



wisconsin department of  
**children + families**

201 East Washington Avenue, Room G200

P.O. Box 8916

Madison, WI 53708-8916

Governor Scott Walker  
Secretary Eloise Anderson

Secretary's Office

**Testimony of Secretary Eloise Anderson  
Department of Children and Families  
Joint Committee on Finance Agency Briefing  
March 30, 2011**

Good Morning Senator Darling, Representative Vos and members of the Joint Committee on Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to present Governor Walker's budget proposal for the Department of Children and Families.

The Governor's overall priority is to create a climate and environment that enables businesses to grow and develop in Wisconsin, creating jobs for families.

That outcome will benefit all.

In addition to creating a strong economy, another top priority of the Governor's budget is protecting vulnerable children and families. He is committed to providing services even during these challenging economic times while maintaining fiscal discipline.

As you know, the Department of Children and Families is charged with protecting and promoting child, family and community well-being through integrated programs offering a family centered approach to service delivery. Governor Walker's budget maintains this commitment of serving children and families.

The Governor's budget for DCF totals \$2,476,504,700 (nearly \$2.5 billion) for the two years.

Specifically, his major proposals for the Department include:

**Maintaining the Funding for Community Aids:**

With regard to child welfare, the state provides funding to counties for services primarily through the Children and Families "Community Aids" Allocation. In the face of the tight fiscal constraints and a decrease in a key federal child welfare funding source, the Governor's budget provides additional funding for the Children and Families Allocation of \$2.35 million in SFY 12 and \$2.6 million in SFY 13.

The Governor recommends the state implement a federal Guardianship Assistance program. This would extend Subsidized Guardianship statewide to provide another option for counties to achieve permanency for children in out-of-home care.

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**Funds for Milwaukee Child Protective Services:**

- The Governor provides increased funding for projected out-of-home care caseload costs.
- The Governor also recommends increasing state support in response to decreasing federal reimbursement for care, maintenance and administrative costs related to children in out-of-home care.

**Funds for Statewide Child Welfare Programs Working with Local Governments:**

- The Governor provides increased funding for the Children and Families Allocation to counties for child and family welfare services; and expands the alternative response pilot program to additional child welfare agencies.
- He also fully funds state foster care and adoption assistance.

**Funds for Permanency Plans and Placement:**

- The budget provides funds for the Program Improvement Plan in order to comply with the second round of the Federal Child and Family Services Review. The plan includes:
  1. Ongoing case management standards revision and implementation;
  2. Permanency consultants to counties;
  3. Development, dissemination and implementation of safety intervention standards;
  4. Learning Management Systems implementation;
  5. KidStat functionality to individual counties;
  6. Creation of a competitive grant program for counties; and
  7. Implementation of a federal Guardianship Assistance program.

**W2:**

Unlike past budgets, the Governor is looking beyond this biennium, trying to reduce the state's ongoing commitments for TANF funds, minimizing the structural deficit that has typically characterized the TANF budget. This will leave the state less vulnerable to uncertainties regarding the future of federal TANF and child care funding.

- Benefit Reductions
  - The proposed decrease in W-2 cash assistance for community services jobs (CSJ) and transitional placements (W2Ts) is \$20 per month. The budget would reduce the maximum monthly grant for a CSJ from \$673 to \$653, and the maximum monthly grant for a W2T from \$628 to \$608.

The original intent of W-2 was to assist a family while they sought employment, and this budget moves W-2 back to that basic tenet.

- Caretakers of Infants
  - The budget does not reduce the current benefit level for caretakers of a newborn infant, which continues to be \$673 per month.

- Transitional Jobs
  - The Transitional Jobs program is less than a year old. It is currently on task to find 2,500 jobs by next fall.
  
- Child Care
  - Governor Walker's budget provides tools to manage child care caseload increases if the need arises, but are not mandatory. These tools include:
    - 1) Creation of a waiting list;
    - 2) Increasing co-pays which may allow more families to use Shares and avoid having to move to a wait list.
  
  - The Governor approved all elements in the DCF budget request related to program integrity in this budget, which demonstrates his on-going commitment to fraud reduction in the Wisconsin Shares program. This includes increased funding for Milwaukee program integrity staffing, funding for staff to assist with hearings and appeals, and full funding for licensing staff.
  
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
  - The target population for the state EITC program is low-income working families. Many eligible EITC recipients are/were W-2 recipients.

The use of TANF to support families to stay employed avoids families having to turn to W-2 and also to manage the transition from assistance to work.
  
- FoodShare Transfer
  - The Department of Health Services (DHS) and DCF are in the early stages of discussion regarding DHS's plans to transfer FoodShare to DCF.
  
- C-Supp/SSI Transfer
  - The population of this program includes families headed by disabled individuals or caring for disabled children. DCF is well positioned to meet the comprehensive needs of these families.
  - Many recipients may be unable to work. DCF believes that employment services similar to the Ticket to Work program at the federal level could be provided using models from W-2 and FEST for recipients whose conditions improve or who may be able to participate in the workforce with accommodations and restrictions.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. I would be happy to address questions.