

Resolution No.

RES. 01 - 19: RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE STATE OF WISCONSIN TO INCREASE FUNDING AND PROVIDE OVERSIGHT REFORMS FOR WISCONSIN'S CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin child welfare system is county-operated and state-supervised, except Milwaukee County, where the system is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF), Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS); and

WHEREAS, DCF provides insufficient funding to counties for the provision of child abuse and neglect services including prevention, investigation, treatment, and out-of-home placement costs, though the state has primary responsibility for compliance with federal requirements and shares liability for ensuring that the system is meeting its obligations to children and families in all 72 counties; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the state of Wisconsin has added numerous mandates and practice expectations, which in turn has increased county child protective services (CPS) workloads and costs; and

WHEREAS, the opioid and methamphetamine epidemics have brought Wisconsin's CPS system to a point of crisis, with increasing concern about the system's ability to meet its obligations to children and families; and

WHEREAS, the capacity for counties to continue to bear the lion's share of the financial responsibility to address this crisis has been exhausted as rising county contributions to the CPS system have far outpaced increases to the DCF Children and Family Aids allocation and counties have been forced to use reserve funding to cover CPS expenses and increase staffing; and

WHEREAS, maintaining sufficient resources for Wisconsin's child welfare system is critical to secure the safety and future of our most vulnerable children; and

WHEREAS, without a proportional increase in the DCF Children and Family Services allocation, the CPS system has been stressed for over a decade, causing caseloads for CPS workers to grow to unreasonable levels, contributing to high levels of staff turnover in some counties and an overrun of out-of-home care costs above what counties can sustain with available resources; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's CPS system leaves significant gaps in state-level oversight for all counties except Milwaukee County, including the absence of caseload standards, the absence of a process for regular legislative evaluation and prioritization of CPS needs, and the absence of a legislative committee that provides regular policy guidance concerning CPS system issues such as adequate funding, performance, cost sharing and long-term stability; and

73 WHEREAS, along with DMCPs, all eleven of Wisconsin's peer states with county-
74 administered CPS systems have either adopted caseload standards for CPS caseworkers,
75 completed thorough workload studies as a basis of determining funding needs, or otherwise
76 have made significant recommendations related to keeping CPS workloads manageable; and
77

78 WHEREAS, the children within Wisconsin's CPS system are too important to allow the
79 current level of under resourcing, oversight gaps and, disparity of attention to continue, while
80 shifting the burden of providing the necessary CPS resources onto county property taxpayers;
81

82 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board of Supervisors does
83 hereby request that the state of Wisconsin increase the Children and Family Aids Allocation to
84 counties in the 2019-21 state biennial budget by \$30 million annually in order to cover a greater
85 share of out-of-home care costs and increase staffing levels based on the caseload standards
86 developed by the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) so Wisconsin's CPS
87 system can meet its obligations; and
88

89 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Chippewa County also urges the state of Wisconsin to
90 close critical oversight gaps by creating legislative mechanisms to review the CPS resource needs
91 of all counties as part of the biennial budget process and to ensure an appropriate committee
92 provides ongoing policy guidance to respond to emerging CPS trends and ongoing system needs;
93 and
94

95 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of
96 Wisconsin, the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, the Secretary of the
97 Department of Administration, the State Legislators that represent Chippewa County, and the
98 Wisconsin Counties Association.
99

100 Forwarded to the County Board by Health & Human Services Board.
101

102 **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

103 There is no fiscal impact to Chippewa County by passage of this resolution.
104

105 **01/8/2019 County Board**

106 **RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

107 **MOVER:** Tom Thornton, District 5

108 **SECONDER:** Dean Gullickson, District 7

109 **AYES:** Zwiefelhofer, Darrow, Ewer, Sikorski, Hartman, Thornton, Bergeron, Gullickson,
110 Mickelson, Gerrish, Eisenhuth, Ives, Hunt, Hull

111 **ABSENT:** Lawrence J. Willkom
112

113 History:

114 12/20/18 Health & Human Services Board FORWARD TO COUNTY BOARD
115

Approved as to Form:

James B. Sherman

James B. Sherman, Corporation Counsel

12/12/2018

Melissa J. Roach

Melissa J. Roach, Finance Director

12/12/2018

Randy B. Scholz

Randy B. Scholz, County Administrator

12/13/2018