance, a 1% penalty could be assessed against the pool of federal funds and continue until the state comes into conformance. The penalty increases to 2% and then 3% per item if nonconformance continues following subsequent federal reviews.

GOVERNOR

Reduce funding by \$231,000 (\$686,400 GPR, -\$537,000 FED, and -\$380,400 PR) in 2009-10 and \$226,900 (\$690,500 GPR, -\$537,000 FED, and -\$380,400 PR) in 2010-11 for the Department's child welfare program enhancement plan. The federal funds are available under Title IV-E, and the PR funds were from federal targeted case management (TCM) funds, which are medical assistance funds the state claims for certain case management services counties provide.

In addition, reduce funding by \$11,200 GPR annually in the child welfare program enhancement plan; aids appropriation to reflect an across-the-board 1% reduction in most non-federal appropriations.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Program Enhancement Plan

1. The PEP has three components: (a) quality assurance reviews of local child welfare agencies, including continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities; (b) training for county staff on statewide policies and standards; and (c) the Wisconsin foster care and adoption resource center, which supports foster care and adoption activities.

2. The following table summarizes by source the funding that DCF budgeted for PEP activities in 2008-09. Funding in 2008-09 includes base funding of \$5,458,300 (\$1,117,200 GPR, \$3,960,700 FED, and \$380,400 PR) plus additional one-time funds of \$481,000. It should be noted

that the base amount for federal funds is overstated because they include matching funds for the one-time funds that are not part of the base.

TABLE 1

**Funding for the Program Enhancement Plan
2008-09 Budget and Base Funding Level**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Fund Source</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>GPR</u>	<u>TCM</u>	<u>IV-E</u>	<u>IV-B</u>	<u>One-Time</u>	
CQI and Quality Assurance Reviews	\$80,600	\$380,400	\$133,400	\$100,000	\$319,500	\$1,013,900
Training	688,500	0	3,555,800	0	161,500	4,405,800
Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center	<u>348,100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>171,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>519,600</u>
2008-09 Total	\$1,117,200	\$380,400	\$3,860,700	\$100,000	\$481,000	\$5,939,300
Base Funding Level	\$1,117,200	\$380,400	\$3,860,700	\$100,000	\$0	\$5,458,300

Quality Assurance Reviews and CQI Activities

3. One of the systemic factors in the CFSR examined whether the state is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement. The CFSR found that the state did not meet substantial conformance with this factor. Therefore, Wisconsin's PEP includes a strategy to implement a statewide quality assurance program to: (a) assure that the expectations of families and the actions of child welfare professionals are guided by clear and comprehensive policies and standards of practice; (b) improve the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate the safety, permanency, and well-being of children; and (c) assure the quality and effectiveness of services for children and families by regularly reviewing the state's programs and practices.

4. To implement a statewide quality assurance program, DCF contracts with The Management Group (TMG) for eight CQI specialists and, upon request from DCF, consultation and technical assistance. TMG also provides consultation on the quality assurance process and coordinates post-review technical assistance and facilitation to counties to develop and implement improvement plans.

5. Approximately 15 counties undergo a quality service review (QSR) each year to meet the federal requirements of a quality assurance system. The local agency reviews are performed by DCF employees, TMG CQI specialists, and a pool of certified QSR case reviewers. The TMG CQI specialist serves as a case reviewer or as a site leader for local agency reviews.

Child Welfare Staff Training

6. Another CFSR finding was that the training partnership did not ensure that newly-hired caseworkers in all child welfare agencies receive the initial training necessary to provide services to support state program goals and federal policy requirements. In addition, the review found that many newly-hired caseworkers were assigned caseloads before completing a training program, and that there were no statewide requirements for staff to participate in ongoing training.

7. The PEP includes a strategy to expand the frequency, accessibility, and application value of child welfare training in Wisconsin, with the goals of: (a) strengthening and diversifying the child welfare workforce and increasing the state's capacity to serve families and keep children safe; and (b) improving the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

8. State law requires all staff members and supervisors whose responsibilities include investigation or treatment of child abuse and neglect to successfully complete training in child abuse and neglect protective services and in unborn child protective services approved by DCF. Training for county child welfare staff is primarily developed and provided through regional training partnerships, which includes DCF, local child welfare agencies, and University of Wisconsin (UW) campuses at Green Bay, River Falls, Madison, and Milwaukee. Training is provided to professional and paraprofessional staff through the state at regional and local agency levels. Training includes required training for new workers, ongoing training for workers, training for supervisors, and customized training to meet the needs of local agencies.

