

Welcome Stakeholders



2025
STAKEHOLDER
MEETINGS



Meeting Agenda



2025
STAKEHOLDER
MEETINGS

Welcome

Dee Nighswonger, Wichita Regional Director

Community Conversation Focus

Secretary Laura Howard

Federal and State Updates

Secretary Howard

Andrea Warnke, Deputy Director of Government Affairs

Budget Update

Dan Lewien, Deputy Secretary

Program Updates

Tanya Keys, Deputy Secretary

Dee Nighswonger

Final Reflections and Questions

Secretary Howard

Community Conversation Focus

Secretary Laura Howard

What can we do together to advance our common purpose of strengthening families? What can DCF do to support you in your work?



Federal Updates



Secretary Laura Howard



2025
STAKEHOLDER
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Federal Impacts



Downsizing
Federal Staff and
Federal
Restructuring

Enhanced
Oversight and
Accountability

Potential Budget
Reductions
*(FY25 Reconciliation Bill and
FY26 President's Budget)*

Upon Enactment:

- **Work Requirements**

- Increases ABAWD SNAP work requirements age to 64 (up from 54)
- Reduces the definition of "dependent child" from under 18 years of age to under 14.

- **SNAP Eligibility**

- Increases SNAP Eligibility Citizenship Requirements
- Changes eligibility criteria used in Standard Utility Allowances & Excess Shelter Expense deductions

Effective 10/1/2025: Expiration of SNAP-ED Program

- Allows the National Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program to expire after FY 2025

Effective 10/1/2026: Administrative Cost Sharing

- Increases the state share of SNAP administrative costs from 50% to 75% beginning in FY 2027

Effective 10/1/2027: State Matching Funds

- Requires states with an error rate >6% to contribute at least 5% of the cost of SNAP allotments beginning in FY 2028 with contribution rates increasing based on a state's SNAP error rate (up to 15%).

Federal Reconciliation Bill: SNAP Impacts



H. R. 1

President's FFY 26 Budget



Proposal includes several changes that would affect DCF programs and stakeholders:

- Eliminates the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Reduces CCDF Discretionary funding
- LIEAP funding eliminated, including advance appropriations from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- The President's Budget eliminates cash, medical assistance, and social services for refugees, asylees, and other arrivals eligible for refugee benefits.
- Maintains Child Support Enforcement, Foster Care, Adoption Assistance, Social Services Block Grant, Child Care Entitlements, and TANF funding.
- Increases the Promoting Safe and Stable Families grant by 15%.

More to Come: Congressional Action on FFY 26 Budget

Senate Committees:

May continue funding
for many proposed cuts,
including LIEAP

House Committees:

Action pending on key
issues

Further clarity on final
budget coming after
Congressional recess

DCF Legislative Session Update



Andrea Warnke, Deputy Director of Government Affairs



Executive Order 25-01 Preservation of Federal Benefits

Executive Order 25-01 requires DCF to **discontinue the prior practice** of reimbursing the state for the cost of foster care from benefits received by youth due to their own disability or the death, disability, or retirement of a parent.

- No funds reimbursed to DCF from benefit monies received after Jan. 1, 2025

ABLE bank accounts allow qualifying individuals with disabilities to save money without losing their federal benefits.

As of **July 21, 2025**:

- **561 ABLE accounts** have been opened for children and youth in custody
- **\$2,166,212.61** conserved for children and youth in custody

Executive Order 25-01 Preservation of Federal Benefits, *continued*

Notices being delivered as of **July 1, 2025**. There will be **three types of notices** based on these events:

- DCF becomes Rep Payee of a child's benefit
- When an ABLE account has been established and needs transferred due to the permanency goal being achieved
- In January of each year, an accounting of benefits received and saved for the previous calendar year

Educational components are being designed in partnership between DCF, the State Treasurer's Office (using their existing ABLE Roadshow), the Kansas Council for Economic Education (KCEE) and Kansas Council for Developmental Disabilities (KCDD).

Thanks to KCDD's support, KCEE will be able to **engage** a retired educator to assist KCDD self advocates in creating vignettes explaining common scenarios that youth receiving ABLE accounts, upon achieving permanency, may encounter.

Legislation Enacted by the 2025 Kansas Legislature



Expedited Permanency & Response to Law Enforcement Reports

HB 2075

*DCF introduced legislation to **reduce the time** between CINC permanency hearings from 12 to 9 months.*

The bill was amended in committee to require subsequent permanency hearings be held every 6 months

In conference committee there were amendments which:

- requires the court to review the involvement and receipt of written permanency plans by the parents and interested parties during each permanency hearing.
- requires law enforcement officers to explore options other than taking a child into custody
- requires the Secretary to receive law enforcement referrals related to a child who may be the victim of abuse or neglect and provide an update to the referring law enforcement agency within 24 hours of contacting the subjects of the investigation

This bill passed both chambers unanimously. Signed into law April 8.

Office of Early Childhood



HB 2045

Established the Office of Early Childhood and updated laws regulating childcare centers and childcare homes.

The establishment of the Office will create greater transparency, safety, and efficiency to Kansans with oversight of all funds, programs and policies relating to early childhood care services provided in Kansas.

The bill includes a provision that the Office may enter into agreements with DCF for the administration of childcare subsidy payments. If executed, DCF would determine an applicant's eligibility for the childcare subsidy.

This bill was signed into law April 24.

HB 2359 emphasizes a person-centered philosophy requiring individualized plans for persons subject to guardianship or conservatorship. The petitioner will be required to consider less restrictive alternatives to guardianship, such as supportive decision-making arrangements or protective arrangements, before recommending full guardianship.

This approach recognizes that adults may need assistance with certain aspects of their lives without necessarily losing all decision-making authority.

The bill was signed into law on April 3.

Amending the Uniform Adult Guardianship, Conservatorship & Other Protective Proceedings Acts



HB 2359

Protection of Foster Parent Beliefs



HB 2311

House Bill 2311 prohibits the Secretary from adopting, implementing, or enforcing policies for selection as out-of-home or adoptive placement, custody, or appointment as permanent or SOUL custodian for a child in need of care that may conflict with sincerely held religious or moral beliefs regarding sexual orientation or gender identity.

