

Moore, Anelia

From: Oconnor, Clifford
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 2:41 PM
To: Whitlock, Cody; Moore, Anelia; Polacek, Michael
Subject: FW: DFCS FY2021 budget reduction recommendations
Attachments: Copy of Cut Target Plan for 14^1 052020.xlsx

Making sure you are quickly copied. Didn't send to Kaitlen Little since she has already asked a question, know she has it. Thanks.

From: Rawlings, Tom <tom.rawlings@dhs.ga.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2020 1:22 PM
To: England, Terry <terry.england@house.ga.gov>; Tillery, Blake <blake.tillery@senate.ga.gov>; Farr, Kelly <kelly.farr@opb.georgia.gov>
Cc: Hempfling, Chris <chris.hempfling@dhs.ga.gov>; Harris, Kevin <Kevin.Harris@dhs.ga.gov>; Oconnor, Clifford <clifford.oconnor@dhs.ga.gov>
Subject: DFCS FY2021 budget reduction recommendations

Chairmen English and Tillery and Director Farr,

Attached is DFCS' 14% budget reduction recommendations for 2021, totaling \$93.2 mm in state funds cuts over the original FY 20 budget.

We have taken an approach that shifts as much of our necessary work to federal funds as possible, especially out-of-home expenses for children in foster care and assistance to parents who have adopted children from foster care. We have both applied the \$46mm in unallocated TANF to this endeavor and have also cut TANF-funded projects across the board, resulting in a plan that will apply about 1/2 of our unallocated TANF to the budget in the 21 fiscal year and leave the other half for future needs.

We have also prioritized the necessity of maintaining our front-line, county-level eligibility and child welfare staff to the greatest extent possible. We have asked our employees to give up about two days a month in unpaid furlough and have advised them that they will likely see 24 furlough days at a minimum. I've also told our management team that the top 250 employees in pay grade may see additional furloughs. Given that our agency traditionally has turnover in excess of 18% annually, we believe that to the extent we later need longer-term staffing cuts we can use these furloughs as a bridge to cutting staff positions and get our overall salaries down to a level at which they could be maintained. Furloughs allow us to maintain the investment we have made in creating a well-trained workforce full of folks we already know we can rely on. Furloughs also offer us the opportunity to preserve employee morale to the greatest extent possible and encourage a spirit of shared sacrifice, both of which are very important to a child welfare and human services workforce.

We have also asked our providers to share in the burden, with group homes taking a 5% rate reduction over the next year and a couple of our valued partners – especially our foster care education project with MAAC and our State CASA program – taking a significant reduction as we cut back. We will work with them and the philanthropic community to help support those providers to the extent possible until the economy recovers.

Finally, we have prioritized people and services over facilities. We plan to cut our physical plant by 14% as well, which would mean closing some county offices and moving to a “hub and spoke” system in which one office serves several counties but in which we also negotiate free or shared spaces in those other counties. We're able to do this now in part thanks to the fact that Shawn Thomas and her Gateway team, working with Jon Anderson of our OFI, have helped us make tremendous strides in automating and simplifying the processes for applying for TANF, Medicaid, and Food Stamps. Our eligibility workers have shown tremendous productivity

during this time, and we are at a stage where we should be able to serve 95% of customers via online or telephone portals, including through our new “virtual lobby” system. Our child welfare workers have also expressed a newfound admiration for teleworking and meeting virtually, as it allows them less time driving to meetings or work and allows them to focus on what they enjoy.

You will see that one cut involves ending or suspending the child abuse registry, which annually costs us about \$1mm plus additional costs for SAAGs and staff time. I’m happy to walk you through our thinking on this recommendation, as this situation guides us to focus on the core mission of this agency, the CAR does not fit into that mission.

I don’t think I need to tell you that these cuts will be hard on our staff and our providers. I’m sure we will all be hearing much from these stakeholders over the next few weeks, and I am here to help you as we work through these difficult and challenging times.

Thanks to you all for the hard work and service you give the people of Georgia.

Tom



Tom C. Rawlings

Division Director

GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES

2 Peachtree Street NW, 19-490 | Atlanta, GA 30303

O: **404-463-9234**

tom.rawlings@dhs.ga.gov

dfcs.ga.gov

