

*Department of Family Services*

**67-15-Foster Care and Adoption Services**

Fund/Agency: 001/67	Department of Family Services	
Personnel Services	\$4,034,856	<p><b>CAPS Percentage of Agency Total</b></p> <p>7.8%</p> <p>92.2%</p> <p>■ Foster Care and Adoption Services ■ All Other Agency CAPS</p>
Operating Expenses	\$8,672,117	
Recovered Costs	\$0	
Capital Equipment	\$0	
<b>Total CAPS Cost:</b>	<b>\$12,706,973</b>	
Federal Revenue	\$4,029,689	
State Revenue	\$5,361,575	
User Fee Revenue	\$9,973	
Other Revenue	\$88,434	
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$9,489,671</b>	
<b>Net CAPS Cost:</b>	<b>\$3,217,302</b>	
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this CAPS	77/77	

**► CAPS Summary**

**Foster Care and Adoption Case Management**

The Department of Family Services provides foster care and adoption services to children ages newborn - 18, and under certain circumstances to age 21, who are placed in its legal custody through a court order (usually for abuse and/or neglect) or through a parent's voluntary relinquishment. When children enter foster care, they are placed in the least restrictive setting that includes regular foster homes, therapeutic foster homes, group homes and residential facilities. The primary goal of foster care is to provide rehabilitative services to the child and family so that reunification can safely occur. If that is not possible, a child may be placed in an adoptive home or other permanent living arrangement. Support in the form of subsidy payments, counseling, and purchased services is available to families who adopt children with special needs.

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Other adoption services include non-agency adoption studies for step-parent, foreign and parental placement adoption, counseling to enable birth parents to make an adoption plan, and the recruitment and training of adoptive homes for children in the legal custody of the Department. In addition, services are provided to adult adoptees requesting access to closed records or assistance with search for birth family members.

Case management is a direct services and includes:

- supportive counseling with children, birth parents, and foster and adoptive parents;
- placement services to locate, refer and place children in the most appropriate available setting;
- referral and coordination of purchased services provided by public and private agencies and contract providers;
- arrangement, oversight and processing of purchased services;
- court appearances;
- preparation of court reports, court testimony and mandated reports;
- recruitment, training and certification of adoptive and foster families;
- home studies on adoptive and foster families;
- development and maintenance of service resources to meet the special needs of children and families;
- visitation to foster homes, group homes, and residential facilities to meet with the children, foster families or staff to ensure that the child is safe and that the case plan is being followed;
- arrangement of regular visitation between children and their birth family members;
- development of permanent resources (adoptive homes, independent living placements) when family reunification is not an option;
- counseling on adoption issues (to adoptees, birth parents, children being adopted, and adult adoptees in search of birth family members); and
- development and implementation of an Independent Living Plan for all youth ages 16-21.

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### **Revenue Sources for Services to Children in Foster Care**

The Department continues efforts to maximize Federal entitlement programs and child support to offset child welfare expenditures. On average, 50 percent of foster care children are eligible for Federal *Title IV-E* dollars (Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care). As of December 1, 2000, 96 children in foster care (19 percent) were receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other Social Security benefits.

The average percentage of children in foster care with a child support order increased from 46 percent in December 1999 to 65 percent in December 2000. This substantial increase is due in part to the ongoing effort of the department to obtain a Judicial Support Order or an Administrative Support Order as soon as children enter foster care. Another factor contributing to the increase is the ongoing review and updating of existing records regarding location and employment status of the non-custodial parents so as to establish orders for child support.

### **Medicaid Funding for Certain Treatment Foster Care and Residential Services**

Implementation of the Statewide policy allowing Medicaid reimbursement for some services provided to youth placed in treatment foster care (TFC) or residential treatment facilities (RTC) began on January 1, 2000. This opportunity will offset a portion of the State and local Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) expenditures that have historically paid for these services.

CSA staff coordinated the required local activities associated with this initiative, including DFS staff and private provider organizations, to ensure the maximum benefit from this opportunity for Medicaid funding. Between the months of January and June, 2000, requisite information on approximately 250 Medicaid eligible children placed in TFC or RTC services was submitted to the State Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS).

