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## **Introduction**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Lewis George, and members of the Committee. My name is Sharra E. Greer. I am the Policy Director at the Children’s Law Center and a resident of the District. Children’s Law Center believes every child should grow up with a strong foundation of family, health and education and live in a world free from poverty, trauma, racism, and other forms of oppression. Our more than 100 staff – together with DC children and families, community partners and pro bono attorneys – use the law to solve children’s urgent problems today and improve the systems that will affect their lives tomorrow. Since our founding in 1996, we have reached more than 50,000 children and families directly and multiplied our impact by advocating for city-wide solutions that benefit hundreds of thousands more.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify regarding the performance of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA). Children’s Law Center attorneys serve as guardians-ad-litem for children in the care and custody of CFSA.<sup>1</sup> Currently, we represent more than half the children involved with CFSA – several hundred children in foster care and protective supervision each year.<sup>2</sup> In our time serving CFSA-involved children we have had the opportunity to witness the agency’s evolution. When we review CFSA’s performance over the past year we see positive changes. CFSA has created a bold plan to transform DC’s child welfare system into the “child well-being system that strengthens

families in their homes and communities by ensuring they have access to supports and resources that are available to them.”<sup>3</sup>

We are happy to be able to partner with CFSA on this work and in resolving issues for children who are in care. CFSA and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Family Services been responsive and available. Members of CFSA’s leadership team, as well as key personnel involved in placement and operations of programming, meet with us and our case-handling attorneys on a regular basis to answer our questions, share critical information, and engage in joint problem-solving for systemic issues.

We believe CFSA has the right long-term vision focused on targeting and coordinating prevention services to keep families together.<sup>4</sup> This includes a more flexible services array that meets and supports families where they are as well as providing alternatives to removal such as informal family planning arrangements, safety plans, and providing in-home services. We commend CFSA for working to build a nuanced system that prioritizes families and community while working to keep children safe.

There is still significant work to be done. There continue to be high levels of placement instability, behavioral health challenges, poor education outcomes, and challenges for youth who age-out of care at 21. These are not new concerns, nor are the solutions easy, but we must do better to meet the needs of foster children. Although meeting the needs of foster children is one of CFSA’s core responsibilities, it is not

something CFSA can do on its own. CFSA needs the support of its sister agencies – including the Office of the Superintendent of Education (OSSE), District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, the DC Housing Authority, the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF), and the Metropolitan Police Department.

CFSA also needs the support and investment of this Committee and the DC Council to accomplish its mission. In addition to ensuring CFSA has adequate resources to fulfill its mission, the Council can support interagency coordination by holding all relevant agencies accountable for meeting the needs of child welfare involved families. We are excited that the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children has been established and the first Ombudsperson, Shalonda Cawthon, confirmed. One of the Office's functions will be to support and report on interagency efforts and systemic issues across child serving agencies.<sup>5</sup>

My testimony today will first discuss several key components of CFSA's prevention work and efforts to minimize removals. My testimony will then address CFSA's services for foster children in three areas: placement, behavioral health, and education. Finally, I will highlight three (3) important laws effecting child welfare that were passed in January 2023 and need to be implemented in the coming year; the Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act, the Preserving Our Kids'

Equity Through Trusts (the POKETT Act), and Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (the FSHO Act) Amendment Act of 2022.

**Investment in Prevention is Critical for District Children and Families and Must be Continued with Transparency, Communication, and Accountability**

Over the past decade we have seen a significant decrease in the number of children in care.<sup>6</sup> Director Matthews recently testified, “CFSA will not walk away from keeping children safe, but we will work harder to keep District families together, empower the community, and share enhanced available resources.”<sup>7</sup> This shift to increased prevention efforts will take time and investment.

*Upstream Approaches are Key Tools for Preventing Entry into the Child Welfare System*

CFSA’s prevention work focuses on moving services, supports, and resources upstream. CFSA’s goal is to focus on strengthening families and the community to limit the need for families to ever become CFSA involved.<sup>8</sup> Some of CFSA’s efforts including Family Success Centers, the Thriving Families, Safer Children Initiative, and Home Visiting programs, all of which work to meet families where they are and help them overcome barriers for more positive outcomes.

Family Success Centers

CFSA opened the Family Success Centers in 2021 as part of the Families First DC initiative.<sup>9</sup> Families First DC is a neighborhood-based, neighborhood-driven approach aimed at reducing disparities and creating stronger, more resilient families through meaningful access to District services.<sup>10</sup> CFSA provides grant funding to community-

based organizations to run the Centers in eleven specific communities in Wards 5, 7, and 8.<sup>11</sup> The Family Success Centers are intended to both: (1) support better integration and delivery of existing services to the community, and (2) develop new initiatives to deliver previously unavailable services that meet the specific needs of the community.

Services are supposed to be focused on residents residing in the target areas, with an emphasis on families not yet involved with the child welfare system. We understand the potential value of the Centers. CLC recently reviewed over 400 of our recent guardian-ad-litem cases from the past year. From this review, CLC attorneys identified that at least 10 percent of their clients could have remained in their living situation before removal with additional supports.<sup>12</sup> The additional supports identified include behavioral health services, housing support, domestic violence services, transportation assistance, and food assistance. Many of these supports can be found at the 11 Centers.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, we have found that Family Success Centers are not well advertised and often not seen as a resource by community members. We did see a drop in utilization last year, from 16,038 families served in FY21 to 11,859 families in FY22.<sup>14</sup> Many DC residents do not encounter Family Success Centers until they are referred by CFSA. We would like to encourage CFSA to work with the community to understand how Centers can be better utilized. We hope in the coming year CFSA will continue to invest in the Centers, understand why utilization decreased and work to improve the Centers.

## Thriving Families, Safer Children

In FY21, CFSA became a Thriving Families, Safer Children (Thriving Families) jurisdiction, reflecting an intentional shift in how the agency views its role in preventing child abuse and neglect.<sup>15</sup> Over FY22 and into FY23, CFSA has evolved the Thriving Families' initiative to be inclusive of community stakeholders (including Children's Law Center) as well as representatives from a broad spectrum of government agencies.

One of the efforts of Thriving Families is to establish a community-based "Warmline," a resource for families that need assistance as an alternative to reporting them to Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline. There has been bountiful discussion and meaningful feedback, led by DC residents, on how the Warmline will operate in practice. There has been a recognition that most families fear, not welcome, interaction with CFSA. The agency, and child welfare in general, has a long and complicated history, and agency interaction usually comes with immense stress and complications for families, especially for Black and Brown families who disproportionality experience family separation at the hands of the agency.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, supportive services provision through a Warmline will require interagency coordination and support.

Further, creating a Warmline to address concerns will likely require changes to mandatory reporting and the definitions of neglect. Currently, there are many situations where the report must be made to the Hotline and there is not the flexibility to call an alternate resource. To try to address this, the OAG has initiated a workgroup with

attorneys for neglect court involved children and parents to try to tackle making positive changes to the neglect law.

