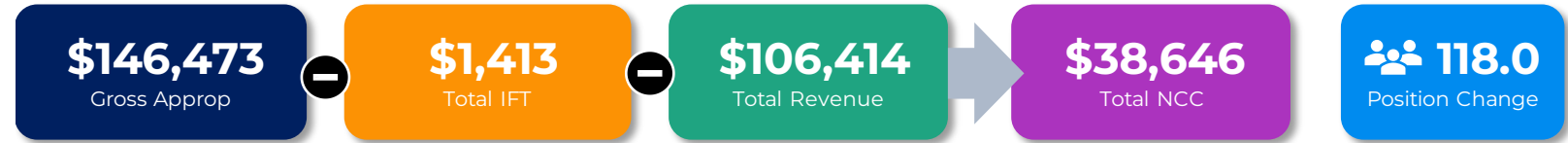




Department Budget Request: Budget Priorities

Listed in order of priority, Amounts in \$Thousands



Mission

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) promotes Child Safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need.

Mandatory & Major Duties

- Ensure equity, inclusion and access for underserved children and families.
- Make placements in the least restrictive and most suitable care setting.
- Decreasing timelines to reunification and permanency for children.
- Provide resources to help transition-age youth achieve independence.
- Support families and youth who are experiencing/at risk of homelessness.
- Reimagining services/approach from reactive to proactive/preventative.
- Deliver advanced data analytics for informed child welfare decisions.

Department Strategic Plan Exists?



No Strategic Plan

2024-25 Budget (\$Thousands)

As of Supplemental Budget Phase

EXPENDITURES/APPROPRIATIONS

Total Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$ 1,521,105
Total Services & Supplies	\$ 414,652
Other Charges	1,475,552
Cap Assets – Equip	586
Other Financing Uses	-

TOTAL GROSS APPROP \$ 3,411,895

Intrafund Transfers 8,515

TOTAL NET APPROP \$ 3,403,380

Revenue 2,627,469

NET COUNTY COST¹ \$ 775,911

TOTAL BUDGETED POSITIONS 9,986

#	Request Title/Short Descriptor	Fund Source	Gross Approp	less IFT	less Revenue	= NCC	Position Change	Board Priority	Directed By	Metrics Plan?
1	Placement Payments (Foster Care, Adoptions, & Guardianship)	NCC	50,573	-	28,680	21,893	-	Child Protection	Fund Req	N
2	Antelope Valley Social Worker Incentive Bonus	NCC	6,678	-	1,736	4,942	-	Child Protection	n/a	N
3	Program Services	RO	2,826	1,326	1,500	-	-	Child Protection	Statute	N
4	Information Technology Support	RO	4,154	-	4,154	-	-	Child Protection	n/a	N
5	Youth Transportation	RO	6,000	-	6,000	-	-	Child Protection	Statute	N
6	Prevention Services	RO	559	-	559	-	2.0	Child Protection	n/a	N
7	Program and Administrative Support Services	NCC	34,231	87	33,884	260	71.0	Child Protection	n/a	N
*	Other Ministerial Changes		30,411	-	18,860	11,551	-	Child Protection	n/a	N
TOTAL			\$ 135,432	\$ 1,413	\$ 95,373	\$ 38,646	73.0			

LEGEND	Primary Use of Funding	Service Delivery to the Public	Service Delivery to Other Departments	Administration
	Funding Source	RO: Revenue Offset	NCC: Net County Cost Change	AFB: Available Fund Balance DAFB: Department Available Fund Balance CO: Carryover Other - SBI: State Budget Impact

¹ Includes restricted and unrestricted locally generated revenues



#	Unmet Need	Approp	IFT	Revenue	NCC	Positions
Tier 1: Critical Unmet Needs						
1	LGBTQ+ & Equity Services	\$ 1,630	\$ -	\$ 1,630	\$ -	-
Tier 2: Priority Unmet Needs						
2	Administrative Support Services	\$ 9,411	\$ -	\$ 9,411	\$ -	45.0
TOTAL UNMET NEEDS		\$ 11,041	\$ -	\$ 11,041	\$ -	45.0

Tiering Definitions

TIER 1: Critical Unmet Needs

Requests where, if unfunded in the upcoming budget year, a department would be prevented from meeting mandatory obligations imposed by settlement, contract, audit finding, new legislation, Board mandate, or imminently cause a health or safety risk.

