Montana Child & Family Services Practice Roadmap

Practice Guidelines and Goals in Conjunction with the Families First Prevention Services Act
Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services
Child & Family Services Division

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Experis Consulting

- This document will be continually updated
- This version was updated on January 10, 2020
## Montana Child and Family Services Practice Roadmap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
<th>2025</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
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<td>Q2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Prevention Plan Requirement**
- **Trauma-Informed Care Requirements**
- **New Standards for Practice Models**
- **Clearinghouse of Prevention Services**
- **Data Collection, Outcome Assessment & Reporting**
- **Technical Assistance & Best Practices**
- **Data Collection and Evaluation**
- **QRTP Operational Requirements**
- **Training Improvements for Courts & Legal System**
- **Mental Health Diagnosis Protocol Improvements**
- **Assessment Process Improvements**
- **Data Availability & Reporting**
- **Review & Improve Placement Licensing Standards**
- **Foster Family Support Practice Improvements**
- **Kinship Navigator Program**
- **Tribal Child Welfare Program Coordination**
- **Statewide Plan to Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect Fatalities**
- **Children Aging Out of Foster Care Programs**
- **Streamlining ICPC Placement & Reducing Delays**
Priority Indications

- **Urgent** – this item is required by pending regulations/guidelines, or a remediation process to resolve a critical issue; failure to address this item will result in significant, immediate, system or program degradation

- **High** – this item will have a significant positive effect on technology capabilities or program practices that will have a direct effect on child welfare outcomes

- **Medium** – this item will have a moderate positive effect on technology capabilities or program practices that will have an indirect effect on child welfare outcomes

- **Low** – this item does not affect critical functionality in any way, it is a potential enhancement that adds value, but its absence does not impede progress
Activity Category

• **FFPSA Compliance** – this item is directly related to the requirements of the Families First Prevention Services Act, and must be completed by the State’s October 31, 2021 deadline

• **Child and Family Services Goal** – this item is not directly required by the Families First Prevention Services Act, but is an existing goal of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division

• **Child and Family Services Further Enhancement** – this item is not directly required by the Families First Prevention Services Act, but is under consideration by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division
Across Montana in 2019, approximately 15,392 children were involved in investigations of maltreatment or other issues where timely interventions can be important.

2,408 children received services as a result of an investigation.

2,205 children entered foster care.

Montana Child & Family Services Profile

2019 State Population: 1,074,532*


Children in Montana do not experience a repeat occurrence of maltreatment within six months

93.7% of children in Montana enter foster care due to abuse or neglect, with only 6% of children experiencing maltreatment occurring more than once within six months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Children Under Age 18 Living in Foster Care</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,781</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>1,926</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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Montana Child & Family Services Profile

2019 State Population: 1,074,532*


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Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) must develop a five-year Title IV-E Prevention Program Plan, including its definition of candidacy, to meet new Families First Preventative Services Act requirements. The plan must fully describe CFSD’s strategy for minimizing the use of residential foster care, with a preference for the child remaining safe at home when possible. Kinship care, whether temporary or permanent, should be the next most preferred care option. The plan must address pregnant or parenting foster youth where applicable. CFSD must maintain an individual prevention plan for children and youth being served by Title IV-E prevention services.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 111. Foster care prevention services and programs
“(A) PREVENTION PLAN.—The State maintains a written prevention plan for the child that meets the following requirements (as applicable):
“(i) CANDIDATES.—In the case of a child who is a candidate for foster care described in paragraph (2)(A), the prevention plan shall—
“(I) identify the foster care prevention strategy for the child so that the child may remain safely at home, live temporarily with a kin caregiver until reunification can be safely achieved, or live permanently with a kin caregiver;
“(II) list the services or programs to be provided to or on behalf of the child to ensure the success of that prevention strategy; and
“(III) comply with such other requirements as the Secretary shall establish.
“(ii) PREGNANT OR PARENTING FOSTER YOUTH.—In the case of a child who is a pregnant or parenting foster youth described in paragraph (2)(B), the prevention plan shall—
“(I) be included in the child’s case plan required under section 475(1);
“(II) list the services or programs to be provided to or on behalf of the youth to ensure that the youth is prepared (in the case of a pregnant foster youth) or able (in the case of a parenting foster youth) to be a parent;
“(III) describe the foster care prevention strategy for any child born to the youth; and
“(IV) comply with such other requirements as the Secretary shall establish.
### Trauma-Informed Care Requirements

**Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance**

The Families First Prevention Services Act requires that services delivered to children and families must meet the standards of trauma-informed care, utilize a trauma-informed approach and focus on the identification of trauma events. This approach must extend to the immediate, secondary, and tertiary family members that may have contact with children receiving services. Adult services must be identified and provided to all family members where applicable.

