

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES**

**Eighty-third Session
February 12, 2025**

The joint meeting of the Subcommittees on Human Services of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means was called to order by Chair Rochelle T. Nguyen at 8:04 a.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, in Room 3137 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 2 of the State of Nevada Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the attendance roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. Link to [Executive Budget](#). Link to [Budget Amendments](#).

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen, Chair
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop
Senator Robin L. Titus
Senator Jeff Stone

ASSEMBLY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Chair
Assemblymember Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Tracy Brown-May
Assemblymember Jill Dickman
Assemblymember Gregory T. Hafen, II
Assemblymember Brian Hibbetts
Assemblymember Sandra Jauregui
Assemblymember Steve Yeager

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Sarah Coffman, Assembly Fiscal Analyst

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Daniel Miller, Program Analyst
Helen Wood, Committee Secretary
Dee Chekowitz-Dykes, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kelsey McCann-Navarro, Administrative Services Officer, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Marla McDade Williams, Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Jacqueline Wade, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Sabrina Schnur, Foster Kinship

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will hear the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). There are seven budgets on the agenda. Their remaining budgets will be heard at a later date. We will start with budget account (B/A) 101-3146, Family Support Program.

HUMAN SERVICES

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

DHS-DCFS - Family Support Program — Budget Page DHS-DCFS-63 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3146

KELSEY MCCANN-NAVARRO (Administrative Services Officer, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services):
Beginning on slide 7 of ([Exhibit C](#)), our FY 2026-2027 Budget Presentation, we provide an overview for DCFS. The Division of Child and Family Services is responsible for the quality and oversight of programs and services in the child welfare, youth mental health and juvenile justice systems. Within DCFS, the Family Support Program and the planning evaluation units both focus on quality and fidelity in the child welfare system.

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The following slides outline the decision units within the Executive Budget. Decision unit E-225 requests one additional quality assurance specialist and associated costs to support the Children's Mental Health Block Grant.

E-225 Economic Growth & Business Development – Page DHS-DCFS-66

Decision unit E-257 requests a contract for the data collection and analysis tool used for various purposes related to program evaluation, quality assurance and continuous quality improvement within children's mental health.

E-257 Health & Wellness – Page DHS-DCFS-67

Decision unit E-259 requests authority for the Federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 Title IV-E Prevention Plan award, known as Title IV E.

E-259 Health & Wellness – Page DHS-DCFS-67

Decision units E-260 and E-908 request transfers of two clinical program planner positions and funding from the Family Support Program, B/A 101-3146 to the Office of Analytics, Nevada Health Authority which is B/A 101-3203.

E-260 Health & Wellness – Page DHS-DCFS-68

E-908 Transfer from FMLY Support to Office of Analytics – Page DHS-DCFS-71

NEVADA HEALTH AUTHORITY

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

NHA DO - Data Analytics – Budget Page DIRECTOR'S OFFICE-24 (Volume III)
Budget Account 101-3203

E-908 Transfer From Family Support To Data Analytics – Page DIRECTOR'S
OFFICE-36

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Decision units E-499 and E-599 [B/A 101-3146] request the sunset of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds which eliminates eight positions and preserves three positions.

E-499 Expiring ARPA Grant/Program — Page DHS-DCFS-69
E-599 Continuing Expiring ARPA Positions — Page DHS-DCFS-70

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

It is my understanding there are a number of ARPA-funded positions being eliminated from the Family Support Program with some positions being filled. Can you discuss your plans for the agency with regard to the incumbents in those positions which are recommended to be eliminated by the Governor? Due to that reduction, there is \$2.9 million in ARPA funds cut from that budget. Is that correct?

MARLA MCDADE WILLIAMS (Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services):

Prior to the budget being developed, we had active recruitments for many positions. A lot of our effort was focused on recruiting, and we were able to fill some of these positions while they crossed over and were scheduled for elimination. Our plan would be to follow the Division of Human Resource Management process for issuing layoff notices for filled positions if needed, but we would always do our best to fill those positions. If those positions are not continued, we would put people into existing open positions going forward.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

How many state positions, not contract positions, would be affected?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

I believe it is three.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

It appears there are two eliminated ARPA-funded positions that were continued to the fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 base budget. The Interim Finance Committee (IFC) had previously approved those using the system of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020 Grant program to replace funding for those two ARPA positions and then add four new positions.

