DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Legislative Report

Date: July 1, 2026

To: Senator Melissa Wiklund, chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Senator Paul Utke, ranking minority member, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Representative Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn, co-chair, House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
Representative Nolan West, co-chair, House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee

From: The Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Child Safety and Permanency Administration

RE: County financial data on federal cash benefits for children in foster care, Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2025

This report and attached appendix are submitted to the chairs and ranking minority members of the Minnesota legislative committees with jurisdiction over child protection, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 142A.609, subd. 11 (f), which states:

> By July 1, 2025, and each July 1 thereafter, each financially responsible agency must submit a report to the commissioner of children, youth, and families that includes [federal cash benefits] information required under paragraph (e). By September 1 of each year, the commissioner must submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over child protection that compiles the information provided to the commissioner by each financially responsible agency under paragraph (e); subdivision 12, paragraph (e); and section 260C.331, subdivision 7, paragraph (d). This paragraph expires January 31, 2034.

The federal cash benefits information required to be reported, compiled and submitted to the legislature is outlined in Minnesota Statutes 142A.609, subd. 11 (e) and subd. 12 (e), and Minnesota Statutes 260C.331, subd. 7 (d), as follows:

> If a financially responsible agency receives any [federal cash] benefits under this subdivision, it must keep a record of:
>
> (1) the total dollar amount it received on behalf of all children it receives benefits for;
>
> (2) the total number of children it applied to be a payee for; and
>
> (3) the total number of children it received benefits for.

To meet the above requirements and ensure consistency and accuracy in data collection, department staff established the following parameters to obtain this data from financially responsible agencies:

- “Financially responsible agency” means a county agency that is financially responsible for a child in foster care.
- “Federal cash benefits” means Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI); veteran’s benefits; railroad retirement benefits and Black Lung Benefits.
- “County calendar year” is the reporting period and covers Jan. 1-Dec. 31 each year.
- “Child in foster care” means a child who is under the placement authority of a county social services agency via court order (Minnesota Statutes, chapter 260C) or Voluntary Placement Agreement (Minnesota Statutes, chapter 260D).

Department staff used the three-question survey developed in 2025 with the assistance of the Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) Management Analysis and Development (MAD) team. MAD sent the survey via Qualtrics to each county or county consortium director for their responses on this required data covering Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2025. While the survey was active, department staff received requests from county staff for additional clarification on determining the reporting period and whether to include receipt of other federal funds, parental fees and back payments. For the purpose of this survey and to accurately reflect the legislative intent, department staff provided the following clarifications:

- Federal cash benefits do not include Title IV-E funding. They only include cash benefits agencies applied for or received on behalf of a child in foster care from the federal agency responsible for administering such benefits.
- Balance of held funds sent to an agency by a prior representative payee for a child does not need to be included in the reporting of this survey. This survey requires agencies to report only the funds received when the agency was acting as the child's representative payee.
- Agencies can report backpay funds they received as representative payee for a child in foster care, provided the backpay funds were for one or more months within the reporting period of Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2025 and the agency was the representative payee and therefore authorized to receive such funds.
- Survey responses should specify the total dollar amount an agency received on behalf of a child in foster care as the representative payee, regardless of how the funding was utilized.

Payments received from a parent or custodian are not included because the statute requires agencies to report only on federal cash benefits they applied for or received on behalf of children in foster care directly from the federal agency administering the federal cash benefits. Such payments instead fall under the scope of billing parents/custodians for costs of care based on the child’s resources/income.

Direct questions about the data and survey to Ami Wazlawik, legislative director for the Child Safety and Permanency Administration at ami.wazlawik@state.mn.us.

Appendix A: County and county consortium responses to federal cash benefits survey

The table below shows financial data received from counties and county consortiums in response to the department's three-question survey that was open from March 1 to April 7, 2026. The survey requested each county/county consortium to report on:

- Total dollar amount of federal cash benefits **received** by the county/county consortium *between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2025*, on behalf of all children under its care
- Total number of children for whom the county/county consortium **applied** to be the representative payee for the child's federal cash benefits *from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2025*
- Total number of children for whom the county/county consortium **received** federal cash benefits *from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2025*

This report should not be used to determine the total number of children in foster care eligible for or receiving federal cash benefits, nor the total dollar amount counties/county consortiums could receive, should they apply to be representative payee on behalf of every eligible child in foster care. There is no mandate that counties/county consortiums should apply to be the representative payee for all children in foster care who may be eligible for federal cash benefits. Each county/county consortium may approach this process differently. For more information, see Income and Resources for Children in Foster Care: Legislative Report (2025).

