CHILD WELFARE BUDGET PRIORITIES

Evidence-Based & Community-based services for better outcomes for Children and Families

Re-allot Budget line items:
- Fund Prevention Services at Local Departments of Social Services:
  $29.8m GF and $9.4m NGF over two years
- Fund Family First Prevention Services Act Evidence-Based Prevention Programs:
  $8.4m GF and $8.4m NGF each year

• Support Family / Neighborhood Resource Centers to provide place-based family-strengthening services with a track record of reducing child neglect and abuse.

• Prioritize allocating funds to place-based family-strengthening programs for communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities give parents what they need to succeed.

> Why it’s important: Strengthening families reduces the “foster care to prison pipeline” — Simply removing a child from their home raises their risk of criminal justice involvement.

Stabilize the Child Welfare Workforce

Re-allot: Budget line item:
- Increase Local Staff Minimum Salary to Address Turnover:
  $5.6m GF and $5.7m NGF each year.

Increase family services worker salaries by 20%. (Currently base salary is $30,828 - only slightly higher than the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four.)

• 2018 JLARC report on Foster Care found that instability of the child welfare workforce prevents Virginia from meeting important mandates in services to children in foster care.

> Why it’s important: Staff turnover of entry-level family services workers is 42%, exacerbating Virginia’s poor foster care outcomes. A hiring freeze in many agencies due to the pandemic is compounding the problem.

Contact: Valerie L’Herrou: valerie@vplc.org, cell 434-996-1803

Advocating for Low-Income Virginians since 1978