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Those actions do not appear to be reflected in that 2025-2027 biennium budget. Do you have a plan for how that issue will be corrected going forward?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

We are going to continue to work with your staff and the Office of the Governor, Office of Finance (GFO) to correct that. We have an approved work program, and it is part of a technical process that we need to work through to get it right in the budget.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MOSCA:

Could you please discuss the agency's plan to address the upfront funding that was not included but is needed to receive the federal Title IV-E [State] Plan reimbursements?

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

We are actively working with the GFO partners to correct this. According to the fund map, we do have the match. It is in a different category, and we need to make an adjustment so we can bring in those federal dollars.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

I know that going through several of these budgets, we have had advanced notice that there will likely be budget amendments forthcoming. It would be helpful to the committee if you would mention during your presentation if there have been conversations about budget amendments and if you have begun working on them.

We will move to the Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services B/A 101-3646.

DHS-DCFS - Southern NV Child & Adolescent Services — Budget Page DHS-
DCFS-112 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3646

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

Through this budget, we provide assessments, care coordination, and a comprehensive continuum of mental and behavioral health care services for

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severely emotionally disturbed children and adolescents from birth through 18 years of age.

Slide 11 and slide 12 of [Exhibit C](#) outline decision units within the Executive Budget. We are working with the GFO on a possible amendment to this budget account.

Decision unit E-253 requests to continue the youth-driven expenditures, including operating supplies and contracts.

E-253 Health & Wellness – Page DHS-DCFS-116

Decision unit E-607 eliminates one senior psychiatrist position with funding to be used for a contract position.

E-607 Budget Reductions – Page DHS-DCFS-117

Decision unit E-651 eliminates 20.51 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to support the cost of temporary contract staff for hard to fill FTE positions at Desert Willow Treatment Center. This decision unit also restores one clinical social work position to allow the agency to maintain the staffing-to-youth ratios.

E-651 Position Restoration – Page DHS-DCFS-118

Decision unit E-900 transfers 12 mental health counselor positions from the Juvenile Justice Services B/A 101-1383 to B/A 101-3646.

DHS-DCFS - Juvenile Justice Services – Budget Page DHS-DCFS-58 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-1383

E-900 Transfers From Juv Justice Serv To SNCAS – Page DHS-DCFS-60

E-900 Transfers from Juv Justice Services To SNCAS – Page DHS-DCFS-119

Decision unit E-902 transfers one psychiatric caseworker position from this budget account [B/A 101-3646] to Youth Parole Services which is B/A 101-3263.

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E-902 Transfers from SNCAS To Youth Parole Svcs – Page DHS-DCFS-119

DHS-DCFS - Youth Parole Services – Budget Page DHS-DCFS-97 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3263

E-902 Transfers From SNCAS To Youth Parole Services – Page DHS-DCFS-101

Decision unit E-903 transfers one psychiatric casework position and one clinical program manager position from B/A 101-3646 to the Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services B/A 101-3281.

E-903 Transfers from SNCAS To NNCAS – Page DHS-DCFS-120

DHS-DCFS - Northern NV Child & Adolescent Services – Budget Page DHS-
DCFS-104 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3281

E-903 Transfers From SNCAS To NNCAS – Page DHS-DCFS-109

CHAIR NGUYEN:

I know we have historically had a hard time filling some of these clinical positions. Can you describe some of the barriers that exist which prohibit the Division from filling these 23 vacant positions that are recommended for elimination? It looks like there are 20 of them being converted over to contract positions. Can you discuss the problems you have had filling those positions?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

I think it has been primarily not being able to compete with the private sector. With the clinical positions, there tends to be a lot of competition, and we struggle finding people willing to come in. It is hard work in our facilities. The youth are very challenging. Not everybody has to stay and deal with the challenges that are there. We do not get any enhancements for dealing with more challenging youth. It is primarily just the competition with the private sector.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Previously, we have included these as FTE and not contract positions. How many of these positions are currently with contract workers? Are the work programs something that we have been doing for years and years?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

I do not know if Ms. McCann-Navarro has the actual number. One of the things that we have worked very closely with our clinical programs on is ensuring that we converted everybody who was serving as a contractor to a state FTE. We made a lot of progress doing that, but it still is not enough to fill all the positions with contractors. We then have to make a decision; do we shut down wings or what do we do? Do we continue to provide care and keep the contract positions, or do we reduce care and eliminate positions? It is always a balance for us.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Would there be any effect to the continuity and accountability of state services having these contract positions, or do you anticipate the same people in those positions would continue in those positions, formalizing they were contract positions as opposed to state employees?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