### Home Visiting

Early childhood home visiting programs are one of the three key service interventions eligible for federal funding under the Family First Prevention Service Act (Family First).<sup>17</sup> CFSA's home visiting programs are an important part of the District's preventions services array. CFSA's home visiting programs are designed for unique populations who are drawn to and benefit from the programs' ability to address their specific needs. These include families experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, a parent returning home from incarceration, as well as programs that focus on fathers, parents of children 0-5, and young Latino (or immigrant) mothers (ages 17-25 with children 0-5).<sup>18</sup> These programs help parents access services, learn parenting skills, and support them to raise their children in nurturing, caring, and supportive environments.<sup>19</sup>

Home visiting has a strong evidence base for promoting positive outcomes for parents and young children across different types of families and settings. Studies have demonstrated that high-quality home visiting has led to a decrease in child maltreatment.<sup>20</sup> The total local funding for CFSA home visiting programs in FY21 and FY22 stayed consistent at \$470,471.<sup>21</sup> CFSA also receives federal funding for home visiting through Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant. In FY22, the Council added a \$70,500 recurring enhancement to CFSA home visiting programs for



the FY23 budget as part of Community Partnership funding in the CFSA budget.<sup>22</sup> We appreciate this additional investment into this critical program. We hope CFSA as well as the Council continue to invest in home visiting.

*Alternatives to Removal are Effective Tools to Keep Families Together, but Need Continued Partnership and Oversight*

Safety plans and informal family planning arrangements (IFPA) can be important tools to prevent children from being removed. Safety plans are formal arrangements that clearly describe immediate safety concerns and detail how the family will manage, mitigate, or eliminate the threats to the child's safety. These plans are time limited and require consistent re-evaluation, monitoring, and management with participants in the plans.<sup>23</sup> Informal family planning arrangements are for families when they come to the attention of the CFSA via a report to CPS, but it is determined the child(ren) can remain safely with their parent or legal guardian or in the community with an identified caregiver. Informal family planning arrangements are developed by families, permitting them to identify supportive resources including a non-custodial parent, relative, or caregiver.<sup>24</sup>

The timing for safety plans and IFPA happens at different times. IFPA typically occurs when there is no open investigation, and often happens when a parent is incarcerated, or is struggling with behavioral health concerns. Safety planning typically occurs when CFSA has an open investigation or an in-home case and CFSA is actively

involved. Both safety plans and IFPAs allow children to stay in the home or in the care of known relatives or kin after CFSA has assessed that they can remain safely in that community setting. This lessens the intrusiveness of government action while still allowing families to access the resources and supports they need to best care for their children.

Both the safety plan and IFPA policies were updated in July 2022 and went into effect October 1, 2022.<sup>25</sup> We applaud CFSA for taking this step to clarify and strengthen these policies to address concerns raised by key stakeholders including Children's Law Center. We appreciate CFSA's engagement and partnership in this work.

In December 2022, the Committee on Human Services held a roundtable regarding implementation of these two policies. During the roundtable, we shared that we had some remaining concerns. Specifically, that the safety plan and IFPA policies need more transparency, communication, and accountability to strike the balance of keeping families together whenever possible while also not leaving children in dangerous situations.

Robust data collection efforts are critical to effective safety planning and IFPA policies. In August 2022, CFSA shared new information regarding data collection for both safety plans and IFPAs. For IFPA the agency is collecting (1) demographics of the caregiver, children, and identified caregiver; (2) description of the situation which allowed for the IFPA (e.g., non-offending parent acted, use of family/kin to support, etc.);

(3) description of the circumstances/incident that contributed to the creation of the plan; and (4) list of services that were offered and explained.<sup>26</sup> We believe this is a great starting point and are glad to see the agency is not only collecting but sharing information. We feel strongly, however, that the agency's data collection efforts for IFPAs must go further. CFSA should also track and report: (1) whether families used any of these services offered; and (2) outcomes for those children and families in the short and long term. This information is essential if we are to evaluate whether IFPAs are successfully keeping kids out of the foster care system – or whether they are leaving children and families stranded without the interventions they need. Director Matthews at the December roundtable indicated CFSA had begun to track this information.<sup>27</sup> We ask the Committee to follow-up to ensure this data is being collected and reported.

Some of the data was reported in the performance oversight responses. This year, for the first time, CFSA reported the number individual of safety plans with performance oversight responses.<sup>28</sup> In FY22 there were 374 individual safety plans made to prevent children from entering care.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, starting on December 1, 2022, CFSA reported (1) if there are Hotline call(s) received after the diversion (2) if the Hotline call warranted an investigation; (3) if it did warrant investigation, if that parent(s) was substantiated; (4) if the parent(s) were substantiated, was that child separated.<sup>30</sup> We applaud the agency for taking these steps towards greater transparency.

We do, however, have some outstanding implementation concerns that we hope will be addressed in the coming year. First, current policies do not address when safety plans will be used. For example, the safety plan policy seems to contemplate that it could be used after an investigation into a hotline call, but also for families with open cases after a child has been removed. Depending on where the family is in its relationship with the agency, it appears that certain aspects of how the safety plan is implemented (which social worker is working with the family on the safety plan, how families can access services, which services can be accessed) and the potential legal implications of the safety plan could shift. Because of this, it would be helpful to specify how safety planning works at different points in a case.

Second, it is currently not clear that safety plans will not be used against families in court. Currently the revised policy reads “Failure to abide by the requirements of the safety plan may result in CFSA action to separate the child from the home and place them into foster care if the child cannot be kept safe.”<sup>31</sup> This raises some concerns for us. On the one hand, being explicit and honest about what the agency might do is fair and reasonable. But in our experience, this language is used against families later, almost as an admission that removal is warranted because the parent lacks capacity or has been unwilling to do what is in the plan. We believe this undermines the safety planning process because it adds a coercive element to the development and implementation of the plan. Further, the court inquiry should be focused on whether the agency’s safety

concerns regarding the child warrant removal – not on penalizing the parent for not adhering to every element of the safety plan. To address this concern, we suggest adding language to the revised policy explaining that acknowledging a safety plan in no way constitutes an agreement that removal is necessary or justified if the plan is not fully adhered to.

Finally, the agency should provide the training and measures they are using to ensure consistency in the use of these policies. A safety plan or IFPA's effectiveness should not be dependent on the person who is working with the family. Children's Law Center feels that it is critical that safety plans and IFPAs document the information, options and/or connections the social worker provides to the families and the follow through on obtaining the necessary resources or supports. It may be helpful to clearly spell those out within the IFPA sheet or the safety plan policy. In addition, we would like these policies (and their related forms) to explicitly state that the agency can provide tangible assistance to the parent in the form of gift cards and/or material items for the care of the child, when appropriate. In our experience, there are times when meeting a specific material need makes all the difference. It would be very helpful if all the potential forms of assistance were documented so that there was clarity about what is possible (even if it is not applicable in every case).

