



616 H Street, NW · Suite 300
Washington, DC 20001
T 202.467.4900 · F 202.467.4949
childrenslawcenter.org

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Damon King
Senior Policy Attorney
Children's Law Center

Introduction

Good morning Chairperson Alexander and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Damon King. I am a Senior Policy Attorney at Children's Law Center and a resident of the District. I am testifying today on behalf of Children's Law Center,¹ which fights so every DC child can grow up with a loving family, good health and a quality education. With 100 staff and hundreds of pro bono lawyers, Children's Law Center reaches 1 out of every 8 children in DC's poorest neighborhoods – more than 5,000 children and families each year. We serve as guardians *ad litem* for hundreds of children in foster care and represent foster parents and caregivers for children who are in or at risk of entering the District's child welfare system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the performance of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). The last year has been an eventful one for CFSA, as new leadership has shown willingness to tackle longstanding challenges that exist in our child welfare system, while continuing with reforms already in progress. I will spend much of my testimony today discussing the agency's continued transition to serving children and families in their homes and communities, as well as important and positive work that the agency is doing to better address the needs of teenagers and young adults moving through and out of the foster care system. Throughout my testimony, I will also discuss the role that we believe this Committee can play in

ensuring that important child welfare reforms and policy changes fully take hold.

However, before I can do that, I must address a deeply troubling event that persisted through much of 2015 and affected the experiences of many foster children for whom the agency is directly responsible: A shortage of available foster homes that, among other things, led the agency to use hotels and its own offices to house children in its care.

CFSA's Placement Crisis

CFSA's placement crisis, which began in the spring of 2015, has raised very serious questions about how the agency manages its array of foster care placements for abused and neglected children. It is important that the Committee use this hearing, as well as its general oversight powers, to ask the agency how it plans to ensure that this crisis does not repeat itself in the future.

How Did We Get Here?

In its most recent report, released in November, 2015, the *LaShawn* Court Monitor disclosed that this past April, 11 children in CFSA's care stayed overnight at CFSA's offices due to a lack of available foster homes at the time they needed to be placed.² Additionally, between April and June, 2015, four more children were placed in hotel rooms for the same reason.³ While the Court Monitor's report covered only the first half of 2015 (January – June), CFSA's oversight responses indicate that the practice of

placing children in CFSA's care in these settings continued into FY16, not ending until at least November.⁴ In total, CFSA reports that 15 children stayed either in hotels or at CFSA in FY15 and nine children in FY16.⁵ This occurred in spite of the fact that the agency's foster care population remained below levels seen in past years,⁶ and remained relatively stable over the course of late 2014 and 2015.⁷

As the agency notes, the immediate cause of this placement shortage was the decision, made at the end of 2014, to end contracts with two private foster care agencies that provided the District's foster care system with licensed foster homes, mostly in Maryland.⁸ This decision was the latest in a series of steps that the agency took to "right-size" the system's supply of foster homes and other types of placements in light of changes in the foster care population.⁹ The agency reports that, in planning for the transition from these contracts, it projected that a certain number of foster parents from these agencies would agree to be re-licensed by other agencies that also serve District foster children.¹⁰ However, for various reasons, the number of foster parents who were ultimately re-licensed fell short of what the agency was expecting.¹¹ When, in the early part of 2015, the number of children removed from their homes began to tick upward – ultimately resulting in a 12.2% overall increase in removals in FY15¹² – the agency was left in a seemingly paradoxical position: Fewer total children in care than in previous years, but also, not enough foster homes to house children as new placement requests came in. As a result, children in need of placements – either because they had just been

removed from their families or because they needed to be moved from their current foster homes – ended up in hotels, at CFSA, or in other temporary arrangements while awaiting placement.¹³

Additional Factors

In light of what we know, it would be easy for us to focus all of our attention on the private agency contracting decision that triggered these events. As I will discuss later, we do hope that the Committee will ask the agency how it will change its decision-making process around private agency contracting in the future. However, beyond the contracting decision, the placement crisis shed light on a number of longstanding problems with how CFSA manages its placement array. These issues left the agency vulnerable to crisis and will continue to be sources of vulnerability until they are corrected.