We do tend to get a lot of continuity and people staying when they are in contract positions. I am not sure that I should say this today, but many of our clinical positions also provide services outside of state government. The schedules they have in place allow them to supplement their income by providing services outside of their state funded positions. This is a system that seems to work for them.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Do we have any safeguards in place to make sure these contract workers are held to the same performance standards, transparency and accountability as full-time state employees? You indicated some of them are working in other jobs. Do we have a process of monitoring what types of other outside work they are doing and whether there are any potential conflicts with the positions they hold outside in the private sector?

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MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

We do hold contract workers to the same standards as the state FTEs in terms of how they provide care in our facilities. If we need to make immediate changes with personnel, it is easier for us to do that with the contracted workers. We also require all contracted workers and state FTEs to submit secondary employment forms to us. We verify there are no conflicts based on those forms.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Can you talk a little bit about the transfer of two psychiatric caseworker positions and one clinical program manager position within the Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services budget?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

Are you asking why we are proposing that transfer?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Yes. What is the projected impact if that happens?

JACQUELINE WADE (Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services):

The reasoning for the transfer of the position is we are seeing an increase in our cases in the north and we have adequate capacity in the south. That is the rationale, so our families can access services a lot sooner and they can get into care a lot faster than if they are on a waitlist. That is the rationale for moving the one position to the north.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

You answered my Northern Nevada question. But, what about the Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services budget account [101-3646] if two psychiatric case worker positions and a clinical program manager position are transferred?

MS. WADE:

With the clinical program manager position to the north, it would allow for the workload to be decreased from the clinical program manager, allow for monitoring of assessments and youth coming from out-of-state and make sure

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the transitions back to Nevada are done seamlessly. There will be no impact in the south.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I do not know if I am hearing it wrong. Forgive me for asking this, but you have answered about the north, is the Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services being affected too? Did you say that, and I just did not hear it?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

If I understand correctly, I believe these positions are related to our wraparound services. We issued a contract to a provider to build wraparound services in Southern Nevada. That was our target area.

The need for wraparound services in Southern Nevada decreased because we had resources focused on that. The need increased in Northern Nevada because we have not focused there yet. These positions are related to that.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Do you then switch people? You do not have people that just move back and forth between the north and south, do you?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

We do not switch people. We generally work with people when we have vacancies, and we choose to fill in the area we need the positions.

We would not require someone necessarily to move to Northern Nevada from Southern Nevada if they were in a filled position. We take the opportunity when we have vacancies to fill them in the region where the need is.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

It seems like it would be difficult. If I am working in the south and then suddenly, you do not need my services, and you say, "Pack your bag, we are going north." We might do that as Legislators, but I cannot imagine doing that. It is a real job that is paying my bills, and now I have two houses or a house and an apartment or something.

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MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

We would not do that. Unfortunately, we have a lot of opportunity with vacancies but are flexible as to where we choose to fill them.

Sometimes we are doing statewide recruitment for positions outside of this but taking applicants where we can find them because we can pay for some travel or do whatever. When we move a duty location, we try to ensure that we are doing it in vacant positions and filling them in the location where we have the need.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

With those transfers in mind, can you discuss the recommended transfers in response to the short-term increase in cases, or is this a recommended change? Is this a long-term strategy, or is this a short-term strategy?

MS. WADE:

The hope is to have the position be permanent since we have a footprint of that care management company in the south, and we do not have it in the north yet. It will increase capacity and serve more families.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We are transferring this position from the south to the north because there is a need for the position up there due to an increased caseload in the north. I have a hard time believing that Southern Nevada has a decrease in caseload. Would you need to add another position, or has the caseload actually decreased in Southern Nevada that allows for the transfer to this northern position?

MS. WADE:

The numbers have decreased in the south and at this time, the south is supporting the north.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Thank you for that. It is kind of surprising.