It also creates a right of action for violations.

This bill was vetoed and overridden on April 10.

Other Overridden Legislature

HB2062: Child Support Order Bundle

- HB 2062 would amend law regarding child support to require such support be calculated from the date of conception.
- It would also require the court to consider the value of a qualified retirement account in determination of child support orders, and to eliminate the exemption of such accounts from claims to collect child support.
- Lastly the bill allows a personal exemption for any unborn child for the purposes of income taxation.

HB2217: Office of Medicaid Inspector General Investigation Expansion

- HB2217 expands the scope of the Inspector General within the Office of the Attorney General to include the audit, investigation, and performance review of all state cash, food, and health assistance programs

HB2240: Legislative Oversight on Public Assistance Waivers and Expansion

- 2240 Requires legislative approval prior to any state agency seeking or implementing a public assistance program waiver or other authorization from the federal government that expands eligibility for any public assistance program, increases cost to the state or makes certain changes in services for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

SB 63: Help Not Harm Act

- Restricts use of state funds to promote gender transitioning, prohibits healthcare providers from providing gender transition care to children whose gender identity is inconsistent with the child's sex, and creates disciplinary and civil action against healthcare providers who provide such treatments.

Community Conversation Opportunity

With knowledge of changes coming, what would it look like for us to continue our work together? How can we be a supportive partner in the work you're already doing?

DCF Budget Update

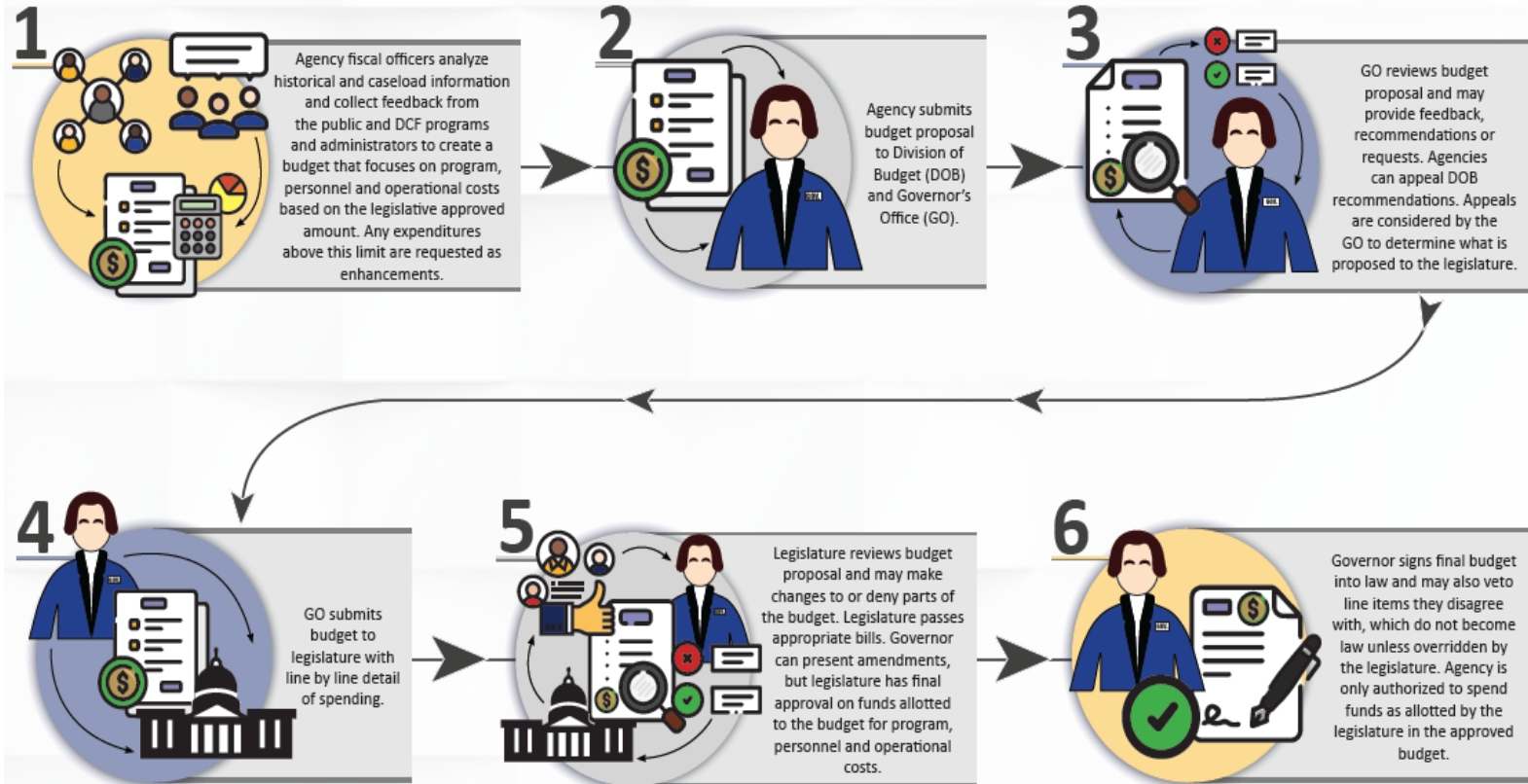


Dan Lewien, Deputy Secretary



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Traditional Budget Cycle



Changes in Budget Process

2025 Legislature



New Special Committee on the State Budget

Worked the Special Committee's Appropriation Bill versus the Governor's Budget Recommendation Bill

Approved funding between fiscal years was removed (Reappropriations)