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H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 111. Foster care prevention services and programs

“(B) TRAUMA-INFORMED.—The services or programs to be provided to or on behalf of a child are provided under an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and in accordance with recognized principles of a trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions to address trauma’s consequences and facilitate healing.
Services utilizing Title IV-E Prevention monies must be evidence-based treatment methods with qualified research demonstrating that they are PROMISING, SUPPORTED, or WELL-SUPPORTED as approved through the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse. At least 50% of these services must be WELL-SUPPORTED.
**Clearinghouse of Prevention Services**

**Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance**

Services and programs must be approved by a single, Federally-governed, clearinghouse. Montana Child and Family Services Division has an opportunity (along with all states) to respond to the current state of the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, and address its practices, response time, willingness to accept new programs, approval criteria, and administration.

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H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 111. Foster care prevention services and programs

“(2) CLEARINGHOUSE OF PROMISING, SUPPORTED, AND WELL-SUPPORTED PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall, directly or through grants, contracts, or interagency agreements, evaluate research on the practices specified in clauses (iii), (iv), and (v), respectively, of section 471(e)(4)(C), and programs that meet the requirements described in section 427(a)(1), including culturally specific, or location- or population-based adaptations of the practices, to identify and establish a public clearinghouse of the practices that satisfy each category described by such clauses. In addition, the clearinghouse shall include information on the specific outcomes associated with each practice, including whether the practice has been shown to prevent child abuse and neglect and reduce the likelihood of foster care placement by supporting birth families and kinship families and improving targeted supports for pregnant and parenting youth and their children.
Data Collection, Outcome Assessment & Reporting

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

Child and Family Services Division will examine its current Federal reporting practices and modify those practices to meet the requirements of the Prevention Plan services and programs. The project will examine the State’s current reporting capabilities and define the necessary improvements to meet new requirements. Requirements will be built into the new CCWIS case management system, MFSIS.

The State of Montana DPHHS CFSD must collect (and deliver to the Federal Government) child welfare data that report on child welfare support activities and how they:

- Support an increase in at-home child welfare support success
- reduce the likelihood of foster care placement
- increase kinship care utilization
- improve child well-being
- provide improved child welfare outcomes

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 111. Foster care prevention services and programs
“(3) DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATIONS.—The Secretary, directly or through grants, contracts, or interagency agreements, may collect data and conduct evaluations with respect to the provision of services and programs described in section 471(e)(1) for purposes of assessing the extent to which the provision of the services and programs—
“(A) reduces the likelihood of foster care placement;
“(B) increases use of kinship care arrangements; or
“(C) improves child well-being.
“(4) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—
“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Finance of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives periodic reports based on the provision of services and programs described in section 471(e)(1) and the activities carried out under this subsection.
“(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make the reports to Congress submitted under this paragraph publicly available.
“(5) APPROPRIATION.—Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there is appropriated to the Secretary $1,000,000 for fiscal year 2017 and each fiscal year thereafter to carry out this subsection.
“(6) OUTCOME ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING.—The State shall collect and report to the Secretary the following information with respect to each child for whom, or on whose behalf mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services or in-home parent skill-based programs are provided during a 12-month period beginning on the date the child is determined by the State to be a child described in paragraph (2):
“(i) The specific services or programs provided and the total expenditures for each of the services or programs.
“(ii) The duration of the services or programs provided.
“(iii) In the case of a child described in paragraph (2)(A), the child’s placement status at the beginning, and at the end, of the 1-year period, respectively, and whether the child entered foster care within 2 years after being determined a candidate for foster care.
Technical Assistance & Best Practices

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

Child and Family Services Division (CFSD), must develop and implement a plan to take advantage of the technical assistance and best practices recommendations provided to all states by the provisions of the FFPSA. The state of Montana will develop a periodic review process to ensure that best practices are continually implemented. This will include, in part:

- Data collection practices & database standards
- HHS guidance & assistance in defining technical standards in accordance with CCWIS guidelines
- Child Welfare practice guidelines

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 111. Foster care prevention services and programs

(d) Technical assistance and best practices, clearinghouse, and data collection and evaluations.—Section 476 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 676) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) Technical assistance and best practices, clearinghouse, data collection, and evaluations relating to prevention services and programs.—