**CFSA Needs Continued Critical Investment for Children in Foster Care**

One of CFSA's core principal's is "children and youth deserve opportunities to grow, develop, be physically and mentally healthy, learn, and prepare for successful adulthood."<sup>32</sup> To do this, CFSA – along with its sister agencies and the Council – must make long-term investments in both the effective implementation of the potentially successful models and programs CFSA has already put into place and the development of new strategies focused on addressing long-term issues and gaps in key service areas.

*Critical Gaps in the Placement Array Are a Continued, Persistent Problem*

Once a child is removed from their caregiver they must be placed in a supportive home. Ideally, a child would be placed once and stay in that home until they leave foster care. Moving a child from place to place creates instability that leads to further trauma, anxiety, and pain. Unfortunately, too many youth in care experience multiple placement changes often caused by not having one that meets their needs. Resource parents and homes for children with disabilities, significant behavioral health challenges, parenting youth, and older youth require special training skills and support and can be difficult to recruit.

We appreciate that CFSA has several reports that share out the key placement information. However, the numbers are a bit confusing. The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children reported that there were 793 children in care during FY22.<sup>33</sup> However, in CFSA's performance oversight responses the total number of children in care was

reported as 537 at the end of FY22 and in the FY22 CFSA Needs Assessment CFSA reported 556 children in care at the end of quarter 3 in FY2022.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, the Ombudsperson reported that 406 children experienced 3 or more placements in FY2022.<sup>35</sup> The agency, however, reported in FY22 Needs Assessment that 295 children experienced 3 or more placement disruptions at the end of quarter 3 of FY22 and that only 145 children experience 3 or more placement disruptions at the end of FY22.<sup>36</sup> We ask this Committee to clarify these numbers.

Regardless, the numbers reflect too many changes in placements. Our client's experiences reflect that as well. In our review of over 400 of our most recent guardian-ad-litem cases, we found that approximately one-fourth of our clients experienced some form of placement instability within the last year or so, including:

- Nearly 65 children had three or more placements within the last year
- Over 50 children who absconded from their placement within the last year – most of them on multiple occasions,
- 26 children sent to respite care because no other placement was available,
- Five children sent for extended home visits because no other placement was available, and
- Six children kept at a hospital or residential facility past their discharge date due to a lack of placement options.

Beyond these general categories, dozens of our clients have experienced more particularized forms of placement instability, such as the inability to find a placement due to juvenile justice involvement, placements that are not supportive of their specific behavioral health or educational needs, and placements that are unstable due to conflicts with other residents of the home. In addition, we continue to see youth staying at Sasha Bruce's homeless shelter. 14 of CLC's clients were placed at Sasha Bruce between June 2021 and May 2022 and overall, 35 CFSA foster youth were placed there in FY22.<sup>37</sup>

CFSA has been working to expand placement options. However, it can often feel that for every step forward in building a proper placement array there are two steps back. Last year, Children's Choice, CFSA's former intensive foster care provider for youth with significant behavioral needs, ended its contract with CFSA. Over the past year, CFSA was able to find a replacement for Children's Choice, and in October 2022, CFSA began contracting with PSI, Inc for 40 beds for intensive foster.<sup>38</sup> But then CFSA lost two placement providers, Boys Town and Latin American Youth Center (LAYC).<sup>39</sup>

CFSA has been able to expand placement options for youth with high needs this past year.<sup>40</sup> CFSA added professional resource parents for pregnant and parenting youth. Additionally, CFSA added trauma-informed professional parents (TIPP) in FY22. As of June 30, 2022, there were four TIPPs providing a total of eight beds and CFSA was interviewing and planning to contract for five additional TIPPs with a total capacity of 10 additional beds bringing the potential total to 28 TIPP beds.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the agency



CFSA works with to operate in Maryland, The National Center for Children and Families (NCCF), has another professional parent program.<sup>42</sup> PFPs provide emergency placement, assessment, advocacy, and support toward positive permanency. As of August 2022, there were five PFP homes providing a total of 12 beds.<sup>43</sup>

We are hopeful the expansion will decrease the number of placement changes but believe more specialized placements are still needed. We urge this Committee to remain focused on placement as a top priority for oversight and for budget. Specifically, we ask this Committee to support any investments the agency needs to make in expanding its placement array, but also to hold the agency accountable for making measurable progress and improving stability for children in care.

*Children in Foster Care Have Persistent Engagement and Achievement Struggles in Education*

Consistently, foster youth have high rates of truancy,<sup>44</sup> low rates of graduation,<sup>45</sup> and low GPAs.<sup>46</sup> Almost 20 percent of CLC clients in foster care had attendance issues during School Year 2021-2022 and almost 15 percent were failing school. Evidence from our own client's experiences shows a focus on education is often the first thing to suffer after a child has experienced a trauma whether that be placement instability, a behavioral health crisis, or other disturbances in their lives. We have found through our own data collection a strong correlation between placement instability and a client choosing to no longer attend school.<sup>47</sup>

It is crucial, however, that education is not seen as a secondary concern but rather as a key component to stability, social and emotional development, and preparation for independence – all of which are necessary prerequisites for long-term success in adulthood. One of CFSA’s central responsibilities is to ensure youth in its care are prepared for successful adulthood. A key element of this transition is an education sufficient to enter post-secondary education and/or the workforce. With persistent engagement and achievement struggles, foster children are not able to make that transition.

In FY22, among foster children in grades 3-8, 0% met or exceeded expectations in math, and only 5% met or exceeded expectations in reading,<sup>48</sup> representing a decrease in math and reading proficiency from the FY19 data.<sup>49</sup> The data is similar for older youth. Among high school students in foster care, 0% met or exceeded expectations in math, and only 3.8% met or exceeded expectations in reading,<sup>50</sup> again representing a decrease from the FY19 data.<sup>51</sup> The numbers speak for themselves: children in foster care are academically behind, and even further behind post pandemic. If we do not turn our attention to the special supports and services that foster youth need to be successful in their educational journey, we will continue to fail District children.

We recognize, however, that CFSA cannot improve educational outcomes for foster children without help from its sister agencies, DCPS, DC’s Public Charter Schools, OSSE, Deputy Mayor for Education (DME), and Office for Students in the Care of DC. DC’s

educational agencies and charter Local Education Agencies must be held responsible for developing specific strategies to meet the educational needs of foster children and youth. In addition to CFSA, these sister agencies must invest in academic success for foster children. We urge CFSA and its sister agencies to work together to develop new strategies focused on improving educational outcomes for foster children.

