

**Government of the District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Financial Officer**



Natwar M. Gandhi
Chief Financial Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Vincent C. Gray
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

FROM: Natwar M. Gandhi
Chief Financial Officer 

DATE: May 14, 2010

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement – “Families Together Amendment Act of 2010”

REFERENCE: Bill Number 18-667, Draft Committee Print

Conclusion

Funds are not sufficient in the FY 2010 through FY 2013 budget and financial plan to implement the provisions of the proposed legislation. Implementing this legislation is not estimated to impose additional costs in FY 2010, but it would require an additional \$775,000 over the four-year budget and financial plan period.

Background

The proposed legislation would amend the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Act of 1977¹ to require that:

- A full investigation be conducted when a report of suspected child abuse or neglect involves a child fatality or suspected sex abuse, the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) suspects a child is at imminent risk of or has experienced severe abuse or neglect, or there is a referral for an investigation following a family assessment²;
- CFSA—either directly or through a contractor or another appropriate District agency—conduct either an investigation or a family assessment for all other reports of suspected child

¹ Effective September 23, 1977 (D.C. Law 2-22; D.C. Official Code § 4-1301.04)

² “Family assessment” as defined in the proposed legislation means an evaluation, for the purpose of developing a voluntary service plan, to determine the current level of family functioning; a family’s strengths, needs, and access to resources; the safety of the child and other children in the home; and the risk of future abuse and neglect to the child and other children in the home. The family assessment shall not include a determination as to whether a report of abuse or neglect is substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded.

- abuse or neglect³;
- CFSA assist the family in obtaining any services determined by the family assessment;
- The initial phase of an investigation include a finding as to whether the report of abuse or neglect was substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded;⁴
- The use of family assessments be fully implemented within 365 days of the effective date of this Act;
- CFSA, on or before October 1, 2010, provide a report to the Council's Committee on Human Services detailing their progress toward full performance implementation of a family assessment response; and
- The Mayor to issue rules for implementing this Act within 180 days of its effective date.

Financial Plan Impact

Funds are not sufficient in the FY 2010 through FY 2013 budget and financial plan to implement the provisions of the proposed legislation. Implementing this legislation is estimated to cost nothing in FY 2010, but \$775,000 over the four year budget and financial plan period. These costs are for: 1) upgrading FACES.NET (CFSA's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System)⁵ to reflect system changes⁶; and 2) providing training to CFSA staff and other relevant parties.⁷

Estimated Fiscal Impact FY 2010 through FY 2013					
	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	Four Year Total
FACES.NET Upgrade ^a	\$0	\$250,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$375,000
Training ^b	\$0	\$300,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$400,000
TOTAL	\$0	\$550,000	\$175,000	\$50,000	\$775,000

^a The total estimated costs for the upgrade, based on previous upgrades, would be \$750,000. It is assumed that CFSA would be reimbursed by the federal government through Title IV-E funds for 50 percent of the cost and the cost would be spread over FY 2011 and FY 2012.

³ Allowing for more than one type of response to initial reports of child abuse and neglect is a Child Protective Services system tool known as differential response. The goal of differential response is to provide families in crisis with services in a comprehensive and empowering manner in an effort to reduce the risk for abuse or neglect. CFSA released "District of Columbia Differential Response Proposal" in September 2009 exploring the use of Differential Response (DR) in the District.

⁴ Unless a decision was made to instead conduct a family assessment.

⁵ FACES.NET is a comprehensive case management system that supports CFSA in all areas of critical business functions. Title IV-E Foster Care, Adoption and Guardianship eligibility is a fully-automated, system-generated determination based on the data maintained in FACES.NET.

⁶ This would include changing the logic structure of FACES.NET, creating a new category of case and revising the structured decision-making tool.

⁷ CFSA projects that intensive training would need to be provided to roughly 130 staff (mostly from CFSA, but also from outside agencies like the Office of the Attorney General, the Family Court and the Department of Human Services), which would include training current investigators on how to conduct family assessments and those who work with FACES.NET on the updated system. There would need to be other less intensive training for 200 stakeholders to make them aware of CFSA's use of family assessments.

^b Assumes that roughly 330 people would need to be trained in FY 2011: 80 staff, 50 managers and 200 stakeholders. On-going training costs would be for additional training for current staff and training for new employees. Training costs are based on previous amounts needed for projects that required extensive training.