



501 3rd Street, NW · 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20001
T 202.467.4900 · F 202.467.4949
childrenslawcenter.org

Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council
Committee on Human Services
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Child and Family Services Agency

Tami Weerasingha-Cote
Supervising Policy Attorney
Children's Law Center

Introduction

Good morning, Chairperson Nadeau and members of the Committee. My name is Tami Weerasingha-Cote. I am the Supervising Policy Attorney at Children's Law Center¹ and a resident of the District. I am testifying today on behalf of Children's Law Center, which fights so every DC child can grow up with a stable family, good health, and a quality education. With nearly 100 staff and hundreds of pro bono lawyers, Children's Law Center reaches 1 out of every 9 children in DC's poorest neighborhoods – more than 5,000 children and families each year.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding the proposed FY2023 budget for the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). Each year, Children's Law Center attorneys serve as guardians-ad-litem for several hundred children in foster care and protective supervision – approximately half of all children in the care and custody of CFSA.² Children's Law Center also has teams of attorneys dedicated to helping families secure special education services for their children, address unhealthy housing conditions, and obtain custody or guardianship of children in their extended family.³ As a result, we have direct experience and insight as to how CFSA's budget impacts children and families in the District.

Once again, the Mayor's proposed FY2023 budget for CFSA keeps funding for the agency essentially flat.⁴ While we are pleased that the Mayor did not make major cuts to the agency's overall budget and applaud additional investments in placement

and permanency, we are concerned that the agency's proposed budget appears to reduce funding to critical programs impacting services for CFSA-involved children and families. Most significantly, we are shocked and dismayed that the Mayor's proposed budget eliminates all funding for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, the legislative agency tasked with helping CFSA-involved children and families resolve day-to-day problems and tackling systemic issues that affect outcomes for foster children.⁵

As we discussed in our Performance Oversight testimony for CFSA in February, CFSA is starting a new chapter.⁶ Over the past year, the agency has exited *LaShawn*,⁷ acquired new leadership in Director Robert Matthews, and is working on bold plans to transform DC's child welfare system into a "child well-being system."⁸ Decisions regarding where to invest and where to cut back in CFSA's budget provide a true picture of the agency's priorities and will determine the success of this new chapter. Further, these decisions will have rippling effects on the children and families that CFSA serves.

We are fortunate in that the District's financial recovery from the pandemic is looking much better than expected. According to the latest projections from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), the District will take in approximately \$506 million more in revenue for FY2022 than was anticipated when the Council approved the FY2022 budget in August 2021.⁹ This is in addition to the over \$570 million excess

surplus from FY2021.¹⁰ Projected revenues for each year of the upcoming financial plan are also higher than previously anticipated.¹¹ OCFO estimates that FY2023 revenues will be 3.9 percent more than FY2022 revenues – an increase of nearly \$360 million dollars.¹² Given this unanticipated additional revenue and the projected financial strength of the city, the Council is well-positioned to prioritize meeting the needs of CFSA-involved children and families.

To this end, we strongly urge the Committee and the Council to commit:

- **\$935,000 in recurring local dollars to fully restoring funding for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children;¹**
- **\$641,000 in recurring local dollars to ensure the Grandparent Caregivers subsidy program has adequate resources to meet the needs of all eligible District families; and**
- **\$119,500 in recurring local dollars to ensure the Close Relative Caregivers subsidy program has adequate resources to meet the needs of all eligible District families.**

My testimony today will provide further details and context for each of these budget asks and explain why they should be prioritized in the FY2023 budget. My

¹ We consider this to be the most important CFSA-related budget item in the proposed FY2023 budget and would prioritize funding this Office over our remaining CFSA budget asks.

testimony will then review several areas of CFSA's budget – highlighting areas of positive investment and noting areas of concern for the Committee's attention.

Funding for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children Must Be Fully Restored

Last year, following the leadership of this Committee and Chairperson Nadeau, the Council took decisive action to establish the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children. After passing the statute establishing the Office unanimously, the Council then overrode the Mayor's veto and proceeded to fully fund the Office in the FY2022 budget.¹³ In so doing, the Council recognized the urgency and importance of establishing this Office to meeting the needs of DC's foster children.