As expected, the first several months of implementation of this initiative was slow, as the private provider, community, State, and local agencies developed procedures. It is anticipated, however, that the FY 2002 benefit of this initiative will offset local expenditures by approximately \$900,000.

The Department receives Federal funding through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Grant for family reunification services. These grant funds are utilized to help birth parents plan and implement quality visitation with their children. Research closely links parental visitation with the likelihood of foster children returning home. The visitation project enables family members to visit more often and encourages parents and children to engage in activities that they normally miss when the children are placed outside of their home.

The Department receives an annual Independent Living Grant from the Virginia Department of Social Services. This grant supports one social worker position to coordinate independent living services to youth in foster care. The youth are administered assessments that assist in the development of a personalized independent living plan. Regular workshops are held for youth on topics including budgeting, accessing financial aid for college, college planning, and life-skills. The Independent Living Initiative is funded in part by Fund 102, Federal/State Grant Fund.

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From FY 2000 to FY 2001, the average monthly number of children in foster care with Fairfax County decreased by 10.8 percent. The following chart highlights foster care statistics:

### Monthly Average Number of Children in Foster Care

FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
675	788	747	658	617	571	509

The foster care caseload is driven, in large part, by the rate of entry of children into foster care. As the chart below shows, there has been a downward trend in the rate of children entering foster care from FY 1999 to FY 2001.

### Rate of Entry of Children into Foster Care

FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
317	282	250	199	239	207	197

The number of children who exited foster care during FY 2000 was 274, or 67 more children than those entering foster care that year. This trend has continued, with the number of children in foster care reaching a low of 493 on December 31, 2000. This decrease is attributable in large part to the abuse and neglect prevention services provided to families in the community and to lower foster care caseloads that allow social workers to provide more time supporting each family.

### **Recruitment, Training and Support of Foster and Adoptive Families**

The Department maintains a pool of about 202 foster families. The majority of children served through foster care have special physical, emotional, or behavioral needs that require skilled parenting. The pool of foster and adoptive parents must continually be replenished because homes become full, families retire or move away, and families' circumstances change. Certain foster care and adoption staff is dedicated to recruiting families through printed and broadcast media, participation in community events, special campaigns, and displays.

Children in foster care may be placed only in fully approved foster and adoptive homes. State policy requires that a thorough home study be conducted with each applicant family and that the applicants be educated regarding how to carry out the roles of foster or adoptive parent. Program staff utilizes a comprehensive group training program to prepare foster and adoptive parents. A formal written narrative is completed which describes the family and states their compliance with State foster and adoptive home standards.

The Department requires that each foster parent complete six hours of in-service training every year. The program staff provides training opportunities on a variety of topics including sexual abuse, drug abuse, learning disabilities, and dealing with violence and aggression.

The Department receives a Federal pass-through grant annually to support recruitment, training, and retention activities for foster and adoptive families. These funds are used to purchase items such as training supplies, training curricula, conference registrations for parents, marketing consultation, and recruitment materials. Foster and adoptive parent recruitment, training, and retention activities are funded in part by Fund 102.

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Foster parents are supported through special events and recognition events organized by the program staff and the foster parents, themselves. The Department offers quarterly support group meetings to adoptive parents that include speakers.

### **Adoption Assistance for Children with Special Needs**

Families who adopt children with special physical, emotional, and behavioral needs are entitled to receive ongoing casework support from the Department as well as 100 percent Federal and State financial assistance to preserve the placement of these children in their adoptive homes. Adoption subsidies pay for basic maintenance costs (room and board) and for special goods and services such as home-based services, counseling and treatment, child care, medical equipment, and respite care. This assistance may continue until the child reaches the age of 21.

The program staff provides crisis intervention counseling to families and referrals to services in the community. They also negotiate subsidy agreements and process the subsidy agreement renewals that are required yearly.

The number of post-final order subsidy cases continues to grow because of the long-term nature of this service. In addition, the Department is responsible for processing the subsidies for children placed through private child-placing agencies located in Fairfax County.

### **Active Adoption Subsidy Cases**

FY 1995	FY 1996	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001
246	283	297	336	394	424	482

Numbers are cumulative total at the close of each year.