*The Current Behavioral Health Systems in Place Fail to Ensure Children and Youth in Care Are Receiving Appropriate and Timely Behavioral Health Services*

CFSA is responsible for ensuring foster children and youth have access to appropriate and timely behavioral health services. Being in foster care often comes with complex and ongoing trauma and, therefore, we must ensure consistent and timely access to appropriate behavioral health services.<sup>52</sup> Failing to meet the behavioral health needs for all foster children undermines their ability to achieve stability and permanency and contributes to the high rates of placement disruption discussed above. Further, unmet behavioral health needs are obstacles to children overcoming the traumas they have experienced and can prevent children from succeeding in school, finding stable housing and employment as adults, and building positive relationships throughout their lives.<sup>53</sup>

Over the past few years, CFSA has made several key investments to behavioral health supports, resources, and services. In 2018, CFSA's Office of Well-Being redesigned its mental health services program.<sup>54</sup> In 2019, CFSA contracted with mental health provider MBI Health Services in 2019 to provide out-patient therapeutic services

for CFSA- involved children, youth, parents, and caregivers.<sup>55</sup> In 2020, CFSA launched the REACH Support Line (RSL), which is a telephone-based intervention that provides after-hours support to resource parents and youth experiencing behavioral, emotional, or family dynamic challenges.<sup>56</sup>

In FY22, CFSA continued to work and improve behavioral health supports for children in care. As mentioned above, CFSA contracted with PSI Family Services to provide 40 beds for intensive family-based foster care program for children experiencing placement instability due to such factors as step-down from a diagnostic or psychiatrist residential treatment facility, current behavioral health diagnosis, or verbal or physical aggression.<sup>57</sup> CFSA is also partnering with District agencies to develop a PRTF with a 30-bed capacity located within 50 miles of the District.<sup>58</sup>

Currently, CFSA's Office of Well Being (OWB) has four dedicated in-house therapists, as well as one psychiatric nurse, to screen, evaluate, assess, diagnose, and provide short-term mental health treatment to children entering care.<sup>59</sup> The total capacity for OWB allows for 72 clients to receive in-house behavioral health services and, during FY21, OWB therapeutic team served 49 total clients.<sup>60</sup> If a child in care is determined to need more or longer-term services, the child is referred to DBH for behavioral health services. Specifically, CFSA contracts with MBI Health Services LLC (MBI), a DBH Core Service Agency which has capacity to serve 150 children and youth, and up to 75 birth parents, for longer-term mental health treatment or a specialized

modality.<sup>61</sup> CFSA initiates most referrals to MBI within one business day of discharge and the mental health supervisor confers directly with the two therapists assigned to the MBI contract to discuss key information needed for the transition and warm hand-off.<sup>62</sup> We appreciate CFSA and DBH working to create timely connection to long term service and engaging in a warm hand-off for foster youth transitioning from OWB to MBI.

However, there remains significant confusion around other services that youth in CFSA's care may receive from DBH. OWB and MBI are not the only places where our clients receive services. In both 2021 and 2022, we reviewed hundreds of guardian-ad litem cases and found that on average between the two years 173 clients were accessing outpatient behavioral health services, representing over 40 percent of our clients.<sup>63</sup> This is significantly more than what CFSA and DBH reported in terms of delivering behavioral health services through the current structure utilizing OWB and MBI. We urge the two agencies to work together to better understand what and how data needs to be collected and reported to accurately capture all foster children and youth accessing behavioral health services and supports in the District.

Additionally, the capacity of OWB and MBI is significantly lower than what is truly needed. As noted above, OWB only has capacity to serve 72 individuals and MBI can serve 150 foster children and youth, but in FY22 there were 537 children and youth in care, 430 whom were above the age of five.<sup>64</sup> Not every child in care will need or want

behavioral health services but we have a responsibility to ensure every child can have access to them if needed or desired. That is significantly more than the current OWB and MBI capacity.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, our own clients' experiences confirm that it is a struggle for foster children to access behavioral health services— from individual and family therapy sessions to medication management appointments, to intensive outpatient mental health services. More often than not, the problem was a lack of providers – either the service needed was unavailable, or the waitlist for an appropriate provider was prohibitively long. Further, high turnover among behavioral health providers negatively impacted our clients' ability to maintain consistent services. Even when our clients successfully connect with a provider, they encounter issues of quality and cultural competence (issues that are both rooted in the overall lack of providers). Many of the reasons and barriers to access overlap with findings in CFSA's FY22 Needs Assessment: lack of evening appointments or flexible hours, insufficient information sharing, transportation issues, need for more training for both resource parents and clinical staff and availability of alternative therapy modalities.<sup>66</sup>

We need to find ways to overcome these barriers. We ask for better data collection on the utilization of behavioral health services by foster youth and evaluation of its timeliness and quality. Accessing behavioral health services is not just an issue for foster youth.<sup>67</sup> DC's behavioral health system for children currently lacks both breadth and depth – it does not include the full spectrum of services our children need, and for the

services we do have, the capacity is insufficient to meet the need. As a city, we need to invest in a comprehensive behavioral health system that can meet the needs of all children – including foster children.

We ask this Committee to view behavioral health as a top priority for both oversight and budget this year. Further, we urge this Committee to work with the Committee on Health and the rest of the Council to reform DC’s behavioral health system for children and families.<sup>68</sup>

### **Three Laws that Impact the Child Welfare System were Passed in Fiscal Year 2023 and Need to be Implemented**

We appreciate the recent Council actions that address the well-being of DC’s children, youth, and families. The DC Council enacted B24-0857, the Preserving Our Kids’ Equity Through Trusts (the POKETT Act) and Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (the FSHO Act) Amendment Act of 2022 in January 2023.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, the passage of B24-0989, Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022 has significant implications for child welfare.<sup>70</sup> We are very pleased to see the Council take action for the well-being of DC’s children, youth, and families. However, the work does not end at enactment of these three bills; there must be effective implementation.

*Recent welcome changes to the Child Protection Register need to be implemented*

B24-0989, Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022, was enacted in January 2023. Although this legislation largely focused on streamlining the screening process for individuals applying to work as a teacher or volunteer in DC

schools and educational programs, this Act also has made important changes to the District's Child Protection Register (CPR or Register). Children's Law Center is strongly supportive of the legislation's reform to the CPR statute.

Prior to the act, placement on the CPR for a substantiated report of abuse or neglect was permanent, resulting in lifetime barriers to employment and family stability – both of which directly impact the well-being of children and families in the District. Substantiated reports include a wide variety of circumstances, including reports stemming from issues of neglect – such as a child missing too many days of school, inadequate supervision, poor housing conditions, and other situations that do not involve violence against children. Such reports are not necessarily helpful in determining whether a person is capable of safely caring for children – especially when they are decades old. This imposed lifelong consequences – long after the underlying situation has been resolved, rehabilitation completed, children reunified, and cases closed.

