

# PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

## ACTION

- Fully fund the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (Title IV-B part 2 of the Social Security Act) at the authorized amount of \$505 million for FY 2008.
- Fully fund the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act at the authorized amount of \$280 million.
- Fully fund the Child Welfare Services programs at the authorized amount of \$325 million.
- Provide funding for new vouchers in the Family Unification Program.

## PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES

### Background

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) is a capped entitlement and was first passed into law as a part of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1993. It has been amended several times since then, most recently in 2006. Potential funding can be as much as \$505 million. Under the 2001 reauthorization (P.L. 107-133), the program was changed to allow Congress to appropriate an amount up to \$200 million in discretionary funds, in addition to the base total of \$305 million in mandatory funds. The \$305 million is considered “mandatory” money, meaning Congress does not have to approve the funding as part of the annual appropriations process. Regarding the discretionary funds, Congress has never appropriated the full \$200 million to the PSSF program, despite having the authority to do so.

PSSF funding of up to \$505 million can be used for four types of services: family preservation, adoption services, family reunification, and family support. As a general rule,

at least 20% of the money must be spent in each of four categories of programs. In 2006, additional separate funding was allocated to address the courts, substance abuse, and the child welfare workforce. The dollars for these programs are provided through a different application process and require applicants to follow procedures other than those related to core PSSF funding. In FY 2007, the total amount of funds available for the core PSSF program was \$395 million. Each state’s share is based on the average monthly number of children receiving food stamp benefits for the most recent three federal fiscal years.

To receive funds from PSSF, the state must include a description of how these funds are to be expended and include that information in the state’s five-year Child Welfare Services Plan. A 25% non-federal match is required. Three percent of the core PSSF funding is set aside for federally recognized Indian tribes or organizations. The money awarded to tribes is based on child population and is granted to tribes and consortia of tribes who submit a five-year plan.

### 2006 Legislation

PSSF was reauthorized in 2006 through the passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act (P.L.109-288), with few changes made to the core PSSF program. Access to PSSF funds for tribal populations was improved and a new annual report to Congress was instituted. The most significant changes enacted in 2006 occurred beyond PSSF’s core funding with the creation of three new programs. First, two new court improvement programs were created. Each program is funded at \$10 million a year, with one program targeted to improving the collaboration and better collection of data used by the state and local courts and child welfare agencies. The second program is targeted



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towards improving the cross training of courts and child welfare personnel.

In addition to the two new court improvement programs, the 2006 reauthorization created a competitive grant program for state and local applicants attempting to address substance abuse and its impact on the child welfare system. The grants provide between \$500,000 and \$1 million a year to applicants working with the state child welfare agency. This substance abuse program is funded at \$40 million in 2007, \$35 million in 2008, \$30 million in 2009, and \$20 million in both 2010 and 2011.

The third and final piece of the 2006 reauthorization is a state incentive fund tying monthly visits to children in foster care with workforce development. If a state provides data indicating that they are visiting children in foster care at least monthly, then that state receives a share of designated funding that can be used for workforce initiatives in the child welfare field. If a state is not making these monthly visits, it must negotiate with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to set specific targets or goals for regular visits. Although a state that can prove monthly visits to children in foster care receives funds that may be designated for the child welfare workforce, the funding is limited—especially when allocated among all states. Each state is guaranteed at least a \$70,000 share. Forty million dollars is available to states in FY 2006 and a state can draw their share of these funds down over the first three years. After this initial allocation, total funding for all states is \$5 million in 2008, \$10 million in 2009, and \$20 million in both 2010 and 2011.

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT

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### Background

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) originated in 1974 and is one of the key pieces of legislation that guides child protection. Although CAPTA was most recently reauthorized in 2003, it went through five previous reauthorizations. With each reauthorization of CAPTA, amendments followed that expanded and refined the scope of the law. Three programs are funded as part of the CAPTA statute. State grants are available to all 50 states to help fund child protective services systems, and discretionary grants are available to support program development, research, training, technical assistance, and data collection. These funds are awarded through an application process on a competitive basis. The third funding stream is for the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program. To encourage and enhance local prevention

efforts, CBCAP provides funds to the states for community-based initiatives.