No Omnibus Bill

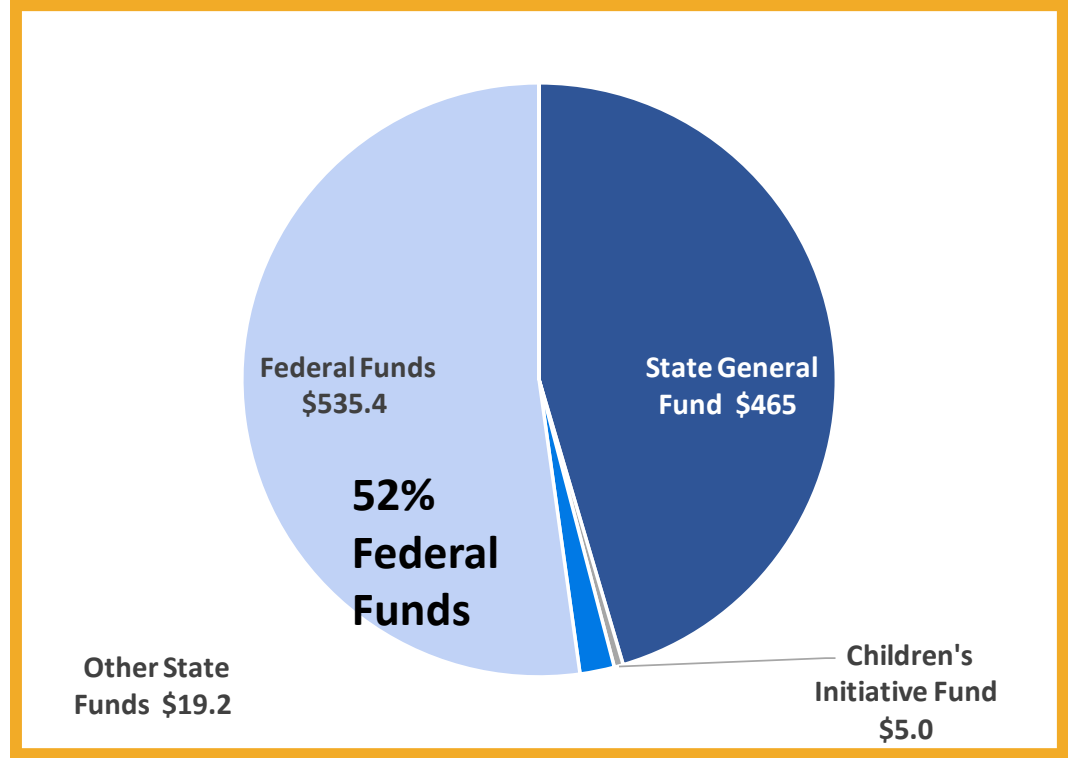
Shorter Legislative Session

FY 2026 Approved Budget (MILLIONS)