As this Committee well knows, the Ombudsperson for Children will serve DC's most vulnerable children and families: those involved with DC's child welfare system. This includes DC's foster children – children removed from their homes and their families by the District government. By taking these children away from their families, the District and its government take responsibility for their lives and well-being. These are the children to whom the District owes the highest levels of duty and care. For far too long, the District has struggled to fulfill these duties and this responsibility. As we testified during CFSA performance oversight hearing in February – and many times before – too many of our foster children are suffering from high levels of placement instability, behavioral health challenges, poor education outcomes, and insufficient preparation for independent living.¹⁴ Failing to meet the needs of foster children in

these basic and foundational areas often means failing to provide them with a path to a happy, healthy, and stable future.

The Ombudsperson for Children is a critical tool the Council needs to be able to fulfill its duty to DC's foster children and exercise effective oversight of DC's child welfare system – a system that encompasses many agencies beyond just the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).¹⁵ The Ombudsperson for Children can help the Council hold all relevant city agencies accountable for meeting the needs of child welfare-involved families and actively facilitate interagency cooperation. Solutions to the persistent problems facing CFSA-involved children and families require action by and coordination between multiple District agencies and the Council. The Ombudsperson for Children is uniquely positioned to identify areas where interagency coordination must be improved to better meet the needs of DC's foster children.

The need for the Ombudsperson for Children is particularly acute with respect to systemic issues impacting crossover youth – children who experience both the foster care system and juvenile justice system. Crossover youth experience significant challenges to their well-being and stability, too often rolling from one system into the next: from foster care to DC's homeless or juvenile justice systems; from the juvenile justice system to prison. They face even greater barriers to positive outcomes in adulthood – including more difficulties in school and higher unemployment rates – than foster care youth involved in only one system. Currently, no District agency

comprehensively tracks crossover youth or conducts systemic analyses on factors affecting their outcomes. As a result, these youth and their challenges have remained largely invisible to the Council and the agencies responsible for their well-being. The Ombudsperson for Children is explicitly tasked by law to report annually on crossover youth and identify systemic issues impacting their outcomes.¹⁶

The Ombudsperson for Children will also be able to help children and families navigate the complexities of the child welfare system and work to resolve everyday problems. Such problems could include overcoming bureaucratic hurdles to obtaining essential items; facilitating smooth transitions between schools when necessitated by placement changes; connecting children and families to hard-to-find behavioral health services; and figuring out where to get additional support for achieving critical milestones such as obtaining a driver's license, work permit, or applying for college. To be clear, CFSA and other DC agencies often offer programs and services designed to meet all these needs and more – but children and families sometimes struggle to connect with the right person or to get their needs met in a timely manner. Children, families, and agency staff need a place to informally work through and resolve these conflicts quickly together – the Ombudsperson for Children will provide that space and the necessary support.

The end of federal court oversight in *LaShawn* makes funding and establishing the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children particularly urgent. The Ombudsperson

for Children will have direct access to CFSA data in the same way that the court monitor did and will be responsible for regularly reporting data trends and analysis to the Council. Without the court monitor, the Council needs the Ombudsperson for Children to be able to exercise effective oversight over CFSA and take any necessary action to ensure the needs of DC's foster children and their families are being adequately met.

It's our hope that as CFSA embarks on its next chapter, the agency will come to see the Ombudsperson for Children as a means of continuing to improve the agency's ability to serve children and families. Although not without its challenges, effective oversight is a critical tool for identifying blind spots and weaknesses. Further, as the agency seeks to transform the child welfare system into a "child well-being" system, the need to strengthen and empower families involved with the system becomes even more essential.

For these reasons, we strongly urge this Committee to fully restore the funding for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, which requires \$935,000 in recurring local dollars in the FY2023 budget. We consider this to be the most important CFSA-related budget item in the proposed FY2023 budget and would prioritize funding this Office over our remaining CFSA budget asks.