### **Disclosure of Information from Closed Adoption Records/Adoption Search**

The Department is mandated to respond to requests from adoptees for information from closed adoption records. The staff reviews and prepares documents for adoptees and provides a brief counseling service to those clients. It is common for adoptees and birth family members to want to search for each other. Program staff are mandated to conduct searches and to ascertain whether the parties are in agreement to have communication or a meeting. In the majority of cases, the searches are successful. The staff may facilitate the planning of contact between the parties.

During FY 2000, there were 5 requests for information from closed records and 31 requests for searches. During FY 2001, there were 15 requests for information and 38 requests for searches.

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## ► Method of Service Provision

### Foster Care and Adoption Case Management Services

Case management services including visitation plans, direct work with birth parents, and court hearings are provided directly by staff in the Foster Care and Adoption Program. The Department of Family Services also purchases foster care placements from private child placing agencies. In those cases, a significant portion of the supportive services to the child and foster family are provided by the private provider.

### Recruitment, Training, and Support of Foster and Adoptive Families

The Foster Care and Adoption Program is also responsible for the recruitment, training, and support of foster and adoptive families. These families may also access other training opportunities in the community in order to fulfill their yearly in-service training requirement.

### Adoption Assistance for Children with Special Needs

The negotiating, processing, and renewing of subsidy agreements are staff directed, and the staff also provides crisis intervention and service referrals. Purchased services funded by adoption subsidy are accessed from the private and public providers in the community.

### Disclosure of Information from Closed Adoption Records/Adoption Search

All of the activities associated with disclosing information from closed adoption records and conducting adoption searches for birth family members are also performed by Foster Care and Adoption staff.

## ► Performance/Workload Related Data

Title	FY 1998 Actual	FY 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Estimate	FY 2002 Estimate
Average number of years that children are in regular or non-custodial Foster Care.	3.10	2.90	2.85	2.80	2.75

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### ► **Mandate Information**

This CAPS is Federally or State mandated. The percentage of this CAPS' resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 76 - 100%. The specific Federal or State code and a brief description of the code follows:

- Code of Virginia: Sections 63.1-55.8, 63-1.56, 16.1-281-283: Defines Foster Care; authorizes local boards of social services to accept children for placement into foster care; mandates the development and implementation of service plans for children in foster care and regular court reviews; mandates that local boards of social services follow standards, rules, and regulations established by the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- State Social Services Policy: Volume VII Section III Chapters B and D: mandates standards, rules and regulations for the provision of foster care and adoption.

### **Recruitment, Training And Support Of Foster And Adoptive Parents:**

- Code of Virginia: Section 63.1-56: mandates that local boards of social services follow standards, rules and regulations for the provision of foster care and adoption services.
- State Social Services Policy: Volume VII, Section I Chapter I: mandates standards and regulations for foster and adoptive parents; Volume VII, Section III Chapter D: mandates policy for conducting adoptive home studies.

### **Post Adoption Support To Families:**

- Code of Virginia: Chapter 11.1, Section 63,1-238-03 through 05: Adoption assistance for children with special needs; mandates that children with special needs receive adoption subsidy and supportive services.
- State Social Services Policy: Volume VII, Section III, Chapter C: mandates standards, rules and regulations for the provision of post-adoption subsidy and services to children and their families.

### **Adoption Search:**

- Code of Virginia: 63.1-219.52, 63.1-219.53: mandates the local social services agency to disclose information from closed adoption records and to conduct searches for birth family members.
- State Social Services Policy: Volume VII, Section III, Chapter D: mandates policies and procedures for disclosure of information from closed adoptive records.

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### ► User Fee Information

Subobject Code	Fee Title	FY 2002 ABP Fee Total
0635	Adoption Services Fees	\$9,973
<b>Current Fee</b>		<b>Maximum Allowable Fee Amount</b>
Varies		N/A
<b>Purpose of Fee:</b> Revenues are based on demand for adoption searches and non-agency home studies. Adoption fees collected for court ordered adoption investigations and non-agency adoption home studies. Adoption services under the <u>Code of Virginia</u> Section 63.2-236 are subject to regulations and fee schedules established by the State Board of Social Services (Volume VII, Section III, Ch D of Virginia Social Services Manual).		
Levy Authority	Requirements to Change the Fee	Year Fee Was Last Adjusted
<u>Code of Virginia</u> Section 63.2-236	State General Assembly	1989
<b>Other Remarks:</b>		