SENATOR STONE:

You have seen a decrease in caseloads in the south. You have seen an increase in caseloads in the north. You do not transfer the personnel from the south to

the north. What are you going to do with the three employees that are in the south? Are you going to reassign them someplace else? Are we going to have double the costs in the budget, or how are we going to advertise the cost?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

They will not be duplicated positions. We only have authority to fill the positions that we have authority to fill. I believe there was an oversight in the transfer of these positions. When you change a duty location, you follow a technical process. In this case, I think we may not have followed that process, and we need to ensure we go back and do that, but we would not require the employees to move back to Southern Nevada. If we did not get authority to do that, we would be looking at other vacant positions to fill them in the geographic location that they were located in.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will move on to B/A 101-3145, for the Children, Youth and Family Administration.

DHS-DCFS - Children, Youth & Family Administration — Budget Page DHS-
DCFS-6 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3145

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

The Division of Children and Family Services is responsible for child protective and welfare service delivery in the 15 rural Nevada counties. The Division provides oversight of urban county-operated child protective and welfare services. Those services include children's mental health and behavioral health treatment and residential services; statewide juvenile justice services including youth correctional centers and youth parole; and the Victims Services Unit to Nevada's crime victims.

We are currently working with the GFO on a budget amendment for this budget account.

On slide 14 of [Exhibit C](#) are the decision units for B/A 101-3145. Decision Unit E-225 adds two additional management analyst positions for the DCFS contract unit.

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E-225 Economic Growth & Business Development – Page DHS-DCFS-9

Decision unit E-228 adds one personnel analyst position to support the Division's human resources unit.

E-228 Economic Growth & Business Development – Page DHS-DCFS-10

Decision units E-499 and E-599 sunset ARPA funds, which eliminates eight positions and restores seven positions. This decision also requests to eliminate the Community Recovery Grant projects funded by ARPA.

E-499 Expiring ARPA Grant/Program – Page DHS-DCFS-12

E-599 Continuing Expiring ARPA Positions – Page DHS-DCFS-13

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MONROE-MORENO:

The quality assurance specialist appears funded by ARPA, but it looks like it was continued in the agency's base budget, but that position, if I am correct, should have been eliminated in FY 2024-2025. Could you let us know what steps you are taking to correct the agency's base budget and the Governor's recommendations for that position?

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

We are currently working with the GFO on a budget amendment to remove that position control number from our base budget. It was an oversight.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MONROE-MORENO:

Do you have an estimated time frame of when we will receive the amendment?

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

I had a conversation with the GFO yesterday, and we are working through it.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

There is a recommended reduction from our one-time ARPA funds totaling \$4.6 million that went to programs. Do the programs know it was one-time funding? As an example, the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Degree Program has 368 nurses participating. It is a nationally-accredited program.

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I want to make sure they are aware there is no continuation of the funding and that is not the expectation.

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

They are aware that it is time limited. We are very clear about that when we issue those funds.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will move on to B/A 287-4895, the Victims of Crime budget.

DHS-DCFS - Victims of Crime — Budget Page DHS-DCFS-123 (Volume II)
Budget Account 287-4895

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

The Victims of Crime Program provides financial assistance to eligible persons who are victims of violent crimes committed in Nevada. This program pays hospital bills, medical and dental treatment costs, mental health counseling costs, lost wages, funeral costs and other crime related expenses.

Slide 16 of [Exhibit C](#) outlines decision units within the Executive Budget. Decision unit E-253 adds General Fund appropriations to replace ARPA funds to maintain the program. Decision unit E-304 adds three crime victim compensation specialists and an online payment and application system to review and process compensation claims for victims of crime. Decision unit E-499 sunsets the ARPA funds for various projects.

E-253 Health & Wellness – Page DHS-DCFS-125

E-304 Government Support Services – Page DHS-DCFS-126

E-499 Expiring ARPA Grant/Program – Page DHS-DCFS-126

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:

In the 2023 Legislative Session, the Executive Budget had zeroed out this account, and I was happy that we are able to restore this. I found it a little bit interesting and maybe a little bit troubling that the group we are contracting with is called Cost Containment Strategies Inc. Cost Containment Strategies Inc., in my mind does not really jive with compensating victims of

crime. It is an interesting name, and I want to put on the record that containing costs is not a statement of our values when it comes to victims of crime.

I know you cannot control the company name. When that entity communicates with victims of crime, do they see that name? Do the communications come from Cost Containment Strategies Inc., or do they send it on behalf of the State of Nevada? I would be worried that victims are getting communications that say in the very title we are trying to contain costs when we are also trying to make you whole as a victim of crime.