Grandparent and Close Relative Caregiver Subsidy Programs Must Be Adequately Resourced

CFSA offers several programs to provide financial and other supports to caregivers who take in children whose parents are unable to care for them. These programs include the Grandparent Caregivers Program, which offers a monthly subsidy for low-income residents who are raising their grandchildren, greatgrandchildren, great-nieces, or great-nephews, and the Close Relative Caregiver Pilot Program, which provides a monthly subsidy to low-income residents who are raising their siblings, nieces, nephews, and cousins.¹⁷ As many of these children would otherwise likely enter foster care, these subsidy programs are critical to CFSA's prevention efforts.

Just this past month, the Council passed – with support from the agency – legislation expanding access to both subsidy programs by eliminating certain eligibility requirements.¹⁸ The goal of these amendments is to increase the number of families able to access these subsidies. CFSA's proposed budget, however, decreases funding to the Grandparent Caregivers Program, and increases funding to the Close Relative Caregivers Program by a negligible amount.¹⁹ To ensure the Council's recently passed amendments have the intended effect of increasing the number of families accessing these subsidies, the Committee must ensure both programs are sufficiently funded.

The proposed FY2023 budget cuts the Grandparent Caregivers Program by \$75,000.²⁰ This is in stark contrast to previous years: the program's budget was

increased by \$539,000 in FY2020 (an increase of over 10 percent), by \$394,000 in FY2021 (an increase of nearly 7 percent), and by \$510,000 in FY2022 (an increase of over 8 percent).²¹ Despite these substantial increases, the program still had waiting lists in FY2020 and FY2021 (and data for FY2022 is not yet available).²² As a result, an additional \$600,000 and \$800,000 was allocated to the program to clear the waitlists in FY2020 and FY2021, respectively.²³ Given this data regarding the past utilization and cost of the program, the proposed cuts to this program are incomprehensible. The demand for this program has increased every year – and the Council just expanded access, which will only have the effect of increasing demand even more. We therefore recommend the Committee increase the budget for this program by at least 8.5 percent over last year’s budget (the average budget increase over the past three years) – which would require an additional investment of approximately \$641,000 in additional local recurring dollars in the FY2023 budget.²⁴

We are similarly concerned that the Close Relative Caregivers program is also under resourced. The agency’s FY2023 proposed budget for this program includes an increase of \$6,000.²⁵ Last year, however, the program’s budget was increased by \$100,000 – nearly 25 percent.²⁶ Participation in this program grew by over 100 percent between 2020 and 2021 (the only two years we have data for) – from 28 children to 60 children served.²⁷ Since then, access to the program has been expanded and the agency is increasing its efforts to reach out to eligible families so they are aware of the

program.²⁸ It would be reasonable, therefore, to expect the program to grow by at least the same number as it did before (roughly 30 children) requiring the budget to be increased at around the same rate. We therefore recommend the Committee increase the budget for this program by at least 25 percent over last year's budget – which would require an additional investment of approximately \$119,500 in additional local recurring dollars in the FY2023 budget.²⁹

The Proposed Budget Includes Strong Investments in Placement and Permanency, but Cuts Funding for Investigations, Prevention, and Services for Foster Children

Although CFSA's overall proposed budget for FY2023 is largely flat compared to last year, there are several notable investments and cuts that we would like to raise to the Committee's attention. First, the proposed budget includes significant additional investments in Permanency and Child Placement.³⁰ Considering the extent of CFSA's ongoing placement crisis (which we discussed at length in our Performance Oversight testimony³¹), we are very pleased to see an increase of nearly \$2 million in the proposed budget.³² These funds should be used to expand CFSA's placement array and enable the agency to provide appropriate placements for all children in care.