“(1) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES.—The Secretary shall provide to States and, as applicable, to Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal consortia, technical assistance regarding the provision of services and programs described in section 471(e)(1) and shall disseminate best practices with respect to the provision of the services and programs, including how to plan and implement a well-designed and rigorous evaluation of a promising, supported, or well-supported practice.
The Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family Services Division and Quality Assurance Division will develop licensing requirements for qualified residential treatment programs to meet new operational requirements defined by the FFSPA. The Children’s Mental Health Bureau will be an active partner in the development of future rules and practices. Programs must be accredited by one of the listed organizations and meet the standards outlined in the Act.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 201. Limitations on Federal Financial Participation for Placements that are not in Foster Family Homes

“(A) QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAM.—For purposes of this part, the term ‘qualified residential treatment program’ means a program that—

“(B) has a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address the needs, including clinical needs as appropriate, of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances and, with respect to a child, is able to implement the treatment identified for the child by the assessment of the child required under section 475A(c);

“(B) has registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff who—

“(C) to the extent appropriate, and in accordance with the child’s best interests, facilitates participation of family members in the child’s treatment program;

“(D) facilitates outreach to the family members of the child, including siblings, documents how the outreach is made (including contact information), and maintains contact information for any known biological family and fictive kin of the child;

“(E) documents how family members are integrated into the treatment process for the child, including post-discharge, and how sibling connections are maintained;

“(F) provides discharge planning and family-based aftercare support for at least 6 months post-discharge; and

“(G) is licensed in accordance with section 471(a)(10) and is accredited by any of the following independent, not-for-profit organizations:

“(i) The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

“(ii) The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).

“(iii) The Council on Accreditation (COA).

“(iv) Any other independent, not-for-profit accrediting organization approved by the Secretary.”.
### Training Improvements for Courts & Legal System

**Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance**

The Court Improvement Program with the assistance of the Child & Family Services Division will provide training to District Court Judges, County Attorneys, Public Defenders and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) regarding the requirement of court approval of placement within 60 days of a youth’s placement in a Qualified Residential Treatment Program.

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H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)

(c) Training for state judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases.—Section 438(b)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(b)(1)) is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by inserting “shall provide for the training of judges, attorneys, and other legal personnel in child welfare cases on Federal child welfare policies and payment limitations with respect to children in foster care who are placed in settings that are not a foster family home,” after “with respect to the child,”.

(d) Assurance of nonimpact on juvenile justice system.—

(1) STATE PLAN REQUIREMENT.—Section 471(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)), as amended by section 131, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(37) includes a certification that, in response to the limitation imposed under section 472(k) with respect to foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of any child who is placed in a setting that is not a foster family home, the State will not enact or advance policies or practices that would result in a significant increase in the population of youth in the State’s juvenile justice system.”.

(2) GAO STUDY AND REPORT.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall evaluate the impact, if any, on State juvenile justice systems of the limitation imposed under section 472(k) of the Social Security Act (as added by section 201(a)(1)) on foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of any child who is placed in a setting that is not a foster family home, in accordance with the amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) of this section. In particular, the Comptroller General shall evaluate the extent to which children in foster care who also are subject to the juvenile justice system of the State are placed in a facility under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system and whether the lack of available congregate care placements under the jurisdiction of the child welfare systems is a contributing factor to that result. Not later than December 31, 2023, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the evaluation.
Mental Health Diagnosis Protocol Improvements

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) must create and implement a well-documented screening process that evaluates all children entering the foster care system for mental illness, behavioral issues, medical conditions and trauma-induced emotional conditions. CFSD must create and implement a series of protocols that ensure that all children are evaluated and that the evaluations do not result in a misdiagnosis and that the children are not placed in a foster care environment outside of remaining at home or a foster family home as a result of an inappropriate diagnosis. The State must also conduct annual audits of the effectiveness of the evaluation methods to demonstrate success. Montana described a process in its 2020-2024 CFSP describing how the state intends to address this issue. The plan was approved, and the state is now in compliance with this requirement.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)

SEC. 203. Protocols to prevent inappropriate diagnoses.

(a) State plan requirement.—Section 422(b)(15)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 622(b)(15)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (vi), by striking “and” after the semicolon;
(2) by redesignating clause (vii) as clause (viii); and
(3) by inserting after clause (vi) the following

“(vii) the procedures and protocols the State has established to ensure that children in foster care placements are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes as a result of the inappropriate diagnoses; and”.

