

# Advocates for Children, Youth & Families: 2018 Priorities

We have an historic opportunity with the establishment of the WA State Department of Children, Youth & Families to help realize the vision for the new department and support a commitment to prevention, well-being and the science of brain development. To achieve this goal, we will advocate for the following effective state policies and needed resources for programs with a proven track record of success.

**REFORM SYSTEMS:** Establish and stabilize systems that improve performance outcomes and increase accountability.

***Primarily Budget:***

- Add a 2<sup>nd</sup> Network Administrator to oversee family support and related services contracts. (Approx. \$600,000)

***Primarily Policy:***

- Amend the Family Assessment Response law to allow the case to be open for services for up to 120 days.
- Include BRS in the foster care forecast.
- Allow youth to enter identifying information about themselves in the Homelessness Management Information Systems.
- Extend the Children's Mental Health Workgroup until Dec. 2020.
- Establish a statewide system response to help families and youth in crisis and prevent young people from experiencing homelessness (aka FINS).

**SUPPORT FAMILIES, FOSTER PARENTS, AND CAREGIVERS:** Provide parents, caregivers, and foster parents with the respect, support, and resources they need to be successful.

***Primarily Budget:***

- Maintain and expand effective home visiting programs. (\$5m)
- Increase out of home care options through strategies such as expanding efforts to find and support family members. (\$TBD)
- Fund placement resources that have proven results. (\$TBD)
- Implement foster parent support programs statewide per the plan required through SB 5890. (\$TBD)

***Primarily Policy:***

- Make improvements to Parent Child Visitation, including forecasting. [NOTE: The DP submitted did have a fiscal request, with the portion relevant to our ask was roughly \$2.9m. Our ask would not need to be that high.]

**PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS:** Ensure youth have a safe place to live as they transition into adulthood.

***Primarily Budget:***

- Expand the pilot to evaluate the effectiveness of the Youth Villages independent living program. (\$1.2m)

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## *Primarily Policy:*

- Ensure that youth incarcerated in the Juvenile Justice System do not fall behind in their education.
- Increase availability of diversion in order to keep youth out of the court system.
- Prohibit the use of detention for status offenders.
- Address eligibility issues related to Extended Foster Care.

**OFFER EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:** Prepare all kids for success in school and beyond.

## *Primarily Budget:*

- Increase the Working Connections Child Care rate in order to retain and expand providers willing to take children on a subsidy. (\$TBD)

## *Primarily Policy:*

- Coordinate with the Community Colleges to develop curriculum for educating students about running a child care program.
- Eliminate barriers to high school and college students accessing Working Connections Child Care, including ensuring that teen parents have access if they are enrolled in school.