Being placed on the Register most significantly impacts families in two critical areas: employment and family stability. Placement on the Register prevents individuals from obtaining jobs involving close contact with children. This includes schools, daycares, aftercare/out-of-school time programs, and all manner of child-serving programs (tutoring, sports clubs, extracurricular programs, etc.). In addition to being sectors where the District is suffering serious workforce shortages, these are also critical jobs and incomes that many families need access to in order to meet their children's basic needs.



Placement on the Register also impacts family stability by preventing individuals from being able to serve as caregivers or kin foster parents for members of their own family. We have seen cases where grandparents or other extended family members of children who have been removed from their parents are unable to care for their family member because of a decades-old report placing them on the Register. As a result, children in these families are faced with the much more traumatic experience of entering the foster care system with a stranger instead of staying with family members they know and love.

The new law creates a tiered structure that allows for different types of reports to be expunged from the Register after one, three, or five years depending on the report type and other circumstances. In cases of a child fatality, sexual abuse, and serious physical injury expungement is not permitted. This is a significant improvement. We look forward to CFSA's timely creation of policies and practices to implement the change. We ask the Committee to follow up with CFSA on the status of the necessary changes.

*With Adequate Resources and Effective Implementation, the POKETT Act Will Provide Much-Needed Financial Support to Children and Families*

The POKETT Act requires CFSA to screen every child in out-of-home care to determine their eligibility for benefits administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), apply for those benefits on the child's behalf, and conserve those benefits for the child until the child exits care. Although the POKETT Act has the potential to provide

much-needed financial supports for some children, youth, and families involved in the child welfare system, careful attention must be paid to ensure this legislation is adequately funded, equipped with the right resources, and thoughtfully implemented for it to have its intended impact.

In September we shared two major obstacles to successful implementation of the POKETT Act. First, federal funds conserved for foster children must be replaced in CFSA's budget.<sup>71</sup> Second, the cost associated with building CFSA's benefits capacity must be included in the budget for this proposed legislation and funds must be allocated accordingly.<sup>72</sup>

Currently CFSA applies to SSA to be the representative payee for any benefits children in its care are eligible for, deposits them in a special purpose revenue fund, and applies those benefits to the child's cost of care. The OCFO estimated that approximately \$1 million of care costs are paid annually from the special purpose revenue fund, and CFSA will require local dollars to replace these costs.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, CFSA will also require staff to support the SSI application process and non-fiscal related appeals; provide basic SSI education for youth, birth and adoptive parents, and guardians; serve as a contract monitor; and serve as a liaison to the social work team, CFSA Business Services Administration, and Office of the Chief Financial Officer.<sup>74</sup>

We call on this Committee and the Council as a whole to ensure the cost associated with building CFSA's benefits capacity be included in the FY24 budget as well as ensuring there are no cuts to CFSA's existing budget due to the reallocation of SSA benefits. We also encourage the Committee to work with CFSA to move forward the procedures and policies that will guide the implementation of this legislation.

*The FSHO Act is an Important First Step in Addressing Housing Stability for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care*

A significant concern for older youth in care is safe and stable housing upon their exit from care. Many older youth do not leave care with an income or housing. Of the 38 youth who aged out in FY22, 9 had full-time jobs, 6 had part-time jobs, and the rest, 23 youth, were unemployed.<sup>75</sup> Also, very few of these 38 youth were able to find independent living situations, only 3 had their own apartment, and another 5 were in a college dorm or in a DDS placement.<sup>76</sup> The rest were all in temporary situations – including staying with former foster parents, family, or friends; living in transitional housing; and incarcerated.<sup>77</sup>

CFSA has taken steps to better partner to navigate the challenges of older foster youth. During the public health emergency, CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) met with our attorneys monthly to discuss the status of youth in extended care due to the pandemic. OYE has continued to host quarterly meetings where advocates can raise systemic issues that are impacting older youth as well as case-specific questions. This

partnership has helped resolve many issues and increased collaboration across the board. However, there is more work to be done to ensure all older foster youth exit care into safe and stable environments.

The current housing supports available to older youth are (1) Rapid Housing Assistance Program (RHAP);<sup>78</sup> (2) Family Unification Program (FUP);<sup>79</sup> (3) the Wayne Place Project;<sup>80</sup> (4) the Mary Elizabeth House; and (5) Genesis Intergenerational Program.<sup>81</sup> The Wayne Place Project, Mary Elizabeth House, and Genesis Intergeneration Program are limited to specific subpopulations of youth. While each of these programs provides important supports for youth transitioning out of care, they are insufficient to meet the needs of all youth. RHAP and FUP are potential housing options for youth who do not require specific supports found in the other programs. However, there have been significant barriers to youth accessing both RHAP and FUP.

We are hopeful that the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act (FSHO Act) will improve access to FUP vouchers.<sup>82</sup> Our clients have often struggled to access FUP vouchers for reasons that are unclear – though it appears obstacles exist at various points along the pipeline from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to DC’s Housing Authority (DCHA), to CFSA itself. We testified in September to the need for more information to understand how DC’s foster youth can more consistently access and utilize FUP vouchers.<sup>83</sup>

Therefore, we appreciate the inclusion of a robust report requirement in the legislation, which falls in line with our suggestion in our testimony at the FSHO Act and POKETT Act hearing in September.<sup>84</sup> The Mayor will be required to submit a report beginning February 28, 2024 and every year thereafter providing the following information: (1) the number of aging-out youths who left foster care in the preceding fiscal year; (2) the number and percentage of aging-out youths who left foster care in the preceding fiscal year who were homeless upon leaving care; (3) the number and percentage of aging-out youths who left foster care in the preceding 5 fiscal years who were homeless at 6 months after leaving foster care and upon the youth's 26<sup>th</sup> birthday; (4) housing options available to aging-out youth and the process for accessing each housing option; (5) the process by which the Agency matches aging-out youth with housing resources, including the use of matrices or other tools by any formal or informal governmental body, and a description of the considerations, qualifications, or other relevant factors that the agency relies on when matching aging-out youth with housing resources; and (6) any barriers faced by the agency in successfully matching aging-out youth with housing resources and the agency's mitigation of those barriers.<sup>85</sup>

With the reporting required by the FSHO, CFSA and the Council will have a better understanding of where the systemic obstacles lie and can take steps to effectively resolve them. Therefore, we ask the Council to work with CFSA to ensure implementation of the

new reporting and planning requirements under the FSHO Act are met and ask the Council to continue to work to expand supportive housing options for youth aging out.

**Conclusion**

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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>.

<sup>2</sup> The term “protective supervision” is 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).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Matthews, Director of Child and Family Service Agency, Oral Testimony, Committee of the Human Services, Roundtable, “The Implementation of the Child and Family Services Agency’s Safety Planning and Informal Family Planning Arrangement Policies,” December 13, 2022, *available at:* [http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view\\_id=2](http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view_id=2).