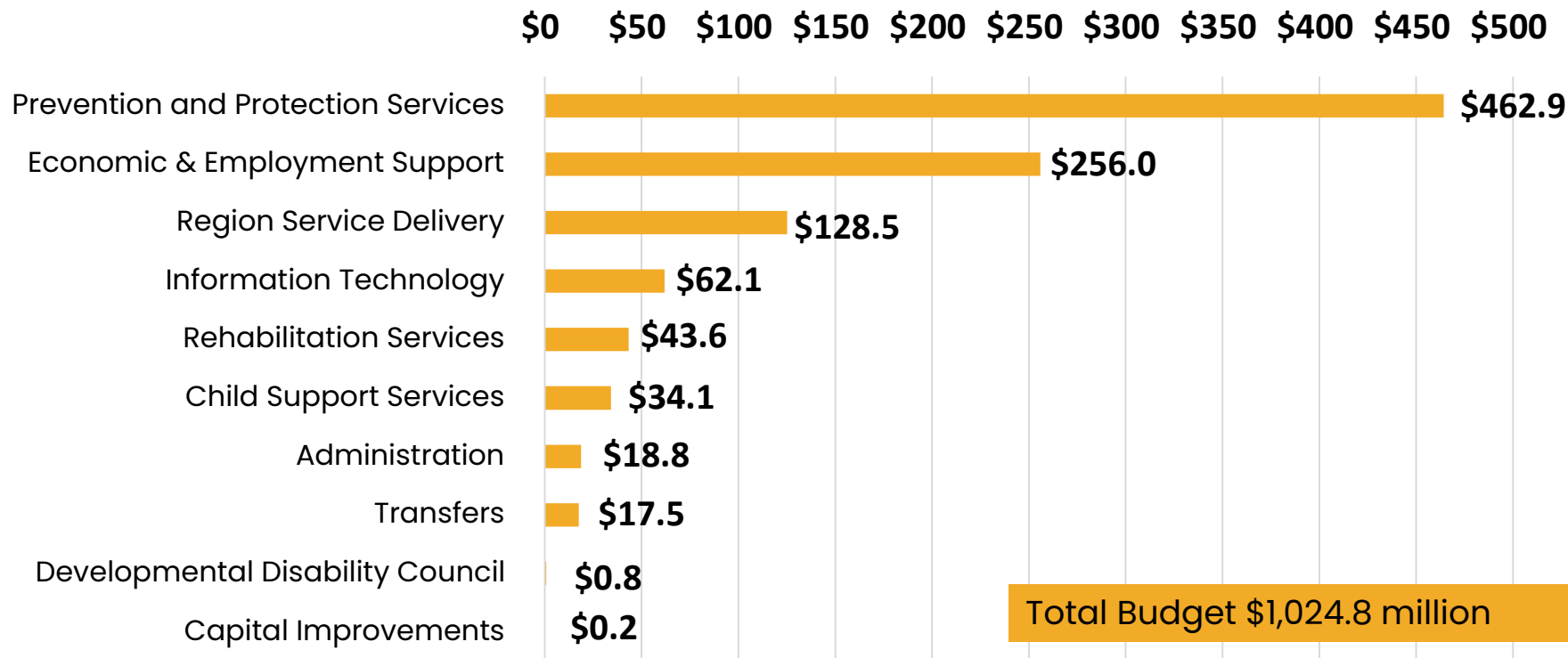
Total Budget **FY 2026**
\$1,024.8

Funding Sources

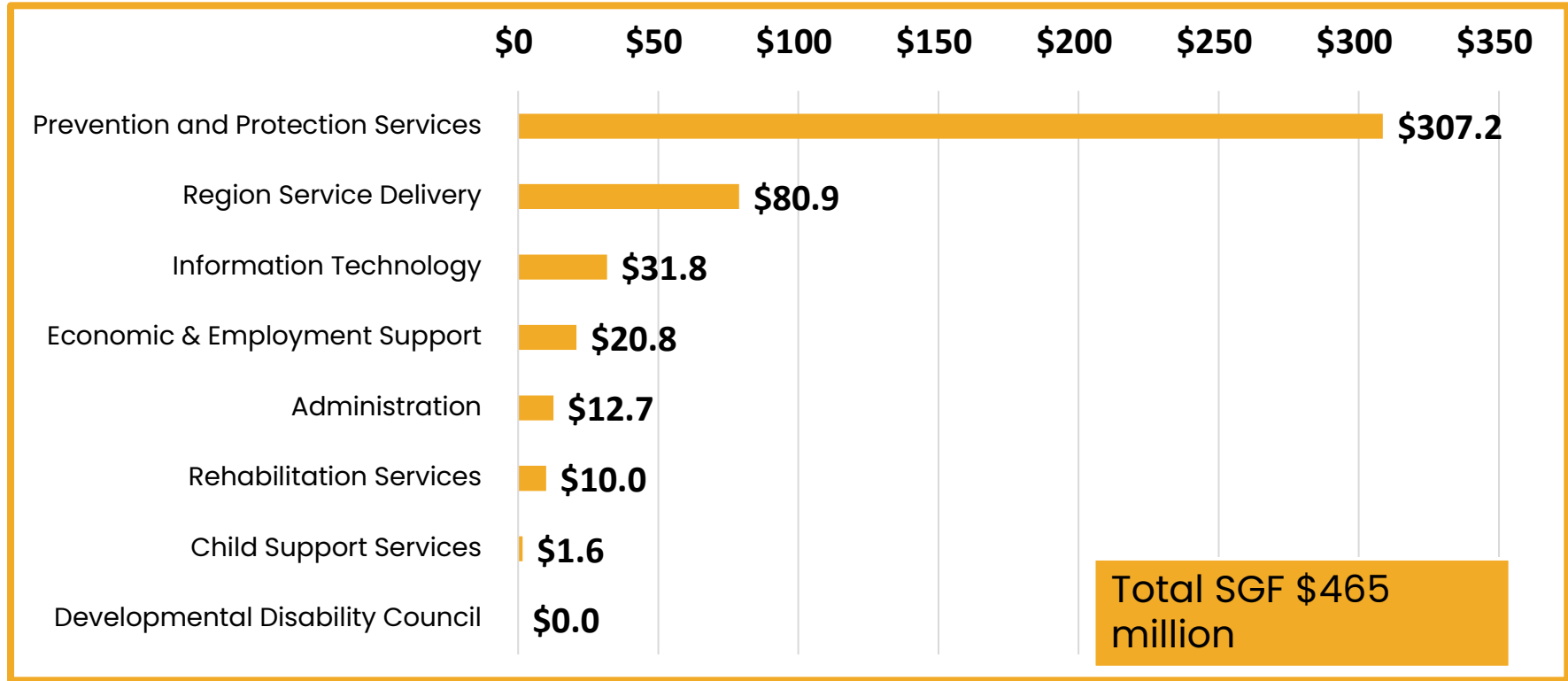
State General Fund	\$465.0
Children's Initiative Fund	\$5.0
Other State Funds	\$19.2
Federal Funds	\$535.4
Enterprise Funds	\$0.1
Total Funding	\$1,024.8



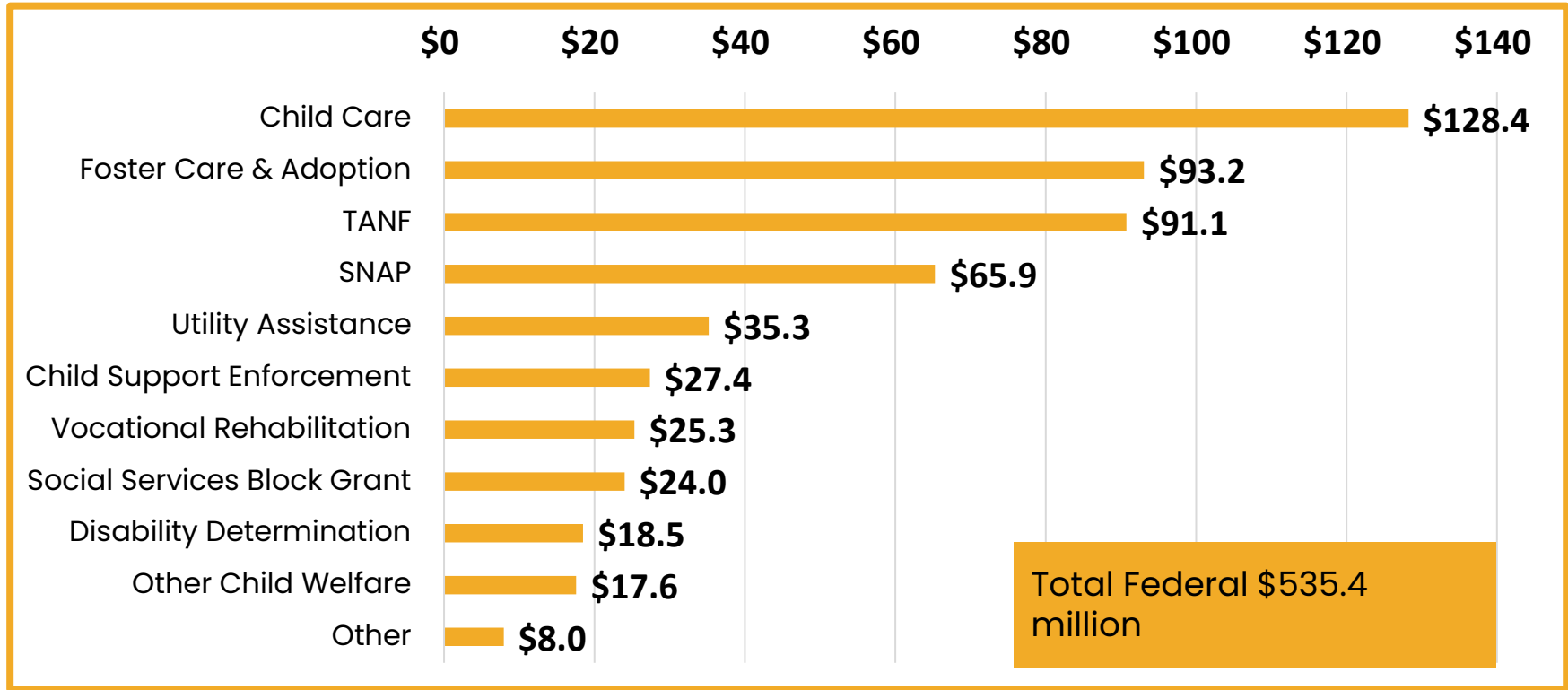
FY 2026 Approved Budget by Program (MILLIONS)