As the November Court Monitor's Report notes, and the agency's oversight responses reveal, the agency is limited in its ability to track and report how many foster homes or other placement slots are available across the foster care system at any given time.¹⁴ In response to requests from the Committee, for example, the agency indicates that it is unable to report how many Maryland-based foster homes are currently available for placement, or how many vacancies exist among its licensed group homes, independent living placements, or teen parent programs.¹⁵ This has two important effects: First, it hampers the ability of the agency to recognize trends in placement

availability, likely compromising its projection capability and potentially preventing it from seeing troubling developments before they reach crisis levels. Second, in a system in which multiple private agencies and providers are licensing or maintaining homes or other placements for children in care, a lack of system-wide real-time availability reporting makes it more difficult to quickly identify potential homes for individual children when they are in need of a place to stay. This difficulty exists even when the agency is not in crisis but becomes that much more potentially harmful when, system-wide, available foster homes are scarce.

In addition to limited data, the foster care system continues to suffer from a shortage of appropriate homes for certain specific segments of the foster care population. These include homes that can accommodate large siblings groups, foster homes for teenagers, and foster homes for pregnant and parenting youth.¹⁶ Further, the lack of evidence-based therapeutic foster care in the District makes finding stable placements for children with severe mental/behavioral health needs challenging. While, in our experience, these shortages preceded the events of 2015, their continuing existence makes the system as a whole less stable. When there are not enough homes to meet the specific needs of these subpopulations, it makes it more likely that, on any given day, there will be a child who does not have an appropriate place to go. If this child is then placed in the first available bed or in a temporary setting – regardless of if the child’s needs “match” with what a caregiver can provide – it only increases the odds

of subsequent placement disruptions and moves to new placements. On a system level, this means that the agency must divert resources to stabilizing and re-placing children repeatedly,¹⁷ placing additional stress on the system as a whole. More importantly, this is de-stabilizing for the children involved, as they must live with repeated moves and near-constant uncertainty.

The effects of a lack of available placements for certain subpopulations become quite apparent when we look at the children who were displaced to hotels, CFSA, and other temporary arrangements in FY15 and FY16. Of the eight children who the agency reports as having stayed in hotels, six were teenagers and the two non-teenagers were members of a sibling group.¹⁸ Of children who stayed at CFSA for whom the agency has made detailed data available, all were either teenagers or part of a large sibling group.¹⁹ Among the 69 children who stayed in temporary placements while awaiting permanent ones in FY15, 56.5% (39 children) were ages 13 to 21.²⁰ The placement crisis did not affect all segments of the foster care population evenly, likely due to the fact that certain subpopulations were already facing a shortage of foster homes to meet their needs.

The Agency's Response to the Crisis & How This Committee Can Help

In its oversight responses, the agency identifies a number of goals for FY16, including establishing a "real-time database of placement options and preferences," improving communication with the private agencies and providers who control much of the

system's capacity, working with stakeholders to identify problems with the current placement process, and, most importantly, adding capacity.²¹

Already, the agency has taken steps toward achieving some of these goals: Through a wide-ranging recruitment campaign, it added 83 foster home beds (35 for teenagers) in FY15.²² In early FY16, it issued RFPs for "family-based foster care, to include traditional, therapeutic, and specialized homes."²³ Over the summer of 2015, it met with stakeholders (including Children's Law Center) for additional feedback. And in late 2015, it convened a workgroup to begin exploring bringing new, evidence-based foster care models to the District. However, more work remains if the agency is to meet its FY16 goals of adding 80 more spaces in foster homes, fixing its placement process, and maintaining the right assortment of foster homes to prevent future crises. The creation of a real-time tracking system is particularly important here, as it is hard to know whether the agency's recruitment targets are sufficient to prevent another foster home shortage when the agency cannot see trends across a large segment of its placement array. Beyond this, there must be a clear plan for how to add homes for the specific subpopulations discussed above and a specific timeline for adding new models of foster care for children with significant needs.

