



Title IV-E Waiver

Be Aware and Prepare: Plan for Expiration of Title IV-E Waiver

Without congressional action, the waiver is set to expire in less than two years; this could cost Florida \$90M

What does the IV-E (4-E) waiver do and why is it expiring?

- Federal rules governing child welfare funding can be restrictive, siloed and cumbersome. Florida's unique waiver grants our state flexibility to use federal Title IV-E dollars – the greatest source of any state's child welfare funding – more effectively. As a result, Florida has successfully kept more children out of foster care and reduced time in care when foster care is necessary.
- Title IV-E waivers will expire in federal fiscal year 2018. By federal statute, this means all states with Title IV-E waivers will lose the authority to flexibly use federal dollars for child welfare services.

What's the benefit of the waiver?

- Through the funding flexibility of the IV-E waiver, families receive intensive services in their own homes, thus keeping more kids safe and preventing thousands of children from entering foster care every year.
- Without the waiver, Florida risks losing significant federal dollars, as there will be more restrictions tied to IV-E monies. Without the waiver, funding is largely tied to paying for services provided to children **after** they are removed from their homes and placed into licensed foster care.
- While foster care is a necessary safety precaution for some children who are at risk of abuse or neglect, research clearly demonstrates that keeping children safe at home with their families is significantly better for children and more cost-effective than foster care.

How will the expiration of the waiver affect federal dollars coming to Florida?

- The largest portion of Florida's federal funding for child welfare services is calculated using historic funding levels prior to implementation of the waiver; this was calculated when the number of children in out-of-home care was significantly higher.
- Ironically, Florida's success in keeping more children safe – and thus reducing the number of children in foster care – will mean less federal financial support for child welfare. When the waiver expires, Florida's IV-E funding will be driven primarily by the number of eligible children placed in out-of-home care, and the state will lose support for children served safely in their homes.

How will expiration of the waiver impact child welfare in Florida?

- Because Florida will have less flexibility to fund effective services that keep children safely in their homes, more children will be at risk of entering foster care. This will strain the existing foster care capacity and increase overall child welfare costs.
- The loss of the waiver will also lead to less innovation, more constraints and an inability to take advantage of Florida's unique model, which successfully encourages community-specific strategies to protect children from abuse and neglect.

What can we do?

- **Be aware.** The Florida Legislature must prepare Florida's system of care – both financially and systemically – for the loss of the Title IV-E waiver by fully assessing the impact of federal financing without the waiver.
- **Prepare.** Support system changes recommended by the Department of Children and Families to maximize IV-E claiming potential.
- **Fund.** Support increases in community-based care core funding.
- **Advocate.** We ask you to share your concern about this issue with House Chairs Brodeur and Harrell and Senate Chairs Flores and Garcia. Let them know this is a critical issue and it will significantly impact how we can serve your constituents.

Florida's child welfare system is the most flexibly funded, community-driven system of care in the United States. Without a complete assessment of the impact of the loss of the Title IV-E waiver and measures to counter the loss of federal dollars, Florida's child welfare system is at risk of quickly becoming more costly and less effective at ensuring the safety, stability and well-being of children.