Second, the proposed budget decreases spending in the following critical areas:

- Child Protective Services – Investigations, which includes CFSA's efforts to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect, is cut by \$307,000
- Clinical Health Services, Nurse Care Management, and Well-Being, which encompass much of CFSA's physical health, mental health, and other well-

being services for children in care, are cut by a total of approximately \$1.5 million (\$228,000, \$212,000, and \$1,068,000, respectively)

- Community Partnership Services, In-Home, and Families First D.C., all of which comprise essential portions of CFSA's prevention efforts, are cut by a total of \$749,000 (\$254,000, \$54,000, and \$490,000, respectively).³³

Each of these areas encompass services directly tied to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of DC's children. Given the historical (and some current) concerns around the quality and timeliness of CFSA's investigations,³⁴ concerns around the ability of CFSA-involved children and families to access health and well-being services (a topic also covered in our February performance oversight testimony),³⁵ and CFSA's increased focus on becoming a prevention-oriented agency – we urge the Council to discuss each of these cuts with Director Matthews, and seek detailed explanations for how these cuts will impact services.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I welcome any questions the Committee may have.

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 advocate 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 more than 100 staff and hundreds of pro bono lawyers, we reach 1 out of every 9 children in DC's poorest neighborhoods – more than 5,000 children and families each year. We multiply this impact by advocating for city-wide solutions that benefit all children.

² Children's Law Center attorneys represent children who are the subject of abuse and neglect cases in DC's Family Court. CLC attorneys fight to find safe homes and ensure that children receive the services

they need to overcome the trauma that first brought them into the child welfare system. DC Children’s Law Center, About Us, *available at*: <https://www.childrenslawcenter.org/content/about-us>. The term “protective supervision” means a legal status created by Division order in neglect cases whereby a minor is permitted to remain in his home under supervision, subject to return to the Division during the period of protective supervision. D.C. Code § 16-2301(19).

³ Children’s Law Center, Our Impact, *available at*: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/our-impact/>.

⁴ Mayor’s Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], p. E-1 through E-10.

⁵ Mayor’s Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Office of the Ombudsperson for Children [RO0], p. E-101.

⁶ Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 17, 2022), *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf.

⁷ LaShawn A. v. Bowser, Civil Action No. 89-1754 (TFH) Final Order (June 2021). On June 1, 2021, the court issued a final order approving the settlement agreement in *LaShawn v. Bowser*, ending more than 30 years of federal court litigation and oversight over the agency’s operations. LaShawn A. was a Federal class action suit that was filed in 1989 on behalf of the District of Columbia’s abused and neglected children. The lawsuit, initially captioned LaShawn A. v. Barry, challenged virtually every aspect of the District’s child welfare system and sought expansive reform of the city’s child welfare agency. Following the trial, Judge Hogan concluded that the child welfare system was in “shambles” and issued a lengthy opinion finding in favor of the Plaintiff children. The District appealed the decision, which was affirmed in part and remanded in part. On remand, Judge Hogan approved an extensive remedial order imposing numerous requirements, changes, and reforms in every area of the child welfare system and bringing a court-appointed Monitor into the case. This Modified Final Order (MFO) controlled the case until June 2021. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), a non-profit organization based in the District, served as the court appointed Monitor. *See* Children’s Law Center, *Overview of the LaShawn A. Litigation*, Practice Kit, *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/files/attachments/resources/PK4_II.%20LaShawn%20A.%20Information_0.pdf.

⁸ CFSA Stakeholder Engagement Forum, October 2021, slides on file with the Children’s Law Center.

⁹ On September 30, 2021, the Office of the Chief Financial Office (OCFO) released the September 2021 Revenue Estimates Letter, which reported that for the May 2021 Revenue Estimate used for the FY2022 Budget was adjusted to \$8,580.1 Billion. On February 28, 2022, the OCFO reported the February 2022 revenue estimate for FY2022 was reported as \$9,086.7 Billion. Therefore, the revenue used to set the FY2022 budget as compared to the current revenue estimate is a difference of \$506.6 Million (\$9,086.7-\$8,580.1 = \$506.6). *See* Government of the District of Columbia, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, *Re: September 2021 Revenue Estimates*, September 30, 2021, *available at*: https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/Sept_2021%20Revenue%20Estimate%20Letter.pdf. Government of the District of Columbia, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, *Re: February 2022 Revenue Estimates*, February 28, 2022, *available at*: <https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/February%202022%20Revised%20Revenue%20Estimates%20for%20FY%202022%20-%202026.pdf>.