Detailed justification for critical unmet needs must be included in a department's budget requests submission.

TIER 2: Priority Unmet Needs

Requests where, if unfunded in the upcoming budget year, a department would be prevented from establishing, maintaining or enhancing programs and services having a close nexus to the department's statutory obligation(s) and/or core mission.

Detailed justification for priority unmet needs must be included in a department's budget requests submission.

TIER 3: Other Unmet Needs

Requests that do not meet the criteria in either category above. Other Unmet Needs include requests that are not characterized by urgency but are included to establish a record of the request (whether submitted with or without justification) or to signal a current intent to submit the request in one of the two prior categories in a future budget phase. Requests in this category are not limited to requests funded by NCC.

Documentation for these requests does not need to be included in a department's budget requests submission.



Budget Challenge/Pressure	Source	Impact Summary
• Immigration	External	Budget challenges are straining DCFS's ability to provide immigration relief services, delaying legal protections for vulnerable children and families. New federal policies and an anti-immigrant climate are further complicating SIJS and U-Visa processes, creating backlogs and increasing deportation risks. Without additional funding for legal services, more children may be left without care, raising the likelihood of their entry into the Child Welfare System.
• Transition Age Youth Placement, Support, and Housing	Internal	Budget challenges are significantly straining both the placement and support services and the stable housing opportunities available to Transition Age Youth. Limited funding is reducing access to essential emergency housing and transitional programs, making long-term success harder to secure. Rising placement costs further compound these pressures by stretching already scarce resources. As financial constraints persist, the ability to provide comprehensive support for TAY – both while in care and as they exit the system – is increasingly jeopardized.
• Birth to 5 children	Internal	Children ages 0-5 are among the most vulnerable in the foster care system, facing unique risks and being overrepresented. To address these challenges, the Department has established a specialized children's court and launched a Birth to Five program whose early results demonstrate that a focused approach on young children is essential for improving outcomes. However, the program is currently understaffed. Increasing staffing is crucial to enhance assessments, expand community-based resources, and strengthen family supports through specialized expertise.
• Community Cultural Brokers	Internal	The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) along with Department have prioritized Anti-Racism and Equity for African American families that interface with County systems. The Department has further uplifted equity and the Community Cultural Broker Program as priorities, but this has not come with staffing to support program operation. It is crucial for the Department to staff the Community Cultural Broker Program even amid budget constraints because the program plays a vital role in building trust, improving outcomes, and reducing disparities in child welfare services.
• Financial Pressures in Foster Care	External	Foster Family Agency (FFA) and Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) providers are facing significant budget pressures as rising service costs have reduced resources and heightened concerns over program losses under the new California Department of Social Services rate structure. Additionally, FFAs now confront escalating liability risks that require far more expensive insurance coverage, with updated policies costing two to four times higher.
• Federal Reduction in Foster Care Funding	External	The 1996 AFDC income threshold for a family of 4 was \$858 per month which equals to 11 hours per week at \$20 per hour. As this standard has not increased, the number of families qualifying for federal funding has decreased significantly. This impacts the amount of federal participation the Department receives for both placement as well as administrative costs.
• Structural Deficits	Internal	Due to on-going loss of Federal funding, the department has been in structural deficits. The Department has been able to avoid deficits due to one-time funding opportunities and a fiscally conservative approach. The Department continues to explore potential revenue sources to continue to meet the needs of children and families.

Other Impact from January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Event

• Recent Wildfires	External	The Department's challenge has been to meet the needs of children, families, and staff affected by the wildfires resulting unanticipated costs, including evacuations. While immediate assistance has been provided, long-term support such as housing and trauma care requires sustained funding that is not yet secured.
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