<sup>4</sup> Tom Oates & Robert Matthews, *Reorganizing Community Collaboratives*, Transcript of Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast (2018), *available at:* [https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/cwig\\_podcasts/cw\\_podcast\\_prevention1\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/cwig_podcasts/cw_podcast_prevention1_transcript.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> R24-0563, Ombudsperson for Children Shalonda L. Cawthon Appointment Resolution of 2022, *available at:* <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/PR24-0784>

<sup>6</sup> In 1989 when LaShawn v. Barry was filed, the count of children in foster care was inaccurate due to inadequate tracking and record keeping, but it was estimated at 2,500 to 3,000. Over the past 10 years, the number of children in care has dropped from 1827 in 2011 to 614 in 2021. *See* FY2021 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q109, *available at:* <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>; Child and Family Services Agency, Annual Report, 2011, *available at:* [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/2011\\_APSR\\_August\\_Update.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/2011_APSR_August_Update.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Robert Matthews, Director of Child and Family Service Agency, Oral Testimony, Committee of the Human Services, Roundtable, “The Implementation of the Child and Family Services Agency’s Safety Planning and Informal Family Planning Arrangement Policies,” December 13, 2022, *available at:* [http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view\\_id=2](http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view_id=2).

<sup>8</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, Dashboard, Front Door, *available at:* <https://cfsadashboard.dc.gov/page/front-door>; CFSA, *Four Pillars Performance Report*, January-June 2021, *available at:* [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/January-June\\_2021\\_Four\\_Pillars\\_Performance\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/January-June_2021_Four_Pillars_Performance_Report_FINAL_0.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> CFSA, Putting Families First in DC (Oct. 22, 2019), p. 5, *available at:* [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/DC%20Title%20IVE%20Prevention%20Program%20Five-Year%20Plan\\_Amended%209.8.20.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/DC%20Title%20IVE%20Prevention%20Program%20Five-Year%20Plan_Amended%209.8.20.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> CFSA Putting Families First in DC, Families First DC Snapshot, *available at:* [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/page\\_content/attachments/FFDC\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_wgrantees.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/page_content/attachments/FFDC_Fact_Sheet_wgrantees.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Locations were identified based on a review of social determinants of health data, violence prevention, substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect, and Office on Neighborhood Safety and Engagement data. CFSA Putting Families First in DC, Families First DC Snapshot, *available at:* [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/page\\_content/attachments/FFDC\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_wgrantees.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/page_content/attachments/FFDC_Fact_Sheet_wgrantees.pdf). *See also* FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q64(a),

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available at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions-2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Internal Children’s Law Center Data Collection, “GAL Deep Dive,” June 2021 through May 2022.

<sup>13</sup> In FY 2022, an 11th Family Success Center opened in Ward 5, a Ward experiencing similar social and economic trends as those in Wards 7 and 8. Through a place-based approach, the Family Success Centers facilitate access to government and community resources tailored to meet families’ needs, to mitigate the effects of trauma, and to increase protective factors for sustainable independence from welfare involvement. Services include Parent Cafés, Concrete Support (food, clothing, diapers), Family Fun Night, Restorative Justice, Physical & nutritional health (fitness, dance, health eating & wellness checks), Trauma and Community Violence groups, Personal and Professional Development, Work Readiness, Books & Breakfast, Nurturing Parenting Program, Knowledge of Child Development, Economic Development, Fatherhood/Men/Boys sessions, Creative Arts, Mental Health and Wellness, Housing support, School assistance and support, Black History Month celebration, and Family Trivia Night. See FY2021 CFSA Performance Oversight, response to Q59(c), available at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>. See also District of Columbia Government, FY2022 *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> FY2022 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q60, available at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions-2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf>; FY2021 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q68, available at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> In January 2021, CFSA announced its participation in a new prevention initiative launched by the U.S. Children’s Bureau and several national foundations: Thriving Families, Safer Children (TFSC). The goal of TFSC is to reshape child welfare with a focus on prevention and equity and to reduce disparities in outcomes for children and their families. Ultimately, TFSC seeks to transform the child welfare system into a child well-being system. CFSA is part of the second cohort of jurisdictions selected to participate in TFSC, which will focus on policy and systemic reforms. CFSA is employing three strategies to launch the transformation from a child welfare to a child and family well-being system. These strategies are: (1) Deepen the community-capacity-building and support infrastructure of the District’s Family Success Centers (FSCs); (2) Stand-up a community-based Warmline to divert calls from the Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline when they are not safety related; and (3) Create a community-supporter model whereby individuals with lived experience with the child welfare system or above average risk factors respond to the calls that come into the Warmline within their communities. See CFSA Stakeholders’ Forum (January 28, 2021), slides from presentation on file with Children’s Law Center; New Hampshire Children’s Trust, Thriving Families, Safer Children: A National Commitment to Wellbeing (Sept. 10, 2020), available at: <https://www.nhchildrenstrust.org/post/thriving-families-saferchildren-a-nationalcommitment-to-well-being>; Casey Family Programs, First-of-its-kind National Partnership Aims to Redesign Child Welfare into Child- and Family Well-being Systems (Sept. 9, 2020), available at: <https://www.casey.org/thriving-families-safer-children/>. See also, Thriving Families, Safer Children Steering Committee, The District of Columbia’s Child and Family Well-Being System Blueprint, Version 1.0, 2021, on file with the Children’s Law Center.



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<sup>16</sup> Robert Matthews, Director of Child and Family Service Agency, Oral Testimony, Committee of the Human Services, Roundtable, "The Implementation of the Child and Family Services Agency's Safety Planning and Informal Family Planning Arrangement Policies," December 13, 2022, *available at*: [http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view\\_id=2](http://dc.granicus.com/viewpublisher.php?view_id=2).

<sup>17</sup> The other services eligible for federal under include mental health, and substance use disorder services. See FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q62, *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q53, *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Casey Family Programs, *Are Home Visiting Programs Effective in Reducing Child Maltreatment?* (September, 27, 2022), *available at*: <https://www.casey.org/home-visiting-programs/#:~:text=Studies%20have%20demonstrated%20that%20high,neglect%20among%20low%20Dinco me%20families>.

<sup>20</sup> Chaiyachati BH, Gaither JR, Hughes M, Foley-Schain K, Leventhal JM. Preventing child maltreatment: Examination of an established statewide home-visiting program. *Child Abuse Negl.* 2018 May; 79:476-484. doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.019. Epub 2018 Mar 20. PMID: 29558714; PMCID: PMC5894115; Casey Family Programs, *Are Home Visiting Programs Effective in Reducing Child Maltreatment?* (September, 27, 2022), *available at*: <https://www.casey.org/home-visiting-programs/#:~:text=Studies%20have%20demonstrated%20that%20high,neglect%20among%20low%20Dinco me%20families>.

<sup>21</sup> FY2022 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q53(d), *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf); FY2021 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q60(d), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Internal Children's Law Center Data Collection, "GAL Deep Dive," June 2021 through May 2022.

