

# CCI

Colorado Counties, Inc.

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www.ccionline.org

April 5, 2011

The Honorable Michael Bennet  
US Senate  
702 Hart Senate Office Bldg  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

On behalf of Colorado Counties, Inc. Health and Human Services Steering Committee, we wish to express our strong support for renewing Title IV-E Demonstration Waivers.

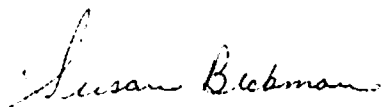
In the past, many states have sought and received child welfare demonstration waivers from the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. Waivers have allowed states to provide prevention and support services to safely strengthen family functioning, rather than having to remove children from their homes. The outcomes from communities that have received these waivers have been impressive, helping keep more families together, while keeping children safe.

While the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services continues to have the authority to extend existing IV-E waivers, congressional action is needed to authorize the Secretary to approve new Title IV-E waivers for states interested in using them to improve services for vulnerable children. Colorado is also requesting that when the Secretary is granted the authority to approve new Title IV-E waivers, that we are considered a demonstration state in order to participate in the program.

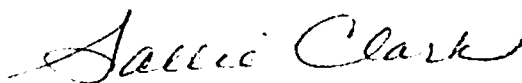
County Commissioners were encouraged to hear that on Thursday, March 17th, Rep. Jim McDermott and Geoff Davis introduced bipartisan legislation to renew IV-E Demonstration Waivers. When we met with you and your staff in March, we spoke about this issue as being one of six CCI federal issue priorities. We are enclosing the one-page issue paper regarding the importance of IV-E Waivers, which we shared with you during that meeting and a copy of a letter to Governor Hickenlooper requesting his administration begin the process of applying for a IV-E Waiver.

We urge you to support the renewal of Title IV-E Demonstration Waivers. Please feel free to contact CCI if you have any questions or if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Susan Beckman  
Arapahoe County Commissioner  
CCI HHS Steering Committee, Chair



Sallie Clark  
El Paso County Commissioner  
CCI HHS Steering Committee, Vice Chair



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The Honorable John Hickenlooper  
Governor, State of Colorado  
136 State Capitol  
Denver, CO 80203-1792

Dear Governor Hickenlooper:

On behalf of the Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI) Health and Human Services Steering Committee, we would like to thank you and your staff for attending the Casey Family Programs Legislative Luncheon. We were energized by the participation of such a broad range of stakeholders and look forward to working in close partnership to serve Colorado's vulnerable children and families in the years to come.

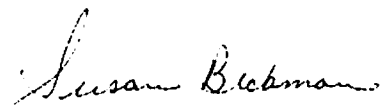
We are writing today to urge your administration and the Colorado Department of Human Services to begin the process of preparing to apply for a federal IV-E waiver. A federal IV-E flexible financing waiver would enable Colorado to utilize federal funds more flexibly to implement national child welfare best practices. This would also allow Colorado to recapture savings achieved from safely reducing the number of children needing foster care and to reinvest those savings in Colorado.

Five states currently have IV-E waivers. Congress is currently considering legislation to allow ten additional states to obtain waivers. Congress has taken significant steps to move this issue forward this year and Colorado must be prepared to be among the first states to apply for a waiver once they become available. It is vital that Colorado is one of these ten states.

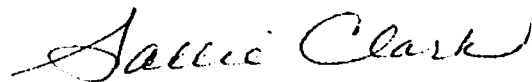
We would welcome the opportunity to assist the administration in this important endeavor. Our members feel the safety of the children of Colorado is paramount and we believe that our efforts to implement best practice strategies to protect vulnerable families and provide permanent and safe homes for Colorado's children will be tremendously supported with flexible federal funding mechanisms.

Enclosed is a fact sheet from the Colorado Human Services Directors Association (CHSDA) that provides more detail and background on this issue. Please feel free to let us know if you have additional questions or need further clarification on this issue. We look forward to working in close partnership with the State to ensure that more families in Colorado are able to stay together safely and securely.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Susan Beckman  
Chair, CCI HHS Steering Committee



Commissioner Sallie Clark  
Vice Chair, CCI HHS Steering Committee

cc: Reggie Bicha, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Human Services  
Roxane White, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor John Hickenlooper  
Colorado Congressional Delegation





## The Need to Reauthorize and Expand Federal IV-E Waivers<sup>1</sup>

*In 1994, Congress authorized the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to approve waivers to IV-E rules for the purpose of funding demonstration projects in state or county child welfare systems. The goal was to generate new knowledge regarding innovative child welfare practices by allowing agencies to use IV-E funds flexibly for support of child welfare services and activities other than foster care and for rigorous evaluation of demonstration projects. Flexible funding waivers have been associated with large reductions in foster care populations and better outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system. It is time for Congress to reauthorize these waivers.*

### **What are Title IV-E Funds?**

Title IV-E is the category of federal regulations that governs federal funding of foster care and adoption support. Title IV-E funds a percentage of foster care maintenance costs paid to foster parents for the care of eligible children and a percentage of states' administrative costs. In contrast, family support services and prevention services are provided largely through much smaller funding sources such as Title IV-B and Social Service Block Grant (SSBG) funds.

A state's IV-E funding depends on the percentage of children in foster care who would have been eligible in 1996 for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a program that no longer exists. The use of 1996 AFDC income standards to determine children's IV-E eligibility is gradually eroding states' IV-E claims as the wages of low-income workers increase due to inflation and the higher minimum wage.

### **What Congress can do**

The HHS Secretary continues to have the authority to extend existing IV-E waivers. However, congressional action is needed to authorize the HHS Secretary to approve new Title IV-E waivers for states interested in using them to improve their services to children and families and to rigorously evaluate their reform initiatives.

New waivers can and should be structured to evaluate new approaches to child welfare federal finance reform that retain the IV-E entitlement while permitting reinvestment of IV-E savings resulting from reductions in the state or county foster care population.

Flexible funding waivers eliminate disincentives and add a powerful incentive to improve outcomes for children while safely reducing foster care populations.

Policymakers have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create lasting reforms by reallocating IV-E foster care savings to prevention, early intervention, family support and expedited permanency services. Expanded use of IV-E waivers will allow additional child welfare systems to take immediate advantage of this opportunity.

**CHSDA encourages Congress to act quickly to reauthorize and expand Title IV-E waivers to enable child welfare programs to focus on front end prevention programs, which have been proven to lead to better outcomes for children.**

*For more information regarding the Colorado Human Services Directors Association, please go to our website at [www.coloradohsda.org](http://www.coloradohsda.org) or contact Jennifer Politi, Policy Analyst/Coordinator at [jpoliti@coloradohsda.org](mailto:jpoliti@coloradohsda.org).*

<sup>1</sup> This fact sheet was prepared by extracting key points from the Casey Family Programs White Paper entitled: "Ensuring Safe, Permanent and Nurturing Families for Children: The Need to Reauthorize and Expand Title IV-E Waivers." The document can be found at:

<http://www.casey.org/resources/publications/NeedForWaivers.htm>.