Ms. McDADE WILLIAMS:

I will have to verify what the actual checks look like. We manage the upfront portion and authorize what the victims get paid out. The company does not control that. We control the payments in accordance with state and federal law.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:

I want to make sure we are not sending the wrong message to victims of crime. Obviously, we have to be mindful of budgets. If we are going to continue to use that entity, perhaps they can remove the name of their firm from communications with the victims.

I know you are trying to potentially transition away from that vendor, but there are some issues in doing that. Apparently, they are the only one who can provide you the data that you need. If you can move away from that vendor, how will you ensure there is not a delay in processing claims for victims of crime?

Ms. McDADE WILLIAMS:

It is like any contract we have; there is a transition period, and we will ensure that we do not cut someone off prior to ensuring that we are able to make the required payments.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:

Federal funding is a question we have talked about with a lot of different agencies. Obviously, this account is pretty unique in that regard. Can you talk about whether you expect federal funding supporting the victims of crime

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compensation to decrease further in a future biennia? How would it impact the compensation claims that you are able to process?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

I think this is one of the federal programs where the state's spend gets us the federal spend. The goal is always to ensure that the State spends appropriately on the front end so that we continue to get the federal match. That would ensure that we are able to continue to compensate victims.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEAGER:

We are obviously trying to monitor what is happening with the federal government. I think there is a lot of confusion there. If you do get an indication that this federal funding might change in some way to the detriment of Nevada and to the detriment of our victims of crime, could you keep us and our Fiscal staff in the loop on that? We have also asked other agencies to do the same.

Compensating victims of crime is a sacred mission we take seriously. We want to make sure there is enough money to do that. Please keep in communication and do not assume that we know, because maybe we do not. It seems like the information changes hour to hour and day to day. If you could commit to doing that, I would really appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER MONROE-MORENO:

In looking through the backup information, the Executive Budget allocated 330 square feet of space for those three new positions you are asking for at the Decatur Boulevard location in Las Vegas. However, I believe that you have moved to the new complex down in Southern Nevada. Would the money still be needed for the Decatur expansion if you are not there? Have you moved to the new location? Will we be getting a budget amendment to remove that dollar amount?

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

The Victims of Crime Unit has moved to the new Warm Springs Road location in the Mineral Building. We will not need the rent for the Decatur location. However, we will work with the GFO to determine if ... I would have to look at

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the spreadsheet to see if we already included it in our rent calculations for the Mineral Building. We can follow-up.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

About moving away from Cost Containment Strategies Inc., I agree it is an interesting name to be running the Victims of Crime Program.

Previously, there have been problems filling various IT positions. Seeing the problems we have had in the past when we administer payment systems and these technical programs throughout, like not just the Department of Health and Human Services, but all state agencies, what concerns do you have? Do you have a program in mind, or do you have people already in place to set up this alternative program so we can move away from this third-party vendor?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

We will have to go out to a Request For Proposal (RFP). The intent with that RFP is to secure a product that does not require a lot of programming and is easy to manage.

The compensation specialists that we are looking to bring in will be processing payments and ensuring that those payments are consistent with our obligations to pay out. The expectation is that they are not doing programming and are able to manage the software program that we bring online.

I do not know how successful that RFP will be. All we can do is go out and see whether there are vendors out there who are able to do this. If we have to bring it in-house in terms of building our own system, then we probably will be coming back and asking for a different resource to be able to do that. We have not had the opportunity to make any of those decisions yet.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

I am confused. What is necessitating this change from the current third-party vendor to this unknown?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

By state purchasing rules, we need to go out to bid to see if there is another vendor out there because the current vendor has been a sole source for a very

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long time. The other part of it is, we are unable to access some of the key data points behind the payments. When we are looking at a new product, like we do for all our other programs, we can access backend information through the Office of Analytics to be able to do analysis. We are unable to do that with this vendor.

Our current payment system started with the federal government and has not developed in a way that allows us to manage the information that goes into it. It manages payments. We have some front-end data, but we do not have any backend data to use for good analysis. One of our goals is to ensure that we have access to that information.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will close the hearing on the Victims of Crime budget and move on to the Information Services budget, B/A 101-3143.