¹⁰ Government of the District of Columbia, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, *Re: February 2022 Revenue Estimates*, February 28, 2022, *available at*:

<https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/February%202022%20Revised%20Revenue%20Estimates%20for%20FY%202022%20-%202026.pdf>.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (June 10, 2021), p. 1, *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SGreer_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-June-10-2021-CFSA-Budget-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf.

¹⁴ Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 17, 2022), p. 3, *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf, “Despite these improvements and exciting plans for system transformation, however, serious problems with CFSA’s core functions continue to exist. Too many of our clients struggle to find stable and appropriate placements that meet their needs. Too often, our clients struggle to access quality behavioral health services in a timely manner. These are not new challenges – we have testified about CFSA’s placement crisis and inability to provide adequate behavioral health supports for children in care for several years.” *See also* Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, p. 19-23, (February 25, 2021), *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-25-2021-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf; Judith Sandalow, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, p. 5, (February 12, 2020), *available at*: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/JSandalowCFSA-FY2019-Oversight-Testimony-FINAL.pdf>; Aubrey Edwards-Luce, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, p. 3,5, (February 12, 2020), *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/CFSA-PerformanceOversight-Testimony_AEL_Final.pdf; Aubrey Edwards-Luce, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, p. 3-4, (February 26, 2019), *available at*: <https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/AEL-CFSA-FY2018-Oversight-TestimonyFINAL.pdf>.

¹⁵ Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (June 10, 2021), p. 2, *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/SGreer_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-June-10-2021-CFSA-Budget-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf. The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), the Office of the Superintendent of Education (OSSE), District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, the DC Housing Authority, and the Metropolitan Police Department all have a role to play in ensuring the District fulfills its responsibilities to DC’s foster children and their families.

¹⁶ Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, DC Act 23-617, Sec. 108(b)(3).

¹⁷ CFSA, Grandparent Caregivers Program, *available at*: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/publication/programgrandparent-caregivers-program>.

¹⁸ The Grandparent and Close Relative Caregivers Program Amendment Act of 2021 (“Act”) removes existing requirements that caregivers demonstrate that they have been the child’s primary caregiver and the child has resided with them for the last six months. This will allow caregivers to connect more quickly with the subsidy and avoid jumping through more hoops to gain necessary supports. Ultimately, this creates greater stability for the caregiver and the children in their home. Additionally, the Act would allow adult parents who have a medically verifiable disability to reside with the caregiver without disqualifying the caregiver from receiving a subsidy. *See* B24-0462, *Grandparent and Close Relative Caregivers Program Amendment Act of 2021*.

¹⁹ Mayor’s Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4012 and Line 4013, p. E-4.

²⁰ Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4012, p. E-4.

²¹ The budget for the Grandparent Caregiver Program in FY2019 was \$5,222,000, in FY2020 the budget was \$5,761,000, in FY2021 the budget was \$6,155,000, and currently, in FY2022 the budget is \$6,665,000. To calculate the percentage increase for each fiscal year we utilized the formula, ((current budget/previous year budget)-1). To calculate FY2020 increase: $((\$5,761,000/\$5,222,000)-1) = 0.10322$ or 10.322%. To calculate FY2020 difference between FY2019 and FY2020 budget: $\$5,761,000-\$5,222,000 = \$539,000$. To calculate FY2021 increase: $((\$6,155,000/\$5,761,000)-1) = 0.06839$ or 6.379%. To calculate FY2021 difference between FY2020 and FY2021 budget: $\$6,155,000-\$5,761,000 = \$394,000$. To calculate FY2022 increase: $((\$6,665,000/\$6,155,000)-1) = .08286$ or 8.286%. To calculate FY2022 difference between FY2021 and FY2022 budget: $\$6,665,000-\$6,155,000 = \$510,000$. See District of Columbia FY2022 Child and Family Services Agency Budget, RL0, Line 4012, p. E-4. See also Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4012, p. E-4.

²² CFSA FY2021 Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q100(d), available at: <https://dccouncil.us/wpcontent/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-ResponsesFinal.pdf>; CFSA FY2020 Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q73(d), available at: <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FY20-21-CFSA-POH-PreHearing-Responses-FINAL2.pdf>.

