

CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION
Discovery Staff Support



2015-17 BIENNIAL BUDGET

Request	FY16	FY17	15-17
FTE	15.0	15.0	15.0
GF-State	\$1,403,000	\$1,315,000	\$2,718,000
Total	\$1,432,000	\$1,342,000	\$2,774,000

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Children's Administration (CA) requests 15 FTEs to assist in completing discovery of material in order to comply with court requirements. By funding this request, CA is expected to avoid discovery sanctions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Expectations around discovery of electronic and hard copy material have increased over the years along with the number of potential records that are discoverable. CA struggles to meet these expectations and in most parts of the state it is an expectation placed on social workers and Information Technology (IT) staff to perform. These staff must complete the time-consuming discovery duties in addition to their existing workloads. CA does not have the technology or staff in place to adequately search for records and produce consistent discovery for all cases. CA has faced court sanctions regarding incomplete and late discoveries. In one current sanction case, CA was fined \$107,000, and additional sanctions are possible.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

CA requests an additional 15.0 FTE to assist in completing discovery tasks across the state. These positions will allow existing staff to focus completely on case management or IT support functions, which are their assigned duties. They will also allow CA to produce in a timely manner the more robust discovery that is required by the courts.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The budget request supports DSHS Goal 5: Public Trust - Strong management practices will be used to ensure quality and efficiency. The decision package is essential to implementing the CA's Strategic Objective 3.2: Percentage of children in



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placement who received a visit to evaluate their health and safety during a calendar month they were in care will increase.

This decision package supports the Results Washington Goal 5: Effective, Efficient and Accountable Government - Fostering a Lean culture that drives accountability and results for the people of Washington.

CA must currently produce discovery on every dependency case from the initial shelter care hearing through each six month review. In addition, CA must produce discovery on any tort or other litigation. Through funding of this request, CA will be able to complete discovery tasks in a timely and thorough manner. Plaintiffs in litigation or families going through dependency proceedings will have timely access to all pertinent records, which enhances CA's transparency and accountability. CA will also avoid legal sanctions, settlements, and damages.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

Legal sanctions must be paid out of existing CA resources, which impinge its ability to fund needed services for children and families. In addition, inadequate discovery can delay court proceedings, in turn delaying permanency for children in the system. Stakeholders will support CA's ability to continue current funding for existing programs and the goal of speedy and safe permanency placements.



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