DHS-DCFS - Information Services — Budget Page DHS-DCFS-23 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3143

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

This is the unit within DCFS that supports the technology needs of the state and county agencies for child welfare. We are in talks with the GFO regarding a possible budget amendment for this budget account.

Slide 18 of [Exhibit C](#) outlines decision units within the Executive Budget. Decision unit E-710 replaces computer hardware and associated software, and decision unit E-905 transfers costs associated with myAvatar system from Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services B/A 101-3646 to B/A 101-3143.

E-710 Equipment Replacement – Page DHS-DCFS-27

E-905 Trans from SNCAS To Information Svcs – Page DHS-DCFS-28

E-905 Transfers From SNCAS To Info Svcs – Page DHHS-DCFS-120

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

Does this United Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY) system talk to the federal agencies? Are we federally required to have this? I see the nod;

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that is a good start. It appears there are 27 positions that currently support the UNITY system. How many positions do you anticipate are going to be needed to maintain the system as we are working on the replacement project? In my documentation, it does not look like we are adequately supporting the transition. Can you talk about that?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

This is a very programmer-intensive system. We have done a needs assessment with a contractor. We will be going out to RFP sometime this year. The intent is, we will get a system that is more off the shelf and requires caseworkers to enter information as opposed to us doing programming. The positions currently doing programming will eventually no longer be needed. We will then follow the process from the Division of Human Resource Management for layoffs.

When I arrived at this Division, I believe this area had something like a 40 percent vacancy rate. We are down to 11 percent, and there continues to be turnover in that unit. I believe there are probably opportunities for those individuals with that technical skill to either be absorbed into our other IT functions or in other IT functions throughout the State of Nevada.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

It looks like we are potentially on track and in the RFP development process, but we have not gone to RFP.

It looks like ARPA funding was approved during IFC in FY 2021-2022 with a projected total cost of \$31.1 million. If the project is not anticipated to be completed until October 2027, do we have any idea what the total projected future expenditures for this product are going to be?

It is pretty unclear about when we are going to expend the money. Could you provide an update on the total projected cost to replace the UNITY system?

Ms. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

I will have to get back to you on any specific projected cost.

What I know at this point is, in the needs assessment, we identified a whole lot of wish list items. In the end, depending on the amount of money we have to

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move forward, we may only have enough to support basic needs. We may not get all the bells and whistles we want.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BROWN-MAY:

Is this a federally required system for Title IV-E reimbursements? We get federal dollars to match. Can you talk about how your agency and the GFO plan to provide the state funds to help realize our federal Title IV-E reimbursements? Is there a recommendation, or is this another anticipated budget amendment?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

My understanding is that we will be proposing a budget for this in the next biennium. It is, as you said, our ongoing requirement to have this system in place for accessing federal Title IV-E funds.

We will be in development over the next two years. Once we have a product and know what the costs are, we would come back in the next biennium with a budget for it. The UNITY system is matched by General Fund monies in terms of the system itself and costs for it. This new project we are developing is matched with ARPA dollars. Moving forward, it will be part of our operation just as it is part of our operation today.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will close the Information Systems budget and move on to the Child Welfare Trust, B/A 645-3242.

DHS-DCFS - Child Welfare Trust — Budget Page DHS-DCFS-51 (Volume II)
Budget Account 645-3242

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

The Child Welfare Trust Account was established to receive benefits for survivors or other awards payable to children receiving child welfare services in a county whose population is less than 100,000. These benefits or other awards including Social Security and Supplemental Security Income are deposited and credited to this fund.

Slide 20 of [Exhibit C](#) outlines the decision unit within the Executive Budget. Decision unit E-260 eliminates the State's deduction for the cost of care in this

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account contingent upon passage and approval of the enabling legislation. We are working with the GFO on a budget amendment for this account as well.

E-260 Health & Wellness – Page DHS-DCFS-51

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

You mentioned there is going to be a budget amendment, but for this particular item, can you confirm that this recommendation would reduce the transfers to the Rural Child Welfare B/A 101-3229 by \$97,000 in each year of the biennium instead of providing the General Fund appropriations in each year of the biennium?

DHS-DCFS - Rural Child Welfare – Budget Page DHS-DCFS-38 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3229

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

Yes, that is correct.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

Do you know what, if anything, the budget amendment will change or what that looks like, or you are still working on it?

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

We are still working on it. We will be removing General Fund money which was a technical error, and it will be adjusted.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

So this should not change, and it should then comport with the question I asked about this would not result in General Fund money being used.

