

Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act

Legislative Action Needed for Successful Implementation



In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the **Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA or the Act)**. This transformational law is intended to reduce disproportionality in Minnesota's child protection system, reduce trauma, and improve permanency outcomes for children and families.

Counties support the purpose of the Act, including reducing racial, economic, and disability disparities in the child welfare system. However, counties recognize that substantial financial investment and targeted statutory fixes are needed to achieve statewide implementation in January 2027. Absent these changes, there is a real risk of failing both families and the county-based workforce. **AMC and MACSSA support SF 4335/HF 4125 - legislation that addresses implementation needs and concerns.**

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Critical Components for Successful Implementation

Requiring counties to assume responsibility for case review at the local level would necessitate the creation of new data and analytic teams and would increase the risk of inconsistent practice and inequitable implementation across the state.

1 Responsibility for Case Review and Quality Assurance

Counties strongly support Minnesota's Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) serving as the responsible entity to establish and implement a statewide case review and quality assurance process. Consistent with other statewide review functions, such as the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), **DCYF is best positioned to serve as the centralized body for evaluation, monitoring outcomes, and ensuring consistent implementation.**

Counties also support legislative changes authorizing DCYF to determine the number of cases needed for review and to provide clear guidance on how that number is established. These recommendations align with those of the [statewide working group](#).

Requiring counties to assume responsibility for case review at the local level would necessitate the creation of new data and analytic teams and would increase the risk of inconsistent practice and inequitable implementation across the state. Counties strongly support a collaborative partnership with DCYF to carry out this function.

2 Resourcing Staffing, Services, and Supports

Counties strongly support investments in a variety of community-based prevention programming, including Community and Family Resource Centers and the Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP). Counties also support investments in economic supports like housing, transportation, child care, and other direct assistance programs that are associated with reduced maltreatment rates.

Community-based programming must meaningfully center the community's voice in both design and implementation to ensure cultural relevance and responsiveness. As economic supports become increasingly central to preventing and addressing maltreatment under MAAFPCWDA, counties need clear guidance on financial expectations and obligations related to safety planning and family stability. Sustained funding for safety planning, family group decision-making, and collaborative safety practices is also essential to promote equity, consistency, and long-term sustainability, supporting both families and the workforce in implementing the Act.

Community-based prevention programming like Family Resource Centers is essential to successful implementation of the Act.

Without state legislative funding, counties will rely on increasing property taxes to fund the cost of implementation the Act.

3 Training

In order to ensure that staff can complete required culturally responsive training, **counties seek a policy change extending the training timeframe from six months to twelve months after training becomes available.** This change will allow county staff to continue performing essential core functions while adequately preparing for full implementation.

4 Definitions of Disproportionality

Successful implementation of the Act requires that definitions of disproportionality be clearly established by DCYF and communicated to counties in a timely manner. While DCYF is currently developing these definitions, at present only African American children (and populations for which SSIS data can be compared to total state child population data showing overrepresentation) are eligible for MAAFPCWDA protections.

Counties support clarifying applicability of MAAFPC WDA to child protection cases.

Successful Implementation Depends on Legislative Action

1 Statewide Case Review Authority

Ensure that the Department of Children, Youth, and Families serves as the responsible entity for the statewide case review and quality assurance function. We support the case reviews being conducted with a representative sample size. This recommendation is consistent with recommendations from the [statewide working group](#).

2 Training Timeline Flexibility

Ensure counties have a minimum of twelve months for child protection and child welfare staff to complete culturally responsive training after the training is made available by the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA). This in-person training should be offered regionally throughout the state.

3 Infrastructure and Implementation Investments

In alignment with investments made to DCYF and phase-in counties in 2024, successful implementation of the Act will require sustained financial support available for the remaining 85 counties across the state. Funding should support both infrastructure and practice changes necessary for active efforts, including:

- **Increased staffing levels**

Reduced caseloads are essential to allow staff the time and capacity to engage in the intensive, relationship-based work required under MAAFPCWDA. Research consistently shows that lower caseloads improve family engagement, safety planning, permanency outcomes, and workforce retention (CWLA, 2015; Casey Family Programs, 2019; Children's Bureau, 2021).

- **Expanded access to concrete supports**

Increased access to housing assistance, transportation, child care, and other basic needs is critical. Research shows that these concrete supports significantly reduce maltreatment risk and repeat system involvement and are foundational to successful active efforts (Chapin Hall, 2020, 2024; ACF, 2022; CEBC, 2025).

- **Upstream prevention and culturally responsive services**

Expanded access to culturally responsive prevention services, such as PSOP, Community and Family Resource Centers, and other community-based programs, is essential to supporting families before more intensive interventions are needed.

Evidence demonstrates these programs reduce foster care entry and strengthen family stability, particularly in communities experiencing disproportionality (CDC, 2021; Casey Family Programs, 2022; Chapin Hall, 2024).

Additional Consideration: Strategic Investments

Support state-county collaboration to identify capacity gaps and strategically invest in services such as:

- Child and family mental health services
- Community-based prevention programs, including PSOP and Community and Family Resource Centers
- Family Group Decision Making, Safety Planning, and Collaborative Safety practices

For more information, please contact:

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