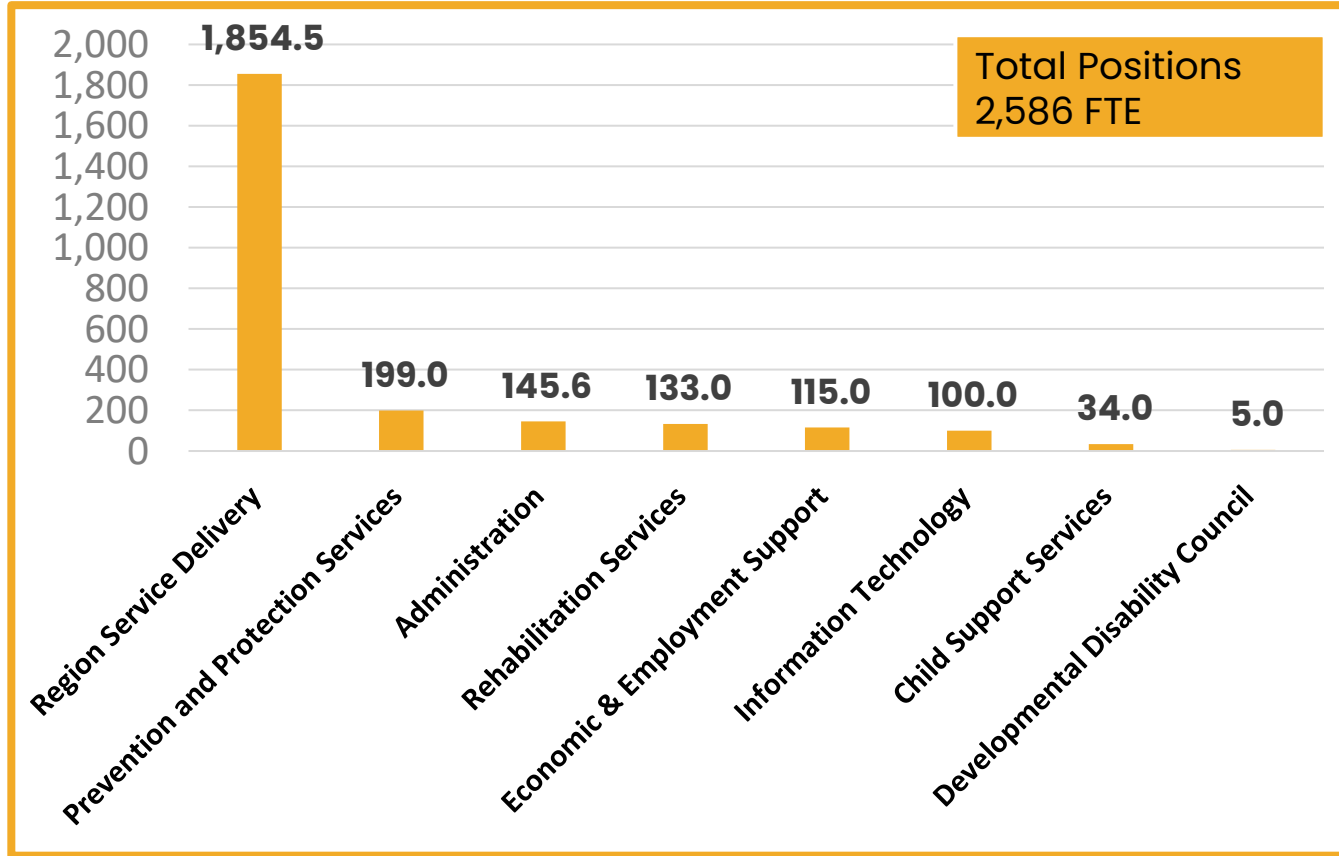
FY 2026 Approved SGF By Program (MILLIONS)



FY 2026 Approved Federal Funds (MILLIONS)