While the agency is ultimately responsible for fixing the problems that led to this crisis, we hope, Chairperson Alexander, that this Committee will play an active role in ensuring that the events of 2015 are not allowed to happen again. Specifically, we hope

that the Committee uses this oversight hearing to gather more details about the agency's plans moving forward, including:

- The timeframe for building a “real-time database” that will track bed availability, vacancies, and provider resources and preferences;
- The data that will be tracked in this database and how such data will be utilized to ensure that the agency adds the right amount and types of capacity;
- The process that the agency followed in determining that its FY16 recruitment targets are sufficient to alleviate the current crisis;
- The agency's recruitment targets for the special subpopulations mentioned above (siblings, teenagers, and pregnant/parenting youth) and how it determined its targets are sufficient;
- The timeline for adopting and implementing evidence-based foster care models for children with severe mental/behavioral health needs;
- The number of foster homes that the agency believes it needs to add for children with severe mental/behavioral health needs and how it determined that number is sufficient; and
- What the agency has learned from the difficulties it experienced transitioning from private agency contracts in 2014-2015, and how this knowledge will affect future decisions regarding private agency and provider contracts.

Additionally, we ask that, over the rest of the fiscal and calendar years, the Committee continue to monitor the agency's progress in reaching its goals.

Community-Based & In-Home Services

As you know, Chairperson Alexander, over the last several years, the agency has worked to change its service-delivery model from one that relied heavily on removing children from their immediate families to one that instead relies primarily on serving children and families in their homes and communities. This effort to “narrow the front door” to foster care, which began under now-Deputy Mayor Brenda Donald, is being continued under Director Davidson. While it is an ambitious change, it is one that we have long supported. If the agency can successfully make this transition, children across the District who are at risk of abuse or neglect will receive support earlier and in a way that is much less disruptive than being put in foster care.

The Agency’s Progress This Past Fiscal Year

Regarding this transition, the agency’s oversight responses show that it has made some progress in the last fiscal year, although not without areas of concern. In our testimony last year, we noted that many of the interventions that the agency promised were either not yet fully launched or only recently launched and asked for data that would show how often families were using community-based services.²⁴ These data are important, not just because they shed light on the reach and effectiveness of specific services, but because they help us to answer fundamental questions about the District’s child welfare reform efforts thus far. Specifically, having narrowed the front door to the foster care system, is the agency effectively protecting and meeting the needs of the children who

are now on the outside of it? And if not, how can the agency adjust its service offerings, policies, and practices to ensure that these children are served?

The good news is that the agency's oversight responses suggest that it has now completed the launch of its initial slate of community-based programming, including interventions that were still mid-launch or mid-expansion at this time last year.

Behavioral health specialists are now co-located at four of the five Collaboratives, and have been since early FY15.²⁵ Infant-maternal health specialists have now all been hired, with the last specialist scheduled to begin working this month.²⁶ And scheduled expansions of Homebuilders and Project Connect were also completed in partnership with three Collaboratives (Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative, East of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative, and Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative).²⁷ Additionally, the agency has directed Title IV-E Waiver funds to two new housing initiatives, Wayne Place and Project Genesis, both of which are responses to a significant need for post-emancipation housing among youth aging out of foster care.²⁸ In the case of Project Genesis, which serves young mothers, programming should contribute to the agency's prevention efforts.