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

Yes.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Is this something that you currently do with these children's funds?

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MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

The *Nevada Revised Statutes* requires us to use these funds for child welfare support. The bill draft request that is coming forward will repeal that requirement in statute.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Would the proposed implementation require all the counties to do this as well or just on the state funds?

MS. MCDADE WILLIAMS:

It is only the state funds. It is just the Rural Child Welfare budget.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Have you worked with any other agencies? How are you going to set up these potential trusts? Do you anticipate any additional costs in maintaining the trusts in place to distribute these funds when these children turn age 18?

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

We already are creating a separate account for each child who is coming into care if they have this funding. There would be no difference in what we are currently doing. It would just not transfer to the rural region budget.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

Did you have any difficulty in maintaining these accounts? With Social Security payments, you cannot carry a balance that is too high. Are you setting up certain types of Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 (ABLE) trust accounts or how is that working so you comply with the federal government?

Are the ABLE accounts partially being spent down to stay under? I believe it was around \$2,000 or it has probably increased.

MS. MCCANN-NAVARRO:

I am not sure. We can follow up on what the exact dollar amount is. We are working with the youth to try to spend that funding down, so they have access to their money before sending it back to Social Security.

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CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will move on to Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services B/A 101-3281.

DHS-DCFS - Northern NV Child & Adolescent Services — Budget Page DHS-
DCFS-104 (Volume II)
Budget Account 101-3281

Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

Budget account 101-3281, Northern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services, provides assessment care, coordination and a comprehensive continuum of mental and behavioral health services for severely emotionally disturbed children and adolescents from birth to 18 years of age.

Slide 22 of [Exhibit C](#) outlines decision units within the Executive Budget. Decision unit E-605 eliminates three positions that have been vacant over two years and is offset by one temporary contracted psychiatric nurse position due to the positions being hard to fill.

E-605 Budget Reductions Staffing & Operations – Page DHS-DCFS-108

Decision unit E-903 transfers one psychiatric caseworker position and one clinical program manager position from this budget account [101-3281] to Southern Nevada Child and Adolescent Services B/A 101-3646.

E-903 Transfers from SNCAS To NNCAS – Page DHS-DCFS-109

E-903 Transfers from SNCAS To NNCAS – Page DHS-DCFS-120

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JAUREQUI:

The clinical social worker position and the psychiatric nurse position were recommended to be eliminated. But since that recommendation, you have filled the positions. Have you had discussions with the GFO about possibly changing or submitting an amendment to keep those positions instead of recommending elimination?

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Ms. McCANN-NAVARRO:

Yes, we have had those conversations. We are actively working with the GFO to see if we can continue to fund those positions.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JAUREQUI:

The mental health counselor position is the third position that is being recommended for elimination. It is recommended that you get a contract position to do that instead. Can you walk us through that? How have you been providing this outpatient treatment if you have not had this position filled in more than two years?

Ms. WADE:

When we are having difficulty filling those positions, our current licensed personnel end up having to increase their capacity to see the families.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER JAUREQUI:

To confirm, what I am hearing is, you currently have mental health counselor positions filled, and they have just picked up the caseload. Is that correct?

Ms. WADE:

That is correct.

CHAIR NGUYEN:

We will move to public comment.

SABRINA SCHNUR (Foster Kinship):

We are proud to partner with the State of Nevada's DCFS to support Kinship caregivers and ensure children remain safely with the family. Nevada has an opportunity to draw down Title IV-E funding for the State's evidence-based Kinship Navigator model which is already being implemented in Utah, Minnesota, South Carolina, Alabama, and soon Pennsylvania and New York. These states are maximizing federal dollars to expand support for Kinship families. Nevada should do the same. By leveraging Title IV-E, we can strengthen services, improve child welfare outcomes and provide sustainable cost-effective support to Kinship families across the State. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the State to make this a reality.

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CHAIR NGUYEN:

Hearing no further public comment, the joint Subcommittee on Human Services is adjourned at 8:58 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Dee Chekowitz-Dykes,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen, Chair

DATE: _____

Assemblymember Erica Mosca, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Introduced on Minute Report Page No.	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
	C	2	Kelsie McCann-Navarro, Administrative Services Officer / Division of Child and Family Services, DHHS	FY 2026-2027 Budget Presentation