<sup>22</sup> FY2023 Child and Family Services Agency Budget, Table RL0-4, Table RL0-5.

<sup>23</sup> See Child and Family Services Agency, *Safety Plans Policy*, July 18, 2022, *available at*: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/publication/program-safetyplans#:~:text=A%20safety%20plan%20clearly%20describes,the%20participants%20in%20the%20plans>.

<sup>24</sup> See Child and Family Services Agency, *Informal Family Planning Arrangements Policy* (July 18, 2022), *available at*: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/publication/ai-informal-family-planning-arrangements>.

<sup>25</sup> FY2022 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q183, *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, Community Pop-up Briefing, August 18, 2022.

<sup>27</sup> Committee on Human Services, Public Oversight Roundtable, Brianne Nadeau, Chairperson, December 13, 2022, Roundtable of the Implementation of Safety Plan and Informal Family Planning Arrangements.

<sup>28</sup> In FY2021 CFSA reported "Our current FACES system does not track the number of individual safety plans developed." See FY2021 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q93(a), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing->

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[Questions-Responses-Final.pdf](#). In FY2022, CFSA reported the total number of safety plans. See FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q83(a), available at: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> See FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q85, available at: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> CFSA has implemented 33 Safety Plans in FY 2023, 28 cases for Child Protective Services and five (5) cases for In-Home Program Services.<sup>30</sup> Of the 66 children involved in the 33 safety plans developed: Six children experienced a separation within 60 days of the plan taking effect, of whom, three children experienced a separation within 30 days and three children experienced a separation between 31-60 days; 12 children were involved in a new hotline call within 60 days of the safety plan. Eleven of the 12 were screened out. The one screened in was linked to an ongoing investigation. The investigation was ultimately substantiated and resulted in a separation. 37 have a case open with CFSA as of February 9, 2023. Of these children, 31 are In Home and six are in an Out-of-Home placement. See FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q183, available at: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, *Safety Plans*, VI. Sections, Section A: Development of the Safety Plan, (1)(f)(iii), July 18, 2022, available at: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program\\_Policy\\_Safety\\_Plans\\_%20July\\_22\\_Final.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Policy_Safety_Plans_%20July_22_Final.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> Child and Family Services, About, available at: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/page/about-cfsa>.

<sup>33</sup> Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, 2022 *Inaugural Annual Report*, p. 9, available at: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/D.C.%20Office%20of%20the%20Ombudsperson%20for%20Children%20Inaugural%20Annual%20Report%20December%2029%202022a.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> FY2022 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q101, available at: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf); District of Columbia Government, *Annual Needs Assessment*, FY2022, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 11, available at: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, 2022 *Inaugural Annual Report*, p. 9, available at: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/D.C.%20Office%20of%20the%20Ombudsperson%20for%20Children%20Inaugural%20Annual%20Report%20December%2029%202022a.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> District of Columbia Government, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 34, available at: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf); FY2022 Child and Family Service Agency Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q102, available at: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

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- <sup>37</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q108, *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf); Internal Children’s Law Center Data Collection, “GAL Deep Dive,” June 2021 through May 2022.
- <sup>38</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q43(b), *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).
- <sup>39</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q107, *available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf); District of Columbia Government, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 20, 25, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).
- <sup>40</sup> In 2017, CFSA developed the SOY program to match specially trained CFSA foster parents with youth who have had challenges in a traditional family-based setting due to behavioral or mental health needs. Aged 13 to 20, SOY youth require parents who are skilled in working with teens and young adults and can support them in learning required independent living skills. District of Columbia Government, FY2021, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 20, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf). In 2019, CFSA established the placement option of SOAR homes (Stabilization, Observation, Assessment, and Respite) with professional resource parents specifically trained in trauma-informed caregiving (described below). SOAR homes provide temporary care for up to 90 days. These homes are particularly appropriate for children who need an array of comprehensive assessments prior to the Agency being able to appropriately identify the best placement match for the children’s exact needs. District of Columbia Government, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 19, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf). As of June 30, 2022, there were eight SOY homes with 19 beds, providing placement for 13 youth and there were two SOAR resource parents providing a total of four beds, providing placement for three children. *See* District of Columbia Government, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 19, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf); District of Columbia Government, FY2021 *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 156, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21_Needs_Assessment_FINAL_0.pdf). CFSA did not add any additional SOAR beds between FY21 and FY22 and unfortunately one SOY bed was lost in FY22 as compared to FY21. *See* District of Columbia Government, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 19-20, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf); District of Columbia Government, FY2021, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 156, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21_Needs_Assessment_FINAL_0.pdf).
- <sup>41</sup> District of Columbia Government, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 19-20, *available at*:

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[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* at 20.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> OSSE, Attendance Report School Year 2021-2022 (Nov. 30, 2022), 8, *available at*:

<https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/2021-22%20Attendance%20Report%20%28Nov%2028%202022%29.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> FY2021 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q133(g), *available at*:

<https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>; FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q136(g),

*available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf) (In FY22, the graduation rate was 87% and in FY21, the graduation rate was 68%).

<sup>46</sup> FY2021 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q133(e), *available at*:

<https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>; FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q136(e),

*available at*: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Internal Children’s Law Center Data Collection, “GAL Deep Dive,” June 2021 through May 2022.

<sup>48</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q49(a), (b), *available at*:

[https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Note CFSA did not report math or reading proficiency in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “CFSA does not have access to current math proficiency levels of its youth in foster care since school districts have put a hold on administering standardized testing since the pandemic began in the Spring of 2020.” *See* FY2021 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q56(a), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>. In FY2019, among foster children in grades 3-8, only 5% met or exceeded expectations in math, and only 12% met or exceeded expectations in reading. CFSA FY2019 Performance Oversight Responses, responses to Q46(a), (b), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/cfsa20.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q49(a), (b), *available at*:

[https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> In FY2019, among high school students in foster care, only 2% met or exceeded expectations in math, and only 5% met or exceeded expectations in reading. CFSA FY2019 Performance Oversight Responses, responses to Q46(a), (b), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/cfsa20.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, *Mental and Behavioral Health Needs of Children in Foster Care*, *available at*: <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/foster-care/mental-and-behavioral-health-needs-of-children-in-foster-care/>;

National Conference of State Legislatures, *Mental Health and Foster Care*, *available at*:

<https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/mental-health-and-foster-care>; and Sheppard, S., *The Mental Health Effects of Living in Foster Care*, verywellmind, February 9, 2022, *available at*:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/the-mental-health-effects-of-living-in-foster-care-5216614>.

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*

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<sup>54</sup> District of Columbia Government, FY2021, *Annual Needs Assessment*, Child and Family Services Agency, p. 43, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21_Needs_Assessment_FINAL_0.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*, at p.112.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*, at p.56.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*, at p. 19.