However, data suggest that utilization of these services is uneven. Behavioral health specialists, for example, are reaching substantial numbers of children and families – 1,210 children and 1,056 parents in FY15.²⁹ Similarly, the agency's pre-removal legal services provider appears to be more than halfway to reaching its FY16

capacity just one quarter of the way into the year.³⁰ On the other hand, enrollment in other interventions, such as the recently-expanded Homebuilders and Project Connect, appears to have not yet reached capacity.³¹

More broadly, the agency's responses suggest that its effectiveness in serving families whose children have not been removed may be similarly uneven. For example, the agency reports that among QSRs of in-home cases conducted in FY15, 40% received an overall practice rating of "unacceptable."³² While, as the agency notes, the sample of cases was too small to be statistically significant, the results are consistent with concerns we have heard from child and family-serving professionals and point to the need for a closer look at how children and families who are not involved with the foster care side of CFSA are faring as they work with the agency and community partners.

What does all of this mean? It means that the agency has taken an important step toward serving families in a different and less disruptive way, but also, that if we are truly going to build the child welfare system that these families deserve, it is important to ask questions as the agency begins this new, post-launch stage of reform. Specifically, the agency needs to have clear answers as to why each currently under-enrolled program is under-enrolled and a clear plan for how to address barriers to enrollment in the coming year. In the event that under-enrollment actually indicates that children and families need something in addition to (or different from) what is currently being offered, the agency needs to have a plan for bringing additional needed

services to its community-based system and for re-allocating agency resources accordingly. On the broader question of how agency staff serve these families, the agency needs to utilize all potential sources of feedback, including future QSRs and phase two of the soon-to-be-concluded evaluation of its differential response system, to identify and address concerns related to family engagement, teaming, and linkage to services.

Overall, we are pleased that, in spite of the challenges that reform sometimes presents, the agency has remained committed to seeing through the transition to a community-based service network. However, in the coming year, it is essential that CFSA use all data at its disposal to figure out what is working and what isn't, and determine how it can address shortcomings in how it serves vulnerable children and families outside the front door. As with the placement crisis, we ask that the Committee closely monitor the agency's progress to ensure that this takes place.

The Needs of Older Youth in Foster Care

As in previous years, the area of services for teenagers and young adults in foster care remains challenging. Nearly half (about 47%) of the children currently in foster care are ages 13 and older,³³ and each year, the agency's oversight data show that their struggles to prepare adequately for adulthood are profound. Routinely, we see that youth struggle to find employment in time for emancipation, or to achieve the levels of

education that are increasingly necessary to find stable work and reach self-sufficiency. And, as we've heard from witnesses who have testified during past oversight and budget hearings, many youth who ultimately exit foster care via "aging out" at 21 struggle to maintain stable housing arrangements and with transportation.

Oversight responses show that, in many respects, this past fiscal year was no different from other years. Of the 95 youth who aged out of care in FY15, 69.5% were unemployed at the time they exited, with another 9.5% only employed part time.³⁴ These are roughly consistent with last year's outcomes.³⁵ Meanwhile, youth who attend college continue to struggle with completion. FY16 year-to-date numbers show that 66 youth enrolled at either two-year or four-year colleges during the fall, 2015.³⁶ Over that same period, 32 dropped out.³⁷ As we have noted in previous years, while CFSA continues to experience success with individual youth, by and large, young people in care are not meeting their potential and are exiting foster care to uncertain futures.

While the challenges that youth face have a variety of causes, there are two areas in which we believe that policy changes could help yield better outcomes for young people transitioning to adulthood from the foster care system: Older youth services for children who are still in care and aftercare services for children who have recently aged out. Fortunately, thanks to your leadership, Chairperson Alexander, and to agency leadership's willingness to think creatively about longstanding problems, we are seeing the agency lay the foundation for major changes in both.

