

March 20, 2020

How is DCFS supporting private agencies who have diminished or suspended non-essential services?

Thank you for your extraordinary commitment to protect and support the vulnerable children and families of Illinois. Families that are in crisis will continue to look to us for support in this time of challenges. The dynamic nature of this outbreak requires us to be nimble in how we respond.

We know that there are many questions regarding how this outbreak is impacting your operations. The Department is committed to being supportive of the private sector and working together so the entire critical child welfare safety net remains strong. We all want to ensure children are protected and families strengthen during this crisis.

To that end, DCFS has designated our fiscal division as an essential service to ensure payments continue so our agency partners can meet their obligations in maintaining essential services. Agencies that discontinue essential services will not be eligible for the additional funds outlined below.

Both public and private executives have been directed to implement plans for the temporary reduction of non-essential services, while maintaining core functions and essential operations. Select staff will continue to report to work; while the remaining workforce will either work remotely or be asked to remain home on call while receiving pay. Communication is the key in the days ahead. Services that ensure the safety of children remain essential and must continue even while staff work remotely, or other accommodations are made to protect the health and safety of staff.

I am writing today with an important update on budget principles we hope will provide relief and reassurance as you move forward:

- **You will not be financially penalized if you slow or stop non-essential services during this emergency. Community-based human service providers will be kept whole as operations are diminished or temporarily suspended during this national and state emergency.**
- From today through mid-April (and longer as needed), in the event fixed rate (fee-for-service) billings are less than normal, DCFS is committed to providing supplemental funding to make up the lost revenues from reduced billings to ensure the preservation of Illinois' social services delivery system and safety net as long as agencies continue providing essential services.

- In the event grant (budget-based) programs are asked to close temporarily by DCFS or reduce services, in response to COVID-19, DCFS will continue to fully fund operations.
- While safety related outcomes remain, the Department recognizes the staffing challenges ahead and performance metrics during this period will be assessed equally for both DCFS and POS in light of these extraordinary circumstances.
- Critically - staff who work for your organizations should continue to be paid in accordance with caseload and contract obligation amounts.
- Likewise, organizations taking on increased public responsibility during this time may receive additional funding commensurate with the temporary reorganization of services. On a limited basis, going forward, existing contracts may be amended to account for increasing needs for services on a case-by-case basis. Please contact your program liaisons for more information.

It has been amazing to see the dedication of the child welfare staff and management during this crisis. There is no doubt that together we can maintain the safety net that is so essential to protecting the most vulnerable children.

Please contact Royce Kirkpatrick, Chief Financial Officer, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, with any questions.

Thank you for all your efforts!



Marc D. Smith
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