<sup>58</sup> *Id.*, p. 25

<sup>59</sup> The CFSA in-house services include a variety of therapy modalities including child-centered play therapy, grief and loss therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), Trauma Systems Therapy (TST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Multisystemic therapy, child parent psychotherapy, and Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT). Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), FY2021 *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 162, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY21_Needs_Assessment_FINAL_0.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 94-95, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, FY2021 *Annual Report*, February 2022, available at:

<https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/CFSA%20Annual%20Public%20Report%20FY2021.pdf>; CFSA FY21 Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q36(n)(iii), available

at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>; and Child and Family Services Agency, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 92-98, December 2022, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> CFSA FY21 Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q36(n)(iii), available at:

<https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/FY21-22-CFSA-Performance-Oversight-Prehearing-Questions-Responses-Final.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> In 2021 we reviewed 389 cases from June 2020 through May 2021 and in 2022 we reviewed 411 cases from June 2021 and May 2022. In 2021, 175 clients were accessing outpatient services and treatment, and in 2022, 171 clients were accessing outpatient services and treatments. Please note this is not inclusive of clients who may have in that timeframe accessed inpatient behavioral health services like hospitalization, psychiatric residential treatments, and other in-patient services.

<sup>64</sup> OWB does not serve children under five due to the challenges associated with providing clinical therapeutic services to younger children. Child and Family Services Agency, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 94-95, December 2022, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf). See also FY22 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses,

response to Q101, available at: [https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> CFSA FY2022 Needs Assessment found that the Agency has “adequate capacity to deliver services or refer to other providers if necessary.” This has not been our experience for our clients. See Child and Family Services Agency, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 98, available at:

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[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> Child and Family Services Agency, FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 95-96, available at:

[https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> Sharra E. Greer, Children’s Law Center, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Health, (February 1, 2023), available at: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-Greer\\_CLC\\_Performance-Oversight\\_DBH\\_General\\_February-1-2023\\_final-1.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sharra-Greer_CLC_Performance-Oversight_DBH_General_February-1-2023_final-1.pdf);

Amber Rieke, Children’s Law Center, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Health, (February 1, 2023), available at: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Amber-Rieke\\_CLC\\_Performance-Oversight-Testimony\\_DBH\\_February-1-2023\\_SBBH\\_final-1.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Amber-Rieke_CLC_Performance-Oversight-Testimony_DBH_February-1-2023_SBBH_final-1.pdf).

<sup>68</sup> *A Path Forward – Transforming the Public Behavioral Health System for Children and their Families in the District*, December 2021, available at:

[https://childrenslawcenter.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/12/BHSystemTransformation\\_Final\\_121321.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/12/BHSystemTransformation_Final_121321.pdf).

This report is released by Children’s Law Center, Children’s National Hospital, the District of Columbia Behavioral Health Association, Health Alliance Network, Early Childhood Innovation Network, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Parent Watch, and Total Family Care Coalition.

<sup>69</sup> B24-0857, Preserving Our Kids’ Equity Through Trusts (POKETT) Amendment Act of 2022, available at:

<https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B24-0857>.

<sup>70</sup> B24-0989, Educator Background Check Streamlining Amendment Act of 2022, available at:

<https://lims.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B24-0989>.

<sup>71</sup> Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (September 22, 2022), available at: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_CLC-Testimony-for-Sept.-22-2022-Hearing-on-B24-0857-B24-0941\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TWeerasingha-Cote_CLC-Testimony-for-Sept.-22-2022-Hearing-on-B24-0857-B24-0941_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> *Id.*

<sup>73</sup> Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Fiscal Impact Statement – Preserving Our Kids’ Equity Through Trusts Amendment Act of 2022, November 17, 2022, available at:

[http://app.cfo.dc.gov/services/fiscal\\_impact/pdf/spring09/New%20Folder/FIS%20Preserving%20Our%20Kids%20Equity%20Through%20Trusts.pdf](http://app.cfo.dc.gov/services/fiscal_impact/pdf/spring09/New%20Folder/FIS%20Preserving%20Our%20Kids%20Equity%20Through%20Trusts.pdf).

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q146(c), available at:

[https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q146(d), available at:

[https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions\\_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions_2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> *Id.*

<sup>78</sup> Through this program, youth aging out of care are eligible to apply for RHAP to prevent eviction, cover security deposits, and assist with rent payments. However, per CFSA’s FY2022 Oversight Responses, only 42 youth applied for RHAP and, of those, only 14 received assistance. FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q154(f), available at: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp->

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[content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions-2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf](https://www.dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions-2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> A federal rental assistance program for a period not to exceed 36 months, otherwise eligible youths who have attained at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age and who have left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act, and is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older. *See* U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Family Unification Program (FUP), *available at*: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/family#:~:text=The%20Fami%20ly%20Unification%20Program%20\(FUP,%2Dof%2Dhome%20care%2C%20or.](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/family#:~:text=The%20Fami%20ly%20Unification%20Program%20(FUP,%2Dof%2Dhome%20care%2C%20or.)

<sup>80</sup> Wayne Place Project is for youth transitioning out of a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) or who otherwise need intensive behavioral health supports. *See* FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q156(a), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions-2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup> Mary Elizabeth House and Genesis are designed to support transitional living for pregnant and parenting youth. *See* Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), FY2022, *Annual Needs Assessment*, p. 26, *available at*: [https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22\\_Needs\\_Assessment\\_FY24\\_Resource\\_Development\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/FY22_Needs_Assessment_FY24_Resource_Development_Plan_FINAL.pdf); FY2022 CFSA Performance Oversight Responses, response to Q156(a), *available at*: <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CFSA-FY22-Performance-Oversight-Hearing-Pre-Hearing-Responses-to-Questions-2-17-2023-FINAL-1.pdf>.

<sup>82</sup> Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (September 22, 2022), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_CLC-Testimony-for-Sept.-22-2022-Hearing-on-B24-0857-B24-0941\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TWeerasingha-Cote_CLC-Testimony-for-Sept.-22-2022-Hearing-on-B24-0857-B24-0941_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>83</sup> Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (December 13, 2022), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_CLC-Testimony-Dec-13-2022-Roundtable-Safety-Planning-Informal-Family-Planning-Arrangements\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/TWeerasingha-Cote_CLC-Testimony-Dec-13-2022-Roundtable-Safety-Planning-Informal-Family-Planning-Arrangements_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>84</sup> Tami Weerasingha-Cote, Children’s Law Center, Testimony before the District of Columbia Council Committee on Human Services, (September 22, 2022), *available at*: [https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TWeerasingha-Cote\\_CLC-Testimony-for-Sept.-22-2022-Hearing-on-B24-0857-B24-0941\\_FINAL.pdf](https://childrenslawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/TWeerasingha-Cote_CLC-Testimony-for-Sept.-22-2022-Hearing-on-B24-0857-B24-0941_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> Preserving Our Kids’ Equity Through Trusts and Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Amendment Act of 202, Sec. 303g., (c). Housing for youth aging out of Agency custody.