Services for Foster Youth While They Are Still In Care

One of the reasons that youth so routinely enter college and the job market unprepared to compete with their non-foster peers is that current programming for teenagers in foster care does not lay the proper foundation. Through its Office of Youth Empowerment, CFSA offers youth pre-college advising and access to vocational training, internships, and employment/career planning. These programs continue to be relatively popular – in FY15, 121 youth participated in CFSA’s Career Pathways program, and another 52 had contact with pre-college advisors.³⁸ As you will no doubt hear today, these programs can and do produce some truly inspiring successes. However, by the time most youth reach these programs, it is often late in their time in foster care – too late to truly prepare them for the rigors of college or engage in thoughtful, long-term career planning. Youth who are interested in college cannot access OYE advisors until they are at least juniors in high school, when their high school careers are half over. Meanwhile, youth who are interested in employment and career planning are generally not linked to Career Pathways until the end of high school. It is not that these youth lack motivation – indeed, we see many who begin thinking about their futures much earlier than many adults realize, and even those who engage later often work tirelessly once they see the opportunity to begin building a life for themselves, away from the day-to-day challenges of the system. But, by the time youth are 18 to 20 years old, they have a long list of competing tasks to complete as they

prepare to transition out of care and are often facing major deficits in readiness – deficits that were not addressed earlier because no one was consistently working with them at critical younger ages. If we want to see more youth succeed in the areas of education and employment when they reach their later years and age out, we need to begin working with youth at earlier ages to prepare them for the demands of college and to help them think about and plan for their careers and lives after foster care.

As you know, Chairperson Alexander, in your role as Chair of this Committee, you recognized this gap in agency services during last year’s oversight and budget hearings. You then requested that the agency submit a report on the feasibility and cost of expanding access to education, employment, and career advising to reach youth in care beginning prior to the start of high school. Director Davidson and his leadership team responded thoughtfully, with a report that outlined how the agency could do just that. Specifically, the agency recommended greater collaboration between the Office of Youth Empowerment and the agency’s Office of Well-Being, as well as the addition of four specialists to begin working directly with youth on education and career planning beginning in the eighth grade.³⁹ The agency also recommended that, in light of the profound academic deficits that do exist among school-aged foster youth, increased funding be made available for tutoring.⁴⁰

We thank the agency for the approach that it is suggesting, and you, Chairperson Alexander for taking a leadership role in addressing this problem. While we

understand that this report, on its own, is not a cure-all for the range of educational challenges that youth face, we do believe that it represents a major step in the direction of building programming that is more responsive to the needs and potential of our teenage and young adult youth. With the right staff in place to work directly with youth as early as age 13, youth would have someone at the agency to talk to from the moment they express interest in post-high school plans. When adults in a youth's life believe that career or college exploration might be the "spark" that a youth needs in order to get on track, they will have somewhere to turn. This is key to sustaining youth's attention and energy, rewarding their ambition, and helping them to complete essential tasks on the road through high school and into college or training. Ultimately, having key people in place at the agency will make it more likely that, as youth move through high school, they will actually be prepared for what comes next.

We thank the agency for considering these changes, and ask that the Committee:

- Ensure that the agency fully commits to implementing its recommendations (including relevant staffing changes) in time for the start to the 2016-2017 school year; and
- Ensure that, as we transition from oversight season to budget season, there are sufficient funds (approximately \$875,000) allocated in the agency's FY17 budget for implementation.

Additionally, we urge the agency to continue to work closely with stakeholders – particularly those who work directly with youth in this age group – to ensure that this expanded pre-college and career advising program is designed in a way that will be

engaging and helpful for youth, and paired appropriately with academic and other supports that will put youth on the path to success.

Aftercare Services

The second area in which improvement is desperately needed is aftercare services – the services that young former foster youth receive as they transition from life in the system to life on their own. These services are available to most former foster youth from ages 21 to 23 and are provided by the Collaboratives via a contract with CFSA. However, as we have heard in testimony over multiple oversight cycles, former foster youth in the target age group for this program continue to struggle with basic needs – including housing and transportation – as well as meaningful planning for their futures. While many of these young people’s struggles point to the need for improvements to pre-emancipation services (like the ones discussed above), they also highlight the need to take a close look at how these services are currently delivered.