State law requires counties to provide data each year by July 1. The following counties/county consortiums did not provide CY 2025 data and are not included in the table below: Carver, Blue Earth, McLeod, Roseau, Sibley and Western Prairie Human Services *(Pope and Grant Counties)*.

County/Consortium	Total dollar amount of federal cash benefits agency received	Total number of children agency applied to be representative payee	Total number of children for whom agency received federal cash benefits
Aitkin	$8,880.00	1	1
Anoka	$65,556.96	6	6
Becker	$85,962.00	0	14
Beltrami	$41,602.92	3	9
Benton	$46,643.90	2	8
Big Stone	$19,726.17	2	4
Brown	$0.00	0	0
Carlton	$45,271.00	2	4
Cass	$7,736.00	0	1
Chippewa	$10,151.00	1	1
Chisago	$18,829.00	2	2
Clay	$76,137.00	11	11

County/Consortium	Total dollar amount of federal cash benefits agency received	Total number of children agency applied to be representative payee	Total number of children for whom agency received federal cash benefits
Clearwater	$0.00	0	0
Cook	$12,860.00	0	1
Crow Wing	$27,372.69	5	5
Dakota	$105,279.00	4	15
Des Moines Valley Health and Human Services *(Cottonwood and Jackson Counties)*	$23,135.20	4	4
Douglas	$21,045.27	1	2
Fillmore	$8,272.00	0	1
Freeborn	$23,497.00	1	6
Goodhue	$17,038.78	0	3
Hennepin	$203,444.04	15	121
Houston	$21,347.49	7	8
Hubbard	$0.00	0	0
Faribault and Martin County Human Services	$107,714.00	0	15
Isanti	$5,802.00	0	1
Itasca	$69,031.10	3	11
Kanabec	$10,754.85	0	2
Kandiyohi	$0.00	0	0
Kittson	$5,618.72	0	1
Koochiching	$9,272.00	2	2
Lac qui Parle	$0.00	0	0
Lake	$25,580.93	4	4
Lake of the Woods	$3,996.00	1	1
Le Sueur	$0.00	0	0
Mahnomen	$0.00	0	0
Marshall	$1,934.00	0	1
Meeker	$13,192.00	1	2
Mille Lacs	$23,744.59	8	6

County/Consortium	Total dollar amount of federal cash benefits agency received	Total number of children agency applied to be representative payee	Total number of children for whom agency received federal cash benefits
Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (Dodge, Steele and Waseca Counties)	$30,448.02	1	9
Morrison	$60,988.16	2	6
Mower	$10,727.00	2	2
Nicollet	$14,392.00	0	3
Nobles	$0.00	0	0
Norman	$20,048.00	1	2
Olmstead	$60,901.73	6	6
Otter Tail	$85,556.76	20	20
Pennington	$0.00	0	0
Pine	$5,685.00	1	1
Polk	$23,262.00	0	2
Ramsey	$0	0	0
Renville	$23,4000.00	3	3
Rice	$0	0	0
Scott	$36,497.00	2	8
Sherburne	$4,296.00	0	2
St. Louis	$378,173.07	50	49
Stearns	$0.00	0	0
Stevens	$0.00	0	0
Southwest Health & Human Services *(Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, and Rock Counties)*	$83,158.00	5	12
Swift	$0.00	0	0
Todd	$43,972.00	5	5
Traverse	$11,604.00	0	1
Wabasha	$0.00	0	0
Wadena	$70,497.00	2	6
Washington	$34,736.00	8	6

County/Consortium	Total dollar amount of federal cash benefits agency received	Total number of children agency applied to be representative payee	Total number of children for whom agency received federal cash benefits
Watonwan	$0.00	0	0
Wilkin	$967.00	0	1
Winona	$59,124.00	10	10
Wright	$66,566.00	3	8
Yellow Medicine	$0.00	0	0
STATEWIDE TOTAL	**$2,298,986.35**	**207**	**435**