(b) Evaluation.—Section 476 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 676), as amended by section 111(d), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) Evaluation of State procedures and protocols To prevent inappropriate diagnoses of mental illness or other conditions.—The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the procedures and protocols established by States in accordance with the requirements of section 422(b)(15)(A)(vii). The evaluation shall analyze the extent to which States comply with and enforce the procedures and protocols and the effectiveness of various State procedures and protocols and shall identify best practices. Not later than January 1, 2019, the Secretary shall submit a report on the results of the evaluation to Congress.”.
Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)

SEC. 202. Assessment and documentation of the need for placement in a qualified residential treatment program.

Section 475A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) Assessment, documentation, and judicial determination requirements for placement in a qualified residential treatment program.—In the case of any child who is placed in a qualified residential treatment program (as defined in section 472(k)(4)), the following requirements shall apply for purposes of approving the case plan for the child:

(i) (A) Within 30 days of the start of each placement in a setting, a qualified individual (as defined in subparagraph (D)) shall—

(ii) assess the strengths and needs of the child, using an age-appropriate, evidence-based, validated, functional assessment tool approved by the Secretary;

(iii) determine whether the needs of the child can be met with family members or through placement in a foster family home or, if not, which setting from among the settings specified in section 4725(12) would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and be consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child; and

(iv) develop a list of child-specific short- and long-term mental and behavioral health goals.

(B) The State shall assemble a family and permanency team for the child in accordance with the requirements of clauses (i) and (ii). The qualified individual conducting the assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall work in conjunction with the family of, and permanency team for, the child while conducting and making the assessment.

(C) In the case of a child who has attained age 14, the family and permanency team shall include the members of the permanency planning team for the child that are selected by the child in accordance with section 4750(12)(c).

(iii) The State shall document in the child’s case plan—

(A) the reasonable and good faith effort of the State to identify and include all such individuals on the family of, and permanency team for, the child;

(B) all contact information for members of the family and permanency team, as well as contact information for other family members and fictive kin who are not part of the family and permanency team;

(C) evidence that the family and permanency team, including meetings relating to the assessment required under subparagraph (A), are held at a time and place convenient for family;

(D) if reunification is the goal, evidence demonstrating that the parent from whom the child was removed provided input on the members of the family and permanency team;

(E) evidence that the assessment required under subparagraph (A) is determined in conjunction with the family and permanency team; and

(F) the placement preferences of the family and permanency team relative to the assessment and, if the placement preferences of the family and permanency team and child are not the placement setting recommended by the qualified individual conducting the assessment under subparagraph (A), the reasons why the preferences of the team and of the child were not recommended.

(D) The child and family services division shall implement a plan to comply with the updated assessment process requirements of the FFPSA.

(E) Within 60 days of the start of each placement in a qualified residential treatment program, a family or juvenile court or another court (including a tribal court) of competent jurisdiction, or an administrative body appointed or approved by the court, independently, shall—

(A) consider the assessment, determination, and documentation made by the qualified individual conducting the assessment under paragraph (1);

(B) determine whether the needs of the child can be met through placement in a foster family home or, if not, whether placement of the child in a qualified residential treatment program provides the most effective and appropriate level of care in the least restrictive environment and how that placement is consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child;

(C) approve or disapprove the placement.

(F) The written documentation made under paragraph (1)(C) and documentation of the determination and approval or disapproval of the placement in a qualified residential treatment program by a court or administrative body under paragraph (2) shall be included in and made part of the case plan for the child.

(G) As long as a child remains placed in a qualified residential treatment program, the State agency shall submit evidence at each status review and each permanency hearing held with respect to the child—

(A) demonstrating that ongoing assessment of the strengths and needs of the child continues to support the determination that the needs of the child cannot be met through placement in a foster family home, that the placement in a qualified residential treatment program provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment, and that the placement is consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child, as specified in the permanency plan for the child; and

(B) documenting the specific treatment or service needs that will be met for the child in the placement and the length of time the child is expected to reside in the treatment or service setting.

(H) The most recent version of the evidence and documentation specified in paragraph (4) and the signed approval of the head of the State agency for the continued placement of the child in that setting.”.
Data Availability & Reporting

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

Child and Family Services Division will build required data elements into Montana’s Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), named Montana Family Safety Information System (MFSIS). A fully-compliant, system is under development as a separate project.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)

SEC. 204. Additional data and reports regarding children placed in a setting that is not a foster family home.