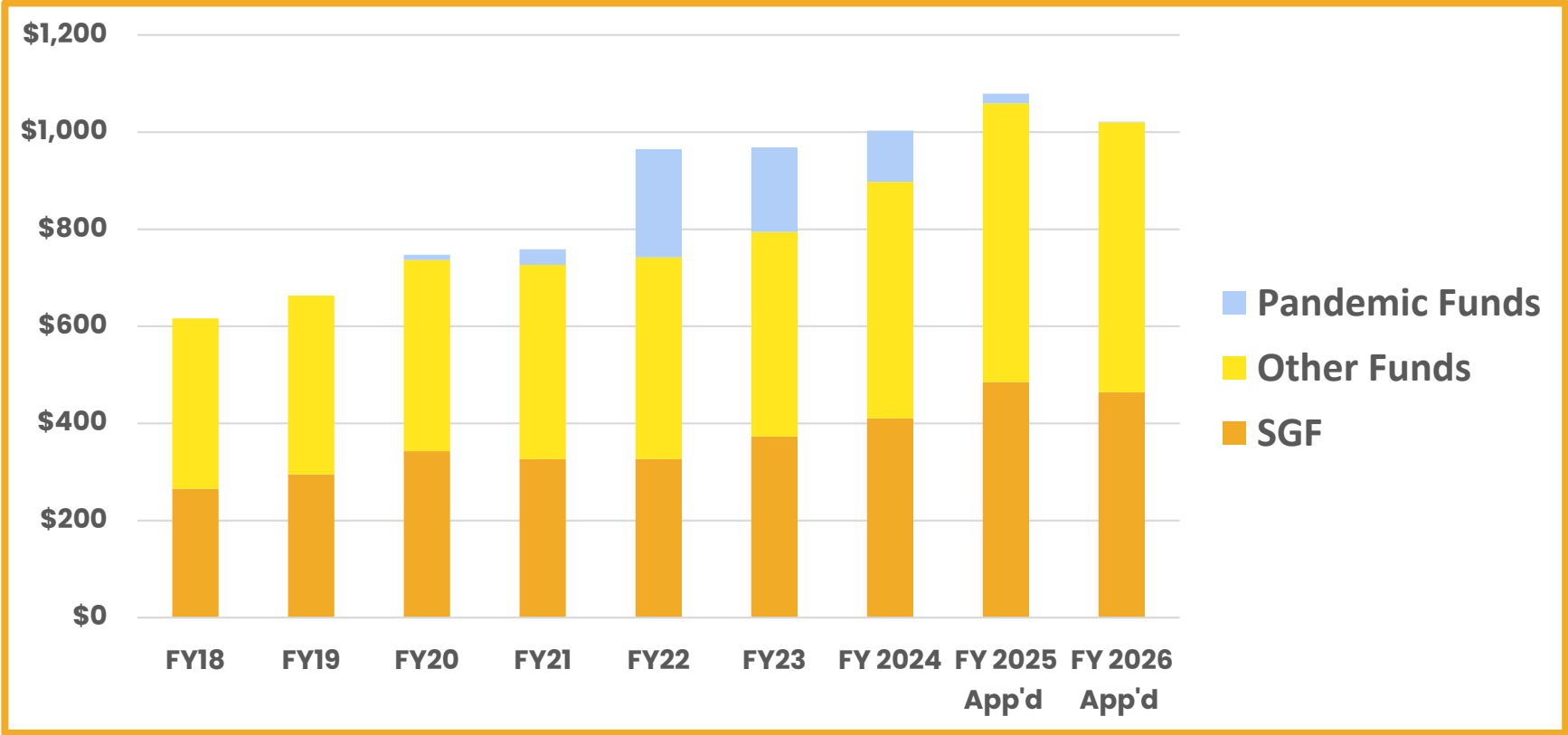


FY 2026 Approved Positions



These are total authorized positions. About 400 are unfilled at any given time. Of the 400, part are vacant because of the normal time for recruitment and hiring, and the other part because the agency does not have adequate funds to fill every position and has to leave them vacant.

DCF Budget FY 2018 – FY 2026 (millions)



2026 Governor's Enhancements



Item	All Funds	SGF	Explanation
Sun Bucks (Formerly Summer EBT)	\$1,650,000	\$825,000	• Provides food benefits during the summer months when children do not receive meals at school. • \$120 per child per summer for families under 185% of the poverty level. • This funds the administrative costs of the program. • The benefits for the program, which are 100% federally funded, are not a part of this enhancement. • An estimated 266,000 children are potentially eligible to receive benefits through this program.
Workload Management Software	\$883,200	\$0	• Funds software licenses used to optimize caseload staffing, prevent backlogs, and help meet federal case processing times. • The software provides real-time information and alerts, prioritizes cases, automates assignments, and creates real-time operational data. • Uses ARPA interest funds for the \$380,748 state match.
Total	\$2,533,200	\$825,000	

2026 Legislative Additions



Item	All Funds	SGF	Explanation
Guided Independent Living Assessment (GILA)	\$215,000	\$215,000	Pilot project with Kansas Cerebral Palsy Research Foundation to help young adults with disabilities to live independently.
Home-Based Vocational Rehabilitation Services	\$600,000	\$600,000	Pilot with Envision to provide specialized community-based services to all ages who are blind or have low vision.
One-On-One TANF Mentoring	\$300,000	\$0	Pilot project with Kansas Big Brothers and Big Sisters for a community-based and school-based mentoring for program for youth using TANF.
KS Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) Program Expansion	\$375,000	\$375,000	Centralizes and expands communication access for all state agencies and expands capacity at the courts.
SparkWheel Program	\$50,000	\$0	Continues funding previously provided by the Department of Education. Provides tools necessary for children to start school.
Total	\$1,540,000	\$1,190,000	

2026 Legislative Cuts

1.5% Cut to State Operations SGF



Item	All Funds	SGF	Explanation
Reductions to Agency Travel, Legal Fees, Phones & Equipment	\$209,222	\$181,509	DCF will look for ways to operate more efficiently.
Reduce Post Adoption Supports Budget	\$503,601	\$503,601	Provides training for adoptive parents, respite care, and Trust-Based Relational Intervention sessions through in-home therapy. The budget for SFY26 will be \$496,399.
Reduction to Family Preservation	\$806,614	\$806,614	Provides the same number of referrals used in FY2025. None of the Family Preservation providers will experience the need to decrease spending. The SFY26 budget will be \$12.2 million AF & \$3.9 million SGF.
Reduction to Hope Ranch Grant	\$200,000	\$200,000	Allows continued services for female victims of human trafficking. The Hope Ranch contract for SFY26 will be \$100,000.
Reduce Toiletries Grant	\$200,000	\$200,000	Giving the Basics, Inc. works with low-income families by providing free essential hygiene products directly to school districts for distribution to students. Contract amount is now \$1.6 million.
Reduction to We Kan Drive	\$406,982	\$406,982	Program helps youth in foster care secure auto insurance, driver's license and drivers education. The SFY26 contract is \$850,000.
Total	\$2,326,419	\$2,298,706	

2026 Other Adjustments



Item	All Funds	SGF	Explanation
State Pay Plan Increase	\$5,325,243	\$3,138,131	Most employees received a 2.5% pay increase. Employees that were more than 10% below market received an increase to bring them to 10% below market.
Cut Funding Related to All Vacant Positions	TBD	TBD	In June 2026, all funds not expended on salaries because a position was vacant during part of the year will be lapsed. Prevents agencies from using salary savings for any other purpose.
Foster Care Consensus Caseload	(\$14,503,632)	(\$8,103,632)	\$10.2 million less cost than FY25 from a change from retrospective to prospective payments for CMPs. (13 months were paid in FY25) The remaining savings are from placement costs and case management costs for fewer children in foster care.
TANF Cash Assistance Consensus Caseload	\$400,000	\$0	The TANF caseload did not decrease as much as the previous projection so funds were added.
Total	(\$8,778,389)	(\$4,965,501)	