In response to concerns raised across the child welfare community, one of Director Davidson’s first major initiatives at the helm of the agency was to convene a working group to reform the aftercare program. The result of a stakeholder forum that Director Davidson hosted in June, the workgroup included a broad cross-section of the community: Agency staff, aftercare providers, caregivers, advocates, and ultimately, youth themselves. It identified important elements in a functional aftercare program, discussed administrative and structural changes that would lead to greater provider

accountability, and identified outcomes and benchmarks for youth ages 14 to 23, to be used throughout the agency and among aftercare providers to track youth's progress and guide assessments of services. It is our understanding that, ultimately, the workgroup's recommendations regarding the goals and delivery of services will be used to make changes to aftercare provider contracts and agency programming, leading to on-the-ground changes in how services are delivered.

While, as with the older youth services report, the workgroup and its ultimate findings/recommendations represent only the first step in a longer reform process, they have the potential to be foundational developments that will guide the delivery of services for older and former foster youth for years to come. Furthermore, the workgroup process that Director Davidson and his team employed presents an example of how the agency can marshal its professional expertise, youth voices, and stakeholder input to tackle even the most seemingly-intractable of challenges. We greatly appreciate how this process was run and look forward to continuing to work with the agency to see aftercare reform through to completion.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions.

¹ Children's Law Center fights so every child in DC can grow up with a loving family, good health and a quality education. Judges, pediatricians and families turn to us to be the voice for children who are abused or neglected, who aren't learning in school, or who have health problems that can't be solved by medicine alone. With 100 staff and hundreds of pro bono lawyers, we reach 1 out of every 8 children in DC's poorest neighborhoods – more than 5,000 children and families each year. And, we multiply this impact by advocating for city-wide solutions that benefit all children.

² Center for the Study of Social Policy. (November 2015). *LaShawn A. v. Bowser Progress Report: For the Period January 1 – June 30, 2015*, p. 98-99.

³ *Id.*

⁴ CFSA indicates that the last child to stay in a hotel did so in November, 2015. The agency's responses do not indicate the last date on which a child stayed at CFSA. See, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q83-Q85.

⁵ However, there are some inconsistencies in CFSA's oversight responses on this topic that suggest that these numbers may not be complete. For example, per the agency's chart in response to Oversight Question 85 (children who stayed at CFSA), two children (ages 14 and 18) who stayed at CFSA were subsequently moved to hotels, then to group home placements. However, neither of these children shows up in the chart provided in response to Oversight Question 83 (children who stayed in hotels) – every child listed in this response was moved to either a foster home or a kinship home. This raises the possibility that the number of children who stayed in hotels in FY15-FY16 was at least two more than what CFSA reported in response to Oversight Question 83. Additionally, while CFSA states that 11 children slept overnight at CFSA in FY15 and five children stayed overnight in FY16, the chart provided in response to the Committee's question only lists 10 children.

⁶ As the Court Monitor's Report indicates, the foster care population has declined significantly over the last 10 years, although the rate of decline has gradually slowed, appearing to approach stabilization. The censuses cited in footnote 7, below, suggest that throughout 2015, the foster care population remained at or below the levels reported at the end of 2014, 2013, and each of the last 10 years prior to 2015. See, e.g., Center for the Study of Social Policy. (November 2015). *LaShawn A. v. Bowser Progress Report: For the Period January 1 – June 30, 2015*, p. 96.

⁷ In fact, based on the agency's oversight responses and the Court Monitor's Report, the general trend of a declining foster care population appears to have continued (albeit in smaller numbers) through most of this period. The foster care population declined from 1,112 children on September 30, 2014 (end of FY14) to 1,068 on December 31, 2014 (end of FY15Q1). It continued to decline slightly over the first six months of the new calendar year, to 1,052 children on June 30, 2015, per the Court Monitor's November report. Thanks to the Court Monitor's June census, we can see that between June 30, 2015 and September 30, 2015 (end of FY15), there was a net increase of nine children, to 1,061. However, over the next three months, declines resumed, reaching a new low of 1,017 children by December 31, 2015 (end of FY16Q1). See, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q77; CFSA FY14 Performance Oversight Responses, Q44; For June 2015 census: See, Center for the Study of Social Policy. (November 2015). *LaShawn A. v. Bowser Progress Report: For the Period January 1 – June 30, 2015*, p. 96.

