

Schedule 13
Funding Request for the 2013-14 Budget Cycle

Department: Human Services

Request Title:

Workload Study

Priority Number:

BA-9H

Dept. Approval by:

Will G. L. 2-13-13
Date

OSPB Approval by:

Grant W. ... 2/14/13
Date

- Decision Item FY 2013-14
- Base Reduction Item FY 2013-14
- Supplemental FY 2012-13
- Budget Amendment FY 2013-14

Line Item Information		FY 2012-13		FY 2013-14		FY 2014-15
		1	2	3	4	5
	Fund	Appropriation FY 2012-13	Supplemental Request FY 2012-13	Base Request FY 2013-14	Funding Change Request FY 2013-14	Continuation Amount FY 2014-15
Total of All Line Items	Total	0	0	0	468,555	0
	FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	GF	0	0	0	388,901	0
	CF	0	0	0	0	0
	RF	0	0	0	0	0
	FF	0	0	0	79,654	0
	MCF	0	0	0	0	0
	MGF	0	0	0	0	0
	NGF	0	0	0	388,901	0
(5) Division of Child Welfare, Workload Study [New Line]	Total	0	0	0	468,555	0
	FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	GF	0	0	0	388,901	0
	CF	0	0	0	0	0
	RF	0	0	0	0	0
	FF	0	0	0	79,654	0
	MCF	0	0	0	0	0
	MGF	0	0	0	0	0
	NGF	0	0	0	388,901	0

Letternote Text Revision Required? Yes: No: If yes, describe the Letternote Text Revision:

Cash or Federal Fund Name and COFRS Fund N/A

Reappropriated Funds Source, by Department and Line Item Name: N/A

Approval by OIT? Yes: No: Not Required:

Schedule 13s from Affected Departments: N/A

Other Information:

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

*FY 2013-14 Budget Amendment
February 15, 2013*

Reggie Bicha
Executive Director

Signature

Date

*Department Priority: BA-9H
Workload Study*

Summary of Incremental Funding Change for FY 2013-14	Total Funds	General Fund	Federal Funds	FTE
Workload Study	\$468,555	\$388,901	\$79,654	0.0

Request Summary:

The Department is requesting \$468,555 Total Funds (\$388,901 General Fund) for FY 2013-14 to evaluate workload for county department child welfare workers. Federal funding of \$79,654 is from Title IV-E of the social security act. Title IV-E funds provide services for the benefit of children in the child welfare system and are used for this funding request where authorized. The Department plans to coordinate with county departments and the State Auditor's Office in the completion of this work. This request is a placeholder to either contract directly with the State Auditor's Office or work directly with an independent contractor in the completion of the study.

Problem or Opportunity:

Due to lack of data, Colorado is currently unable to evaluate whether county child welfare departments are appropriately staffed, utilizing efficient and best business processes, or expediting practice changes that support caseworkers and enable the timely delivery of child welfare services that are tailored to preserve families and keep children safe. This budget amendment provides funding for a workload study to be coordinated by the State Auditor's Office with the goal of achieving a better

understanding of components of case work at county departments.

Brief Background:

Colorado currently has not established or required child protection workload standards for county department personnel. The Council on Accreditation (COA), a nationally recognized organization that publishes standards in child protection, references workload as including caseload and other organization responsibilities. The federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children's Bureau, does not mandate or promulgate standards for states for child protection workloads. Additionally, Child Welfare allocations to counties identify how much funds are available, but it does not identify the cost of performing the work. A workload study allows Colorado to evaluate the effort required and whether adequate resources have been allocated to support county departments.

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) and the COA identify workload standards of 12-15 investigations and assessments of families, and 15-30 families receiving services per worker. CWLA standards indicate a supervisor workload of one supervisor to five social workers. The

CWLA had the following guidelines in computing workload and caseload standards:

- Caseloads should be computed separately for each worker category.
- Case transfers and changes in case status should receive careful consideration.
- To develop workload standards, time required to conduct the following should be calculated:
 - Travel;
 - Collateral visits, outreach activities and court schedules;
 - Supervision, consultation and collaboration;
 - Emergencies that interrupt regular work schedules;
 - Work with community groups;
 - Attendance at staff meetings, staff development, professional conferences and administrative functions;
 - Case management, and;
 - Telephone contacts, reading of records, case record or computer entry and reports of conferences and consultation.

The most recent national analysis and report to Congress by the ACF, *Child Maltreatment 2011*, lists a large range across states of 32 to 231 completed investigation and alternative response reports per worker during the year. This variance may be due to the broad range of circumstances in each case, the diverse service array that is available, and the vast difference among communities.

A workload study provides an assessment of the work needed to effectively serve a family at each phase of the child protection process, including:

- referral – receiving the initial call from a person reporting suspected child abuse or neglect;
- assessment – determining the appropriate actions needed to respond to the call;
- intake – establishing a new child welfare case;
- ongoing case management – providing the services needed for the particular situation; and

- permanency efforts – seeking permanent placement, such as reunification, adoption, or relative guardianship, for a youth placed out of his or her home.

Not every type of case requires the same amount of activity; however, through a study of enough cases, trends based upon family dynamic, the child's age or needs, and the availability of community resources may be identified. Performing a workload study would establish the standard that Colorado lacks, and enable the Department and county departments to determine if resources need to be realigned or if additional resources are needed to effectively serve Colorado families.