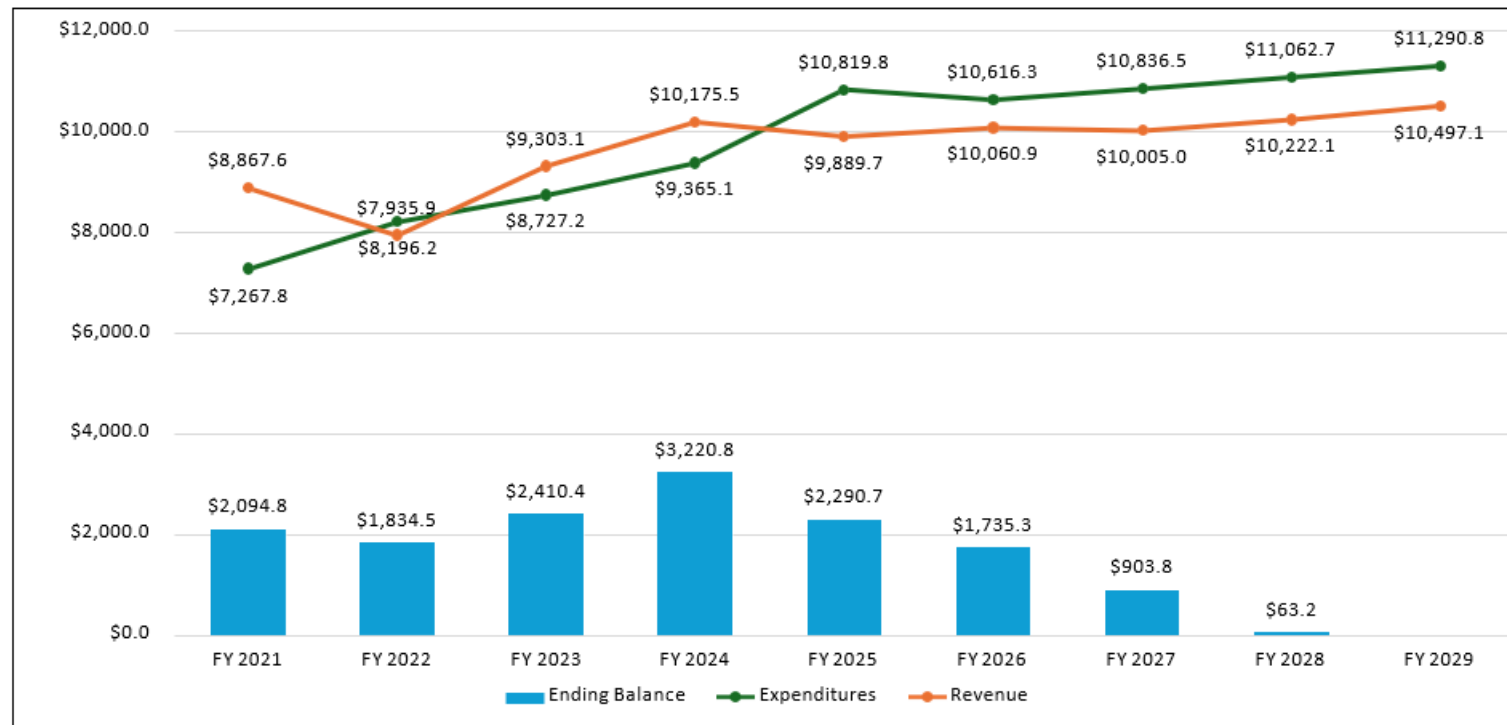
Fiscal Year 2027 & Future



- The State has been in great financial position the past several years.
 - State revenues have exceeded projections
 - Federal funding increased with significant money tied to the pandemic
 - Many critical programs and services were able to be funded and expanded
 - Strong ending balances were maintained
 - Kansas ended FY 2025 with total tax collections of \$1.06 billion. Up 3.2% from 2024.
- However, with the most recent budget, the Governor has pointed out that state funds will be in the red by 2029.
 - The budget created by the Legislature now spends hundreds of millions more than estimated revenues for the foreseeable future
 - Keeping Kansas on the path of fiscal stability is going to require a lot of discipline this next year.
- For FY 2027, Agencies will be trying to submit a budget with little to no growth in state funds from the current year.
- Federal funding, which accounts for over half of DCF's funds, also looks to be decreasing.
 - The Reconciliation Bill & the Proposed FFY26 President's Budget cuts millions from the DCF budget.

State General Fund Estimate

KLRD Estimates through FY2029



Includes Approved Legislation, Veto Overrides, & Vetoes as of April 11, 2025
Dollars in millions

Questions?

