

# State of New Mexico

## CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Children, Youth & Families requests \$258 million budget for fiscal year 2023**

SANTA FE – The Children, Youth & Families Department this week submitted the department’s 2023 state fiscal year general fund budget request of \$258 million, a \$44.6 million increase over SFY2022. When factoring in all funding sources, including federal dollars, the Department’s budget is more than \$368 million.

The budget request reflects CYFD’s needs to align its funding with the department’s mission and strategic plan to help our children be safe and to thrive in the community and with a family whenever possible.

The department’s budget request focuses on expanding services and programs that are trauma-responsive and increase prevention; on continuing efforts that favor placement with relatives when appropriate; on implementing the next phase of extended foster care through the Fostering Connections program; on improving financial supports for resource families; and on reducing vacancies across the agency.

The extended supports now available to young adults who age out of the foster care or juvenile justice systems include guaranteed housing, connection to community-based behavioral health supports, job assistance, food access, and money for college.

As of August 2021, more than 160 young adults have enrolled in extended foster care through age 21. These transition aged youth benefit from extended services, including access to health care, housing, food, and other basic necessities. The department’s request (including federal funding) for contracts related to Fostering Connections, prevention, homelessness, kinship/guardianship, stipend training program, transitional living programs and community services is \$42.6 million.

Statewide Central Intake continues to see success in connecting directly with young people in crisis or who need services through text message-based Reach NM, which has engaged in more than 1700 text messages since launching in late December 2020. A differential response system, FORCE (Family OutReach and Community Engagement), is under pilot implementation in four counties and was also able to resolve barriers and refer to resources for nearly 600 additional families across the state to connect them to school between September 2020 and May 2021.

Protective Services is also requesting more than \$69 million for care and support funds that go directly to our resource parents, costs for incidental reimbursements and at-risk childcare payments. CYFD has recently increased the monthly amount provided to resource families with the help of a higher federal fund reimbursement rate.

In 2019, the department entered into a settlement agreement for a class-action lawsuit *Kevin S., et al. v. Blalock, et al.* The department is requesting \$2 million to support the implementation of intensive case management services, a required service for children in state custody as part of the Kevin S. Settlement Agreement.

The SFY23 budget also includes expansion and better support for the CYFD Office of the Secretary's Office of Children's Rights, launched in January 2021 as part of Governor Lujan Grisham's vision for better serving the state's children and families. The Office of Children's Rights offers educational advocacy and disability rights, part of ensuring a child is receiving all state and federal programs they are entitled to. The office also has a grievance process to address concerns of children who are in foster care, centered around the 29 specific rights CYFD guarantees through its New Mexico Foster Child and Youth Bill of Rights.

Behavioral health remains a central focus of the department and CYFD's Behavioral Health Services Division (BHS) continues to collaborate with CYFD's Juvenile Justice and Protective Services Division to develop and maintain trauma-responsive services. Behavioral Health Services' overall base request is \$59.2 million, a 30% increase, including a general fund request increase of \$16.3 million. This request is due to the expansion of community behavioral health services statewide to both effectively implement CYFD's strategic plan and comply with the requirements of the Kevin S. Settlement Agreement within the established timelines. These services include Functional Family Therapy, Developmental Disability Services, High Fidelity Wraparound, Domestic Violence Offender Treatment Intervention Program. Expansion of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment to Protective Services population remains high priority as well as growth around the Crisis Assessment Tool for accurate screening of individual needs and strengths. BHS is also working to add 63 additional full-time positions utilizing agency vacant positions to BHS to support the expansion of the aforementioned services.

Finally, CYFD's Information Technology Division, as part of the department's MMIS/CCWIS Data Modernization Project, is requesting \$4.7 million to pay for licensing for the new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System as well as contracts for data retrieval and archiving of the department's 23-year-old FACTS system, slated to be replaced in fall of 2022.

This budget will help the Children, Youth & Families Department get better results, move further toward a preventative services model, comply with legal settlements, and build a better child services delivery system to help support the children and families of New Mexico.

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