

Children's Integrated Services: Stop the Historic Underfunding of CIS

THE ISSUE AND WHY IT MATTERS

CIS maximizes young children's health, development, and learning by providing individualized support to families and early care and education programs. These essential and federally mandated services are designed to lessen, if not eliminate, the need for future services that are costlier and less efficient. CIS has been shown to be effective in mitigating the effects of childhood trauma for thousands of Vermont families.

Since CIS began in 2009, funding has remained flat, while the demand and actual costs to the 12 regional non-profit agencies that provide these services have steadily increased. This leads to a critical lack of capacity to serve children and families who struggle with multiple risk factors including increased child welfare involvement, increased exposure to parental opiate use, poverty, homelessness, and increased autism prevalence.

By fully funding CIS, the state of Vermont will save seven to ten times that amount as a return on investment by preventing the high cost consequences of childhood trauma in adults including incarceration, chronic medical conditions, substance abuse, and suicide.

ACTUAL COSTS FAR EXCEED PAYMENT

Several years ago, the Child Development Division (CDD) of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) paid consultants to study CIS reimbursement rates and make recommendations. The study revealed that actual cost of providing services was \$634 per client per month, far below the statewide monthly rate of \$502 in the FY20 budget. Using the state's figures and factoring in inflation, full funding for FY22 would mean a case rate of about \$667.

FY22 BUDGET – HOUSE ACTION – \$1.492m INCREASE

The Governor's Recommended FY22 Budget proposes to level fund CIS, and a case rate of around \$520. Following the recommendation of the House Human Services Committee, the House passed a budget that includes \$1.492m in additional funding for CIS for FY22, to make up approximately half the difference between the Governor's proposal and the actual need. That funding would bring the case rate to \$600.

About 20% of the funding comes from the General Fund, and the remaining 80% from Global Commitment funds.

FY22 BUDGET– SENATE REQUEST

We ask the Senate to support this funding increase.

ALLIANCE MEMBER/LEAD ORGANIZATIONS: Vermont Parent Child Center Network, Vermont Family Network, and Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development