Colorado is not able to determine the number of cases a worker carries, and thus is unable to determine the workload associated with the cases. A workload study complements a consistent practice model by providing state and county leadership the opportunity to objectively evaluate and improve the quality of child welfare services provided to Colorado families. While the Department is requesting funding for this study, the project will either be coordinated and administered by the State Auditor's Office or completed by an independent contractor with the State Auditor's office serving in an advisory role. During the procurement of the project, the Department's goal is to work in a joint fashion with both Auditor's Office and county departments in the refinement of the scope of the project.

Proposed Solution:

It is recommended that Colorado conduct a workload study with the following scope:

- Determine the workload levels for child protection assessments, including differential response assessment responses, traditional responses, and mixed caseload responses.
- Determine the workload levels for child protection ongoing workers, including specialists and generalists for workers who carry mixed cases.

- Determine the maximum number of workers that a child protection casework supervisor can carry, including assessment workers, ongoing workers, and mixed caseload staff.

Alternatives:

An alternative to a workload study is a caseload study. A caseload study would only assess the number of cases that a worker may have. The measurement is quantitative, not qualitative. It does not take into account the complexity of each case, and the amount of time needed to provide quality services. The deficiency of this alternative is that it does not account for the actual time spent by a worker to provide quality services. An additional alternative is to not perform a workload study; however, this does not allow for a statewide evaluation of Colorado workers and a determination of what operational changes may need to occur to improve the delivery of child welfare services.

Anticipated Outcomes:

Conducting a workload study allows County Departments to determine optimal staffing levels and identify needed practice changes to optimize resources. A workload study may also assist with identifying trends and determining priorities in the needs of Colorado families.

Through the workload study, Colorado will:

- Determine if there is adequate staffing/process in county departments to meet policy and legislative requirements related to delivering services to children and their families to meet outcomes of child safety, permanency and well-being.
- Determine the:
 - Case/workload to worker ratio;
 - Supervisor to caseworker ratio;
 - Case aid case/workload ratio, and;
- Determine if changes in practice will require more resources or create efficiencies.

Assumptions for Calculations:

The Department proposes the State Auditor's Office or an independent contractor will complete

the study. The study will be address the following items:

- Evaluate the work related to child protection assessments, differential response assessments and mixed caseloads;
- Recommend maximum workload levels for caseworkers and casework supervisors;
- Identify workload trends;
- Evaluate the impact of child protection competencies developed by the Training Academy Steering Committee;
- Identify any technical or user issues with Colorado Trails (Trails), the information system used by Child Welfare for case management; and
- Identify and evaluate variances due to agency practices, staff turnover, retention activities, educational degree requirements, pay and benefits.

The following assumptions are made regarding the contract services with a vendor to perform a workload study:

To perform the workload study will take three contract staff approximately 1,000 hours each at an hourly rate of \$100:

$$3 \text{ staff} \times 1,000 \text{ hours} \times \$100/\text{hr.} = \$300,000.$$

Ongoing reviews with State staff during the project are estimated at 100 hours per contract staff:

$$3 \text{ staff} \times 100 \text{ hours} \times \$100/\text{hr.} = \$30,000.$$

Travel for each contract staff to the counties is estimated to be 5,000 miles:

$$3 \text{ staff} \times 5,000 \text{ miles} \times \$.51/\text{mile} = \$7,650.$$

IT and Software needs for data collection and processing are estimated at \$5,000.

Consultation with the Department (review the results, develop recommendations, etc.) is estimated at 240 hours per contract staff:

$$3 \text{ staff} \times 240 \text{ hours} \times \$100/\text{hr.} = \$72,000$$

Indirect costs (13% of direct costs) = \$53,905.

Total Workload Study cost: \$468,555.

The above estimate is based upon reviews of a 2010 Minnesota workload study (\$469,000) and a 2009 New York workload study (\$500,000). In addition, the Department reviewed the 2007 workload study for County Administration costing \$500,000, as a basis for the estimated cost of this request. The Department requests \$468,555 to perform this work (83% GF/17% Federal Fund; one-time).

Consequences if not Funded:

This recommendation supports the efficient delivery of child welfare services to Colorado children and families. Without a workload study, Colorado does not know if caseloads are hindering child protection efforts and it is more difficult to create work process efficiencies.

Impact to Other State Government Agency:

Not applicable.

Relation to Performance Measures:

This funding request supports Governor Hickenlooper's Child Welfare Plan "Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy." This includes

strategies of: a common practice approach across counties; managing decisions and performance through data; and, aligning funding with outcomes. Additionally, a key C-Stat measure that will be positively affected is 'Timeliness of Assessment Closure.'

Supplemental, 1331 Supplemental, or Budget Amendment Criteria:

Given the ongoing challenges facing Colorado's Child Welfare system, the Executive Branch decided to take advantage of improving revenue forecasts and implement critical Child Welfare reforms.

Current Statutory Authority or Needed Statutory Change:

26-5-102 (2)(a) C.R.S. authorizes reforms in child welfare and related delivery systems to be directed at more efficient and responsive service systems for children, youth, and families; and 26-5-102 (2)(d) authorizes reforms in child welfare and related delivery systems to be directed at encouragement and authorization for a truly integrated service system that incorporates blended funding and administration. A statutory change is not required.