9. In addition, DCF contracts with UW campuses at Green Bay, Oshkosh, Milwaukee, and Madison to support students pursuing either a bachelor's degree or master's degree in social work. Under this stipend program, the instruction costs are matched under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, and the Title IV-E funds, in turn, are used to waive tuition, provide books, and provide stipends for travel and living expenses to students. Students are required to commit to working in public child welfare for the same period of time that the student received the stipend. Stipend amounts are recouped if students do not complete the employment requirement.

10. Finally, DCF contracts with UW Madison to provide central support to the training system and the regional partnerships. The contract provides funding for information technology and for three staff: (a) a state training coordinator; (b) a curriculum coordinator; and (c) a state trainer.

Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

11. The CFSR found that local agencies did not adequately assess or address the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. The CFSR also found that, while Wisconsin has a strong training curriculum for foster parents available to counties, there was no initial or ongoing state-mandated training for foster parents. As a result, there were some counties in which foster parents received minimal training prior to having a child placed in their homes.

12. In response to both of these findings, the PEP included developing a foster and

adoptive parent resource center that would increase support for foster parents by improving their access to information, training, and resources.

13. DCF contracts with the foster care and adoption resource center (FCARC) to provide information and resources for: (a) existing or prospective foster and adoptive families; (b) public, tribal, and private agency foster care, child welfare, and adoption staff; and (c) youth currently or previously involved with the foster care system.

Funding Alternatives

14. AB 75 would provide \$686,400 GPR and \$690,500 GPR to partially replace the loss of federal Title IV-E funding and other one-time funding. The following tables show funding in 2009-10 and 2010-11 under AB 75.

TABLE 2

**Funding for the Program Enhancement Plan
2009-10 Under AB 75**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Fund Source</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>GPR</u>	<u>TCM</u>	<u>IV-E</u>	<u>IV-B</u>	
CQI and Quality Assurance Reviews	\$80,600	\$0	\$21,400	\$0	\$102,000
Training	1,348,900	0	3,062,600	0	4,411,500
Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center	<u>374,100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>145,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>519,600</u>
Total	\$1,803,600	\$0	\$3,229,500	\$0	\$5,033,100
Difference from Base Level Funding	\$686,400	-\$380,400	-\$631,200	-\$100,000	-\$425,200

TABLE 3

**Funding for the Program Enhancement Plan
2010-11 Under AB 75**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Fund Source</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>GPR</u>	<u>TCM</u>	<u>IV-E</u>	<u>IV-B</u>	
CQI and Quality Assurance Reviews	\$80,600	\$0	\$21,400	\$0	\$102,000
Training	1,353,000	0	3,064,500	0	4,417,500
Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center	<u>374,100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>145,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>519,600</u>
Total	\$1,807,700	\$0	\$3,231,400	\$0	\$5,039,100
Difference from Base Level Funding	\$690,500	-\$380,400	-\$629,300	-\$100,000	-\$419,200

15. Because the continuous quality improvement program was funded in 2008-09 with mostly one-time funding, the federal matching funds would also have to be reduced to show that these one-time funds are no longer available for federal matching funds. The reduction to federal matching funds for this aspect of the PEP was underestimated, so the bill should be modified to reduce funds by \$194,200 FED in 2009-10 and \$192,300 FED in 2010-11 to reflect the loss of additional federal matching funds. Funding levels under AB 75 would substantially reduce CQI program activities (Alternative 1).

16. In addition, AB 75 would reduce the PEP by \$11,200 GPR annually. Should the Committee adopt this provision, it should be modified to reduce federal matching funds. The Committee could reduce funding for the PEP by an additional \$3,000 FED annually to reflect the loss of federal matching funds (Alternative 2).

17. The Committee could approve the Governor's recommendations as modified. As a result, DCF would either have to support priority activities by reallocating funding within the child welfare program, to the extent possible, reduce the scope of these activities, or discontinue these activities, which could affect the state's ability to meet the requirements in the PEP.

