



# Family First Prevention Services Act Implementation Update and Budget Items

Bharti Wahi, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Children and Family Services

# What is FFPSA?

- The act became law in 2018, and changed many sections of federal child welfare laws, including Title IV-E. The primary changes impact **prevention services** and **residential placements**. The act:
  - Creates new policies and practices that limit federal Title IV-E reimbursement for placements that do not meet criteria for new specialized settings.
  - Establishes placement requirements for new specialized settings for child care institutions (children's residential treatment programs, group homes and foster residence)
  - Creates new optional Title IV-E prevention services, for children at-risk of entering foster care, expanding federal reimbursement for mental health, substance abuse treatment and in-home parenting programs that are rated and approved by the federal Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

# New Specialized Residential Placement Settings

- Family First creates four specialized settings for children placed in child care institutions (children's residential treatment facilities, group homes and foster residence) based on the needs of a child.
  - Qualified residential treatment program (QRTP)
  - Pregnant or parenting youth (PPY)
  - Youth who have been or are at risk of sex trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation (STY)
  - Extended foster care youth in supervised independent living settings. (SILS)

# FFPSA Implementation – Certification of Facilities

- 47 requests for certification – 37 certified & 10 requests pending
  - Children’s Residential Facilities
    - QRTP certification: 16 requests, 11 approved and 3 pending
    - STY certification: 25 requests, 23 approved and 2 pending
    - STY & PPY: 1 request currently pending
    - QRTP & STY: 3 requests, currently pending
  - Foster Residence Settings
    - STY – 2 requests, 2 approved

# FFPSA Implementation – Qualified Individuals

- A child placed in a QRTP must be assessed by a Qualified Individual (QI)
- All QI's are required to attend a mandatory 2 day training and become certified in a child and adolescent needs and strengths(CANS) tool specific for QRTP placements.
  - As of September 30, 2021, DHS has trained and certified 74 individual QIs
  - Through a DHS pilot QI program, 31 individuals have completed 98 qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) assessments.
  - 27 counties have contracted with 43 individuals from the community or approved county employees under a federal waiver.

# FFPSA Implementation – Guidance & Training

## Guidance, training, technical assistance and consultation

- Department has provided numerous trainings and webinars; issued multiple bulletins and practice guides, facilitated statewide listening sessions for county supervisors, and continues to provide daily technical assistance and consultation for broad group of partners and stakeholders.
- Department has issued weekly/biweekly FFPSA News and Updates Newsletter since July 2021. Over 1,000 individuals receive information.
- For list of available resources, go to the department's public website at [County Link](#)  
[FFPSA Webpage](#)

# FFPSA – Prevention Services

Family First expands federal reimbursement to include prevention services for mental health/substance abuse treatment and in-home parenting skill-based programs for parents or kin caring for children at-risk of entering foster care. The broad categories of prevention services eligible for reimbursement are:

- Mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician
- In-home parent skill-based programs that include parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling
- Kinship navigator programs that help kinship caregiver's access programs and services to address their needs and the needs of children in their care in a way that is meaningful for their family.

# FFPSA – Prevention Services

Prevention services must be:

- Rated and approved as promising, supported or well-supported by and in accordance with the federal Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse
- Identified in the state's five-year prevention plan as services that prevent child maltreatment and the unnecessary removal of children from their families while keeping children safe



# FFSPA Implementation – Remaining Work

## Remaining work

- The 2021 legislature directed the department to convene a QRTP discharge and aftercare workgroup
  - Membership for this work group will include representatives from counties, Initiative tribes, residential facility and other stakeholders and will begin meeting in April 2022
- FFPSA requires county and Initiative tribal agency leadership to review and approve QRTP placements that exceed 6 and 12 months
  - DHS will issue additional guidance on how to implement this new oversight role.
- Establish a sustainable statewide QI program, which is included in the governor's budget
- Obtain federal approval for the state's Prevention Services Plan
- Support establishment of prevention services eligible for IV-E reimbursement

# FFPSA Implementation – Needed Investments

- \$5 million annual investment for supporting Parent Mentors and other promising practices to be part of the state's prevention services array
- State staff to implement Title IV-E eligible prevention services
- Operationalize IT requirements of FFPSA
- New statewide QI program including grants to pay for QI work, training and certification

# Other Child Welfare Investments

- The governor's budget includes:
  - Increased investment in the Parent Support Outreach Program, which is intended to prevent children and families from entering the child welfare system
  - Increased investment in Family Assessment Response, which provides case management services and addresses tangible needs for families who are being served under Family Assessment Response
  - Increased investment in Family Group Decision Making, which positions the family group as leaders in decision making about their children's safety, permanency, and well-being
  - Increased funding for youth aging out of foster care, both in direct support and through grants to counties to better ensure a reasonable caseload for workers assisting children aging out of foster care
  - Funding to support the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe's implementation of Minnesota's American Indian Child Welfare Initiative, which recognizes tribal sovereignty and better ensures indigenous families receive culturally appropriate services

# Thank You!