Congress authorizes CAPTA funds, which are not an entitlement, but are appropriated annually. To receive these funds, a state must meet certain requirements related to child abuse and neglect under its state law. Receipt of these funds also requires that they be spent on child protection activity. The amount of money a state receives is based on its child population. Although the CAPTA state grants and discretionary grants are authorized at \$200 million, CAPTA state grants were funded at \$27 million and the CAPTA Discretionary Grants Program was funded at \$25.7 million in FY 2007. This translates to \$147 million in underfunding. The CAPTA Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program received \$42.3 million. Authorized at \$80 million, the CBCAP program was also underfunded—this time by \$38 million.

## CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

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### Background

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) program was created in 1980 as subpart 1 of Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (SSA). It authorizes funding for state matching grants to help protect children from abuse and neglect. States are provided funds based on the population of its children under age 21. To draw these funds, each state must also submit a five-year child welfare services plan. Funding can be used for a wide variety of programs and services, including those that address and prevent neglect, abuse, exploitation or delinquency of children, the unnecessary separation of children from their families, and support for children who have returned to their homes. Limited funds may be used for foster care payments, adoption assistance payments, and daycare.

In 2006, as part of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act (P.L. 109-288), the Child Welfare Services program was amended to require a reauthorization in 2011. P.L. 109-288 also placed a 10% cap on the use of funds for administrative purposes and enacted changes to the state planning process in the implementation of a state's child welfare system. One of the new changes is a requirement that states have a way to address child welfare issues in the event of a disaster, including how to track children who are displaced, how to continue services, and how to remain in contact with the child welfare workforce during such a disaster. In FY 2007, CWS was funded at \$286 million. This continues a decline from earlier this decade when funding was more than \$291 million. It is also \$39 million below the program's authorized funding level.



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# PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

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## FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM

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### Background

The Family Unification Program (FUP) provides Section 8 housing vouchers to families with children who have been placed, or are at risk of placement, in foster care primarily because the family lacks adequate housing, and to youth transitioning out of foster care. Approximately 40,000 FUP vouchers have been awarded, allowing more than 200,000 children to return home from foster care or avoid out-of-home placement altogether.

The average cost for an FUP voucher and supportive services—services which are paid out of child welfare funding streams, not HUD’s budget—for a family for one year is approximately \$13,412, substantially lower than the cost of keeping the children in child welfare, by any measure. Yet, despite the growing need and the research documenting the success and cost savings associated with FUP, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development has not issued any new vouchers under it in the past five years. Congress should approve funding of at least \$10 million for new FUP vouchers.

- Of the estimated 280,000 children exiting out-of-home care in the United States in 2004, 64.2% were reunited with their parents or other family members.
- 118,000 children were waiting to be adopted during FY 2004.
- 52,000 children were adopted from the public foster care system in FY 2004.
- 305,000 children entered foster care during FY 2004.
- According to some estimates, federal investment in programs such as FUP that address the housing and social services needs of the families who are separated due to homelessness would save the United States approximately \$2 billion annually.

Sources for statistical information are provided in the online version of this fact sheet. See [www.cwla.org/advocacy/2007legagenda.htm](http://www.cwla.org/advocacy/2007legagenda.htm).

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## KEY FACTS

- In 2004, an estimated 3 million cases of child abuse and neglect were reported and referred for investigation to state and local child protective service agencies because family members, professionals, or other citizens were concerned about a child’s safety and well-being. After follow-up assessments, officials substantiated 872,000 of these cases.
- Of the approximately 870,000 substantiated cases of abuse or neglect, 59.4% of the children received follow-up services. In other words, 40% of child victims did not receive any follow-up services. Of the children who were reported abused or neglected but their cases were not substantiated, 27.3% received follow-up services.
- Of the estimated 1,490 child deaths in 2004, 81% of child victims were younger than age 4. Another 11.5% were between the ages of 4 and 7.
- 78.5% of the perpetrators of child maltreatment were parents.
- 517,000 children were in foster care during FY 2004.
- An estimated 280,000 children exited foster care during FY 2004.