⁸ During last year's oversight season, the Committee requested a breakdown of the number of private agency foster homes in D.C. versus Maryland and Virginia, broken down by agency. The two agencies, Foundations for Home and Community and Kids Peace National Center of North America, were providing a combined 185 foster homes to children as of December 31, 2014, with just 20 in the District. CFSA FY14 Performance Oversight Responses, Q55.

⁹ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q88.

¹⁰ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q88.

¹¹ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q88.

¹² CFSA removed 450 children in FY15, compared to 401 in FY14. See, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q32; CFSA FY14 Performance Oversight Responses, Q23. Due to the number of children exiting care during this period, however, there was still a net decline in the foster care population during FY15. See, Note 7, above.

¹³ In addition to the children who stayed in hotels and at CFSA, in FY15, 69 children stayed in respite or emergency placements while awaiting placement, with 15 more children doing so in the first quarter of FY16. See, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q87. Oversight responses do not indicate how

many of the children in these settings in FY15 were placed there after the onset of the placement crisis, but CFSA has noted that increasing the number of respite homes and emergency placement options is one of the steps it has taken to ensure that children do not stay in hotels. *See*, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q89.

¹⁴ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q80 & Q82; *See also*, Center for the Study of Social Policy. (November 2015). *LaShawn A. v. Bowser Progress Report: For the Period January 1 – June 30, 2015*, p. 5-6.

¹⁵ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q80 & Q82.

¹⁶ In 2015, CFSA held a series of information sessions with stakeholders regarding foster parent recruitment. In its materials discussing areas of need within its placement array, the agency noted four groups that were “in critical need of foster families”: Sibling groups, children with special needs, teen moms, and older youth. This assessment is echoed in CFSA’s oversight responses (e.g., CFSA’s response to question 82(d), which notes that “CFSA has enough DC homes to accommodate the younger population, however, we are challenged with finding homes for specific populations, such as teens and sibling groups...”). The Court Monitor’s report also notes that the decision to end private agency contracts in 2014-2015 left the agency with a shortage of foster care placements to serve “specific populations, including older youth and those with mental or behavioral health challenges.” *See*, Child and Family Services Agency. (2015, June). *Specialized Recruitment*. Informational session presented to Children’s Law Center. *See also*, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q82; Center for the Study of Social Policy. (November 2015). *LaShawn A. v. Bowser Progress Report: For the Period January 1 – June 30, 2015*, p. 7.

¹⁷ Oversight responses show that 177 children who were in care for the entirety of FY15 had three or more placements during the year. This represented just over a quarter of the children who were in foster care during FY15. *See*, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q78.

¹⁸ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q83.

¹⁹ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q85.

²⁰ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q87.

²¹ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q81-Q82.

²² CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q82.

²³ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q82.

²⁴ Testimony of Judith Sandalow, Executive Director of DC’s Children’s Law Center, before the DC Council Committee on Human Services, p. 7, February 18, 2015.

²⁵ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q19.

²⁶ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q19.

²⁷ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q19.

²⁸ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q19.

²⁹ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q20.

³⁰ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q20.

³¹ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q20.

³² CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q24.

³³ Based on the FY16Q1 census. This corresponds to 477 youth as of December 31, 2015. *See*, CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q77.

³⁴ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q76.

³⁵ CFSA FY14 Performance Oversight Responses, Q67.

³⁶ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q69.

³⁷ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q69.

³⁸ CFSA FY15 Performance Oversight Responses, Q69-Q70.

³⁹ Child and Family Services Agency. *Current Educational Services and Career Planning at the Child and Family Services Agency Comprehensive Analysis*, pp. 8-10.

⁴⁰ Child and Family Services Agency. *Current Educational Services and Career Planning at the Child and Family Services Agency Comprehensive Analysis*, pp. 8-10.