18. However, the PEP is a contractual agreement between the state and DHHS, and the components of this item are to support activities included in the PEP. DCF indicates that if funding for the CQI program is substantially reduced, DHHS would likely order DCF to rebuild the CQI program. In addition, the QSR case review data described above is needed to show performance on CFSR standards. The level of funding under AB 75 for these activities would result in a declining ability to provide data to DHHS that they require. As noted above, the next CFSR will take place in 2010. If, during that CFSR, the state is found to be in nonconformance, DHHS can assess financial penalties against the funds received by the state under Titles IV-B and IV-E. The Committee could delete the provision related to the 1% reduction (Alternative 5).

19. To replace lost funding and restore funding levels to the 2008-09 funding level, an additional \$1,402,900 GPR annually would be needed. AB 75 would provide \$686,400 GPR in 2009-10 and \$690,500 GPR in 2010-11. Compared to the bill, the Committee could provide an additional \$716,500 GPR in 2009-10 and \$712,400 GPR in 2010-11 and reduce funding by \$14,400 FED annually (Alternative 3). Funding level totals would be the same as in Table 1. This would ensure adequate levels of funding to maintain each component of the PEP, including the CQI program. However, given the economic situation, additional funding may not be available.

20. DCF indicates that it could reallocate the amount of GPR funding provided under AB 75 such that more funding is provided for the CQI program. The following tables show funding for the PEP in 2009-10 and 2010-11 under DCF's alternative.

TABLE 4

**Funding for the Program Enhancement Plan
2009-10 Under DCF Reallocation**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Fund Source</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>GPR</u>	<u>TCM</u>	<u>IV-E</u>	<u>IV-B</u>	
CQI and Quality Assurance Reviews	\$480,600	\$0	\$127,800	\$0	\$608,400
Training	946,900	0	2,896,700	0	3,843,600
Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center	<u>374,100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>145,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>519,600</u>
Total	\$1,801,600	\$0	\$3,170,000	\$0	\$4,971,600
Difference from AB 75	-\$2,000	\$0	-\$59,500	\$0	-\$61,500

TABLE 5

**Funding for the Program Enhancement Plan
2010-11 Under DCF Reallocation**

<u>Component</u>	<u>Fund Source</u>				<u>Total</u>
	<u>GPR</u>	<u>TCM</u>	<u>IV-E</u>	<u>IV-B</u>	
CQI and Quality Assurance Reviews	\$480,600	\$0	\$127,800	\$0	\$608,400
Training	953,000	0	2,899,500	0	3,852,500
Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center	<u>374,100</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>145,500</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>519,600</u>
Total	\$1,807,700	\$0	\$3,172,800	\$0	\$4,980,500
Difference from AB 75	\$0	\$0	-\$58,600	\$0	-\$58,600

21. The Committee could reduce funding by \$2,000 GPR and \$59,500 FED in 2009-10 and \$58,600 FED in 2010-11 to reflect DCF's reallocation of most of the GPR funding provided under AB 75 (Alternative 4).

ALTERNATIVES

1. Modify the Governor's recommended funding level for the PEP to reduce additional federal matching funds of \$194,200 FED in 2009-10 and \$192,300 FED in 2010-11.

ALT 1	Change to Bill
	Funding
FED	- \$386,500

2. Modify the Governor's recommendation to reduce the program enhancement plan by an across-the-board 1% reduction to reduce additional federal matching funds of \$3,000 FED annually.

ALT 2	Change to Bill Funding
FED	- \$6,000

3. Modify the Governor's recommendation to provide \$716,500 GPR in 2009-10 and \$712,400 GPR in 2010-11 and reduce funding by \$14,400 FED annually to restore funding for the PEP at the 2008-09 funding levels.

ALT 3	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	\$1,428,900
FED	<u>- 28,800</u>
Total	\$1,400,100

4. Modify the Governor's recommendation to reduce funding by \$2,000 GPR and \$59,500 FED in 2009-10 and by \$58,600 FED in 2009-10 to reallocate most of the GPR funding provided under AB 75 to ensure funding for CQI program activities.

ALT 4	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	- \$2,000
FED	<u>- 118,100</u>
Total	\$120,100

5. Delete the 1% reduction provision.

ALT 5	Change to Bill Funding
GPR	\$22,400

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