Section 479A(a)(7)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 679b(a)(7)(A)) is amended by striking clauses (i) through (vi) and inserting the following:

“(i) with respect to each such placement—
“(I) the type of the placement setting, including whether the placement is shelter care, a group home and if so, the range of the child population in the home, a residential treatment facility, a hospital or institution providing medical, rehabilitative, or psychiatric care, a setting specializing in providing prenatal, post-partum or parenting supports, or some other kind of child-care institution and if so, what kind;
“(II) the number of children in the placement setting and the age, race, ethnicity, and gender of each of the children;
“(III) for each child in the placement setting, the length of the placement of the child in the setting, whether the placement of the child in the setting is the first placement of the child and if not, the number and type of previous placements of the child, and whether the child has special needs or another diagnosed mental or physical illness or condition; and
“(IV) the extent of any specialized education, treatment, counseling, or other services provided in the setting; and
“(ii) separately, the number and ages of children in the placements who have a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement; and”.
Review & Improve Placement Licensing Standards

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

The State of Montana must meet new foster care licensing standards that reflect the model standards that have been approved under the FFPSA. Model standards are defined as those developed at the federal level by the Administration for Children and Families. The Child and Family Services Division and the federally-recognized tribes in Montana have completed this requirement by updating or explaining areas of non-conformity within state incensing standards.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
Subtitle C - Miscellaneous

SEC. 131. Reviewing and improving licensing standards for placement in a relative foster family home.
(a) Identification of reputable model licensing standards.—Not later than October 1, 2017, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall identify reputable model licensing standards with respect to the licensing of foster family homes (as defined in section 472(c)(1) of the Social Security Act).
(b) State plan requirement.—Section 471(a) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)) is amended—
(1) in paragraph (34)(B), by striking “and” after the semicolon;
(2) in paragraph (35)(B), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and
(3) by adding at the end the following:
“(36) provides that, not later than April 1, 2018, the State shall submit to the Secretary information addressing—
“(A) whether the State licensing standards are in accord with model standards identified by the Secretary, and if not, the reason for the specific deviation and a description as to why having a standard that is reasonably in accord with the corresponding national model standards is not appropriate for the State;
“(B) whether the State has elected to waive standards established in 471(a)(10)(A) for relative foster family homes (pursuant to waiver authority provided by 471(a)(10)(D)), a description of which standards the State most commonly waives, and if the State has not elected to waive the standards, the reason for not waiving these standards;
“(C) if the State has elected to waive standards specified in subparagraph (B), how caseworkers are trained to use the waiver authority and whether the State has developed a process or provided tools to assist caseworkers in waiving nonsafety standards per the authority provided in 471(a)(10)(D) to quickly place children with relatives; and
“(D) a description of the steps the State is taking to improve caseworker training or the process, if any; and”.

The State of Montana must meet new foster care licensing standards that reflect the model standards that have been approved under the FFPSA. Model standards are defined as those developed at the federal level by the Administration for Children and Families. The Child and Family Services Division and the federally-recognized tribes in Montana have completed this requirement by updating or explaining areas of non-conformity within state incensing standards.
Foster Family Support Practice Improvements

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

The Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) will develop expanded foster parent advisory guidance to improve foster family support and retention needs to meet FFPSA requirements. CFSD will develop a plan to address these types of improvements that will include input from foster parents, sending families to national conferences, hosting a training to enhance foster parent support group leaders, partnering with Montana Kinship Navigator for additional supports, and sending a team to ACF’s Adoption Call to Action planning conference.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
TITLE III—Continuing Support for Child and Family Services
SEC. 301. Supporting and retaining foster families for children.

(a) Supporting and retaining foster parents as a family support service.—Section 431(a)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 631(a)(2)(B)) is amended by redesignating clauses (iii) through (vi) as clauses (iv) through (vii), respectively, and inserting after clause (ii) the following:
“(iii) To support and retain foster families so they can provide quality family-based settings for children in foster care.”.

(b) Support for foster family homes.—Section 436 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629f) is amended by adding at the end the following:
“(c) Support for foster family homes.—Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Secretary for fiscal year 2018, $8,000,000 for the Secretary to make competitive grants to States, Indian tribes, or tribal consortia to support the recruitment and retention of high-quality foster families to increase their capacity to place more children in family settings, focused on States, Indian tribes, or tribal consortia with the highest percentage of children in non-family settings. The amount appropriated under this subparagraph shall remain available through fiscal year 2022.”.

The Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) will develop expanded foster parent advisory guidance to improve foster family support and retention needs to meet FFPSA requirements. CFSD will develop a plan to address these types of improvements that will include input from foster parents, sending families to national conferences, hosting a training to enhance foster parent support group leaders, partnering with Montana Kinship Navigator for