²³ Child and Family Services Agency, Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program, Annual Status Report 2021, February 28, 2022, p. 4, available at: <https://lms.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/48941/Introduction/RC24-0142-Introduction.pdf>.

²⁴ To calculate the average of the budget increase over the past four years: $((10.322 \text{ percent} + 6.839 \text{ percent} + 8.286 \text{ percent})/3) = 8.482\%$. See supra, note 21, explaining the percent in budget increase between fiscal years 2020 to 2022. To understand the suggested increase, take the total number of the FY2022 budget, multiplied by the average percent, and add back in the \$75,000 the Mayor cut: $(\$6,665,000 \times 8.5\%) + \$75,000 = \$641,525$. Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4012, p. E-4.

²⁵ Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4013, p. E-4.

²⁶ Prior to FY2022, the Close Relative Caregiver Program did not have its own budget line, however, the program began in FY2020. See Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4013, p. E-4; Child and Family Services Agency, Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program, Annual Status Report 2021, February 28, 2022, p. 4, available at:

<https://lms.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/48941/Introduction/RC24-0142-Introduction.pdf>. In Calendar Year 2021, CFSA reported that the budget for the Close Relative Caregiver Program was \$401,310. See Child and Family Services Agency, Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program, Annual Status Report 2021, February 28, 2022, p. 4, available at: <https://lms.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/48941/Introduction/RC24-0142-Introduction.pdf>.

²⁷ Child and Family Services Agency, Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program, Annual Status Report 2021, February 28, 2022, p. 4, available at: <https://lms.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/48941/Introduction/RC24-0142-Introduction.pdf>.

²⁸ B24-0462, Grandparent and Close Relative Caregivers Program Amendment Act of 2021; CFSA FY2021 Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q101(i), available at: <https://dccouncil.us/wpcontent/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-ResponsesFinal.pdf>.

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- ²⁹ \$502,000 (FY2022 budget amount X 25% - \$6000 = \$119,500. *See, supra*, note 26; Child and Family Services Agency, Grandparent Caregivers Program and Close Relative Caregivers Program, Annual Status Report 2021, February 28, 2022, p. 4, *available at*: <https://lms.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/48941/Introduction/RC24-0142-Introduction.pdf>; Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 4013, p. E-4.
- ³⁰ Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 2012 and Line 2066, p. E-4.
- ³¹ Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children's Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 17, 2022), p. 3, *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf.
- ³² Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Line 2066, p. E-4.
- ³³ Mayor's Proposed FY 2023 Budget and Financial Plan, Volume 4 Agency Budget Chapters – Part III, Child and Family Services Agency [RL0], Lines 3087, 3090, 3091, 7020, 8010, 8020, and 8040, p. E-4, E-5.
- ³⁴ *LaShawn A. v. Marion Barry, Jr.*, United States District Court of the District of Columbia, 89-1754, June 20, 1989, original complaint *available at*: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/603815c5dc9365633e4c0830/t/603fb775f2ba1f4eb0fe4573/1614788470864/DC+complaint.pdf>. *See also* Better Childhood, *LaShawn A. v. Mayor Bowser*, *available at*: <https://www.abetterchildhood.org/washington-dc>; Center for the Study of Social Policy, *LaShawn A. v. Bowser*, Progress Report for the Period January 1 – December 31, 2020, *available at*: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/LaShawn-A-v.-Bowser-Report-for-Period-Jan-Dec-2020.pdf>. There has not been a significant decrease in the number of investigations, FY2020 there were 4,544 investigations and in FY2021 there were 4,308 investigations. *See* CFSA FY2021 Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q23(d), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.us/wpcontent/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-ResponsesFinal.pdf>.
- ³⁵ Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children's Law Center, Testimony Before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (February 17, 2022), p. 3, *available at*: https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/TWeerasingha-Cote_Childrens-Law-Center-Testimony-for-Feb.-17-2022-CFSA-Oversight-Hearing_FINAL.pdf; Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), FY2021 Annual Needs Assessment, p. 102-113, November 1, 2021, *available at*: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21_Needs_Assessment_FINAL_0.pdf.