

## ENHANCING PLACEMENT STABILITY & FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

### DCF: Services for Children and Families Line Item #4800-0038

Supports for children in foster care are funded through a line item that supports a wide range of services for DCF involved children.

	FY2022 MAFF request	FY2022 Governor
DRS	+ \$4.5M (5%)	+1%
MAFF	\$175K	Not Included
BH-FRL	\$250K	Not Included
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,925,000</b>	

### Providing for the daily needs of foster children

#### Request: \$4.5M\*

Foster parents are volunteers who are reimbursed for the cost of caring for foster children through a Daily Rate of Support (DRS). The current DRS lags well behind the actual cost of caring for a child, this gap widens when special needs of a foster child are included. Foster parents who are financially able to do so, willingly dip into personal resources to cover the gap in daily needs and to provide the “extras” for children in their care. While this generosity is laudable, placing this financial burden on foster parents creates an inequitable system with implications for the wellbeing of children and for recruitment and retention of qualified foster parents including kinship caregivers. The DRS has been tied to the USDA rate for raising a child which was last calculated according to costs in 2015. This request increases the 2015 USDA rate by the rate of inflation.

**\*Cost is estimated based on the number of children in foster care in an average year.**

### For FY2022 MAFF is seeking increased funding in this item to support the following services:

#### Support for the Massachusetts Alliance For Families (MAFF)

#### Request: \$175,000

MAFF is the statewide association of foster, kinship, adoptive, and guardianship (FKAG) parents. MAFF’s goal is to improve short and long-term outcomes for foster and adopted youth by improving recruitment and retention of well-trained and supported FKAG homes. Key to this goal is ensuring FKAG parents feel connected, supported, and equipped to face the joys and challenges of caring for DCF-involved children. MAFF Representatives work to promote community engagement, connect FKAG families to local resources, support families in times of crisis, and break the isolation our families routinely feel.

Additionally, MAFF is frequently called upon to represent FKAG voices in state level meetings, act as advisors to promising initiatives, and serve on coalitions. MAFF Representatives bring invaluable knowledge and lived experience to the table while most often remaining the only group of people in the room not compensated for their time, effort, and expertise. FKAG parents have continuously demonstrated their value, expertise, and knowledge when it comes to getting it right and caring for the children in their homes. MAFF Representatives do invaluable work not only to ensure FKAG families feel supported and connected to one another, but also to ensure their voices are heard at decision-making tables. Increasing MAFF resources to provide compensation for their work will ensure that, for the first time, FKAG families truly have an **equal seat at the table**.

**Behavioral Health Family Resource Liaisons (BH FRLs)**

**Request: \$250,000**

This year, MSPCC’s Kids’ Net Program utilized grant funding to enhance its services to foster parents by providing access to Behavioral Health Family Resource Liaisons (BH FRLs). BH FRLs are experienced foster parents who receive ongoing specialized training and clinical supervision. With the goal of preserving placement stability, the BH FRLs provide coaching, consultation, and facilitate access to resources to assist foster parents in meeting the behavioral health needs of foster children. Because waits for mental health services are often long, a particular focus of BH FRLs is working with families to avert an emerging crisis and to provide bridge supports when a child is awaiting clinical services.

**DHE: Tuition and Fees Waivers for Foster and Adopted Youth- Line Item #7066-0021**

**Request: \$7,294,911**

National data shows that the college graduation rate for children who spent time in the child welfare system is **less than 5%**. In comparison, the graduation rate for all youth is 34%. Children who enter the foster care system often have extensive histories of trauma. Their experience of trauma can often be a significant barrier to being accepted to college, able to attend, and completing a degree. The foster and adopted child tuition and fee waiver ensures that cost of attendance is not a barrier for youth who age out of foster care or were adopted from foster care and are accepted to a state college or university. Since 2008, this program has enabled hundreds of young people access education and the resulting employment opportunities that they would not otherwise have had.

FY2021 GAA	FY2021 Spending	FY2022 MAFF request	FY2022 Governor
\$7,294,911	\$7,221,962	\$7,294,911	\$7,294,911

**DEEC: DCF-and DTA Related Child Care- Line Item #3000-3060**

**Request: \$358,928,9000**

Funding for child care services for children with active cases at the Department of Children and Families is allocated in combination with child care funding for families currently involved with or transitioning from transitional aid to families with dependent children.

FY2021 GAA	FY2021 Spending	FY2022 MAFF request	FY2022 Governor
\$350,928,901	\$350,928,901	\$358,928,900	\$358,928,900

The lack of quality affordable childcare is a stressor for all parents, including foster parents. A recent MSPCC survey showed that more than 75% of foster parents work full-time outside of the home making access to child care a vital foster care service component. The survey also found that nearly 25% of foster parents contribute to the cost of child care. Anecdotal evidence indicates that lack of access to childcare and/or the financial burden associated with accessing child care are factors which deter potential foster and kinship parents from accepting a placement. Increased access to child care is at the heart of enhancing placement stability and improving recruitment and retention of foster parents.

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