**Today's presentation is
available online.**



stakeholder.dcf.ks.gov

Program Updates



Deputy Secretary Tanya Keys



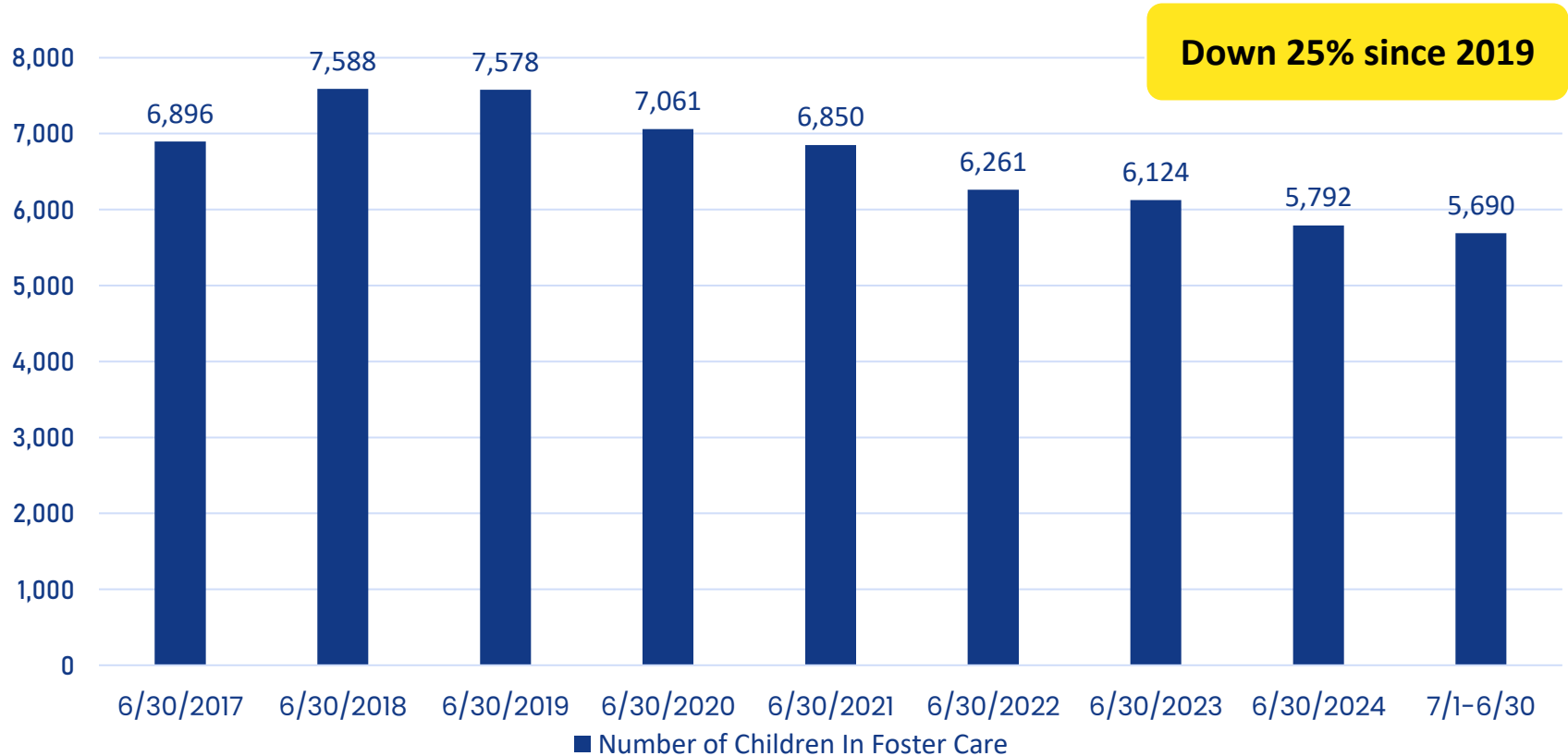
Economic and Employment Services

In February 2023, EES implemented One Kansas, establishing a statewide shared caseload for eligibility.



- Several efforts were made throughout 2024 to refresh standard operating procedures and solidify effective workload management to support One Kansas.
- Since the implementation of One Kansas, families are now receiving an eligibility determination in **fewer than 10 days**.

Number of Children in Foster Care



Community Conversation Opportunity

What can we do more of to reduce the need for foster care and support families?

Therapeutic Family Foster Homes

Therapeutic Family Foster Homes (TFFH) capacity building contracts awarded and began March 1, 2024.

Innovative mix of service delivery options will include specific recruitment strategies and increased wraparound supports to resource families, biological families and youth.

- Some grants include collaboration with agencies who operate similar programs or support youth requiring a therapeutic level of care

As of July 1, there are 96 Therapeutic Family Foster Homes, 38 of which provide respite care only.

- At least one home available in each DCF Region
- Mockingbird Model launch of first two family constellations scheduled in May.
- Cornerstones of Care has been able to provide 2,318 nights of respite care to avoid the need for entering foster care.
- In-Home Specialists have worked with 35 family preservation families assisting with issues such as school attendance, support for youth attending virtual school, hygiene practices, bullying concerns at school as well as creating and following routines.
- 30 respite caregivers successfully ended the need for respite care and the children were able to return safely home.

Holidays and Weekend Response

On July 1, 2025, DCF began initiating contact with families every day of the week including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays when there is a report from a law enforcement officer about a child in a family who might be a victim of abuse or neglect.

- DCF responds within 24 hours by initiating contact of individuals named and responding back to the referring law enforcement agency.

Collaborations with Law Enforcement

On April 14, Brenda Soto, Deputy Director of Medicaid and Children's Mental Health, attended the Chief of Police Conference in Mulvane, KS to represent the DCF booth.

During this event, FOUR Questions/Family Mobile Crisis Helpline/988 informational visor cards were provided by DCF representatives which aided in discussions surrounding prevention and access to needed mental health services and community-based interventions prior to family crises.

Attendance at this event included Chiefs of Police and juvenile intake specialists who were eager to receive the informational visor cards and showed immense interest to provide the cards to individual forces at a later date. The relational dialogue at the event provided an opportunity for DCF representatives to encourage attendees to connect with their regional DCF leadership in hopes that the visor cards and prevention discussions could continue the momentum forward with law enforcement partnerships in each region



Kansas City: Concentrated Foster Care Prevention Pilot

This pilot program was created to decrease the need for Foster Care for youth being released from PRTFs and Acute Facilities where caregivers/parents refuse to pick them up. DCCCA, who provides Family Preservation Services for the Kansas City Region, has taken on the assignment to assist DCF Child Protection Specialists when they meet with parents/caregivers who are reluctant to take their children home after release from these facilities.

Since implementation, several youth have been reunified with their families without entering into the Foster Care System. DCCCA provides resources and services to these families after reunification. We are now making plans to implement this process throughout the state in the other regions.

Wichita Region Highlights

Multi-Agency Resource Center (MERC):

- June floods caused evacuations and significant damages.
- One-stop shop for disaster related relief services
- Alongside other agencies and non-profits, DCF employees from El Dorado and Wichita staffed the MARC and provided assists to 60 families.

Consistent and accessible communication:

- *Dialogue with DCF* engages nearly 100 community stakeholders through the El Dorado Service Center.
- Quarterly newsletters and bi-annual in-person meetings

Network for Success:

- Coming to El Dorado this year!
- Closed networking event for providers of service to create connections, advance collective wisdom and provide intentional space for collaboration.

Community Conversation Opportunity

In our common purpose for today, what else should we discuss to encourage continued progress?

Thank You For Joining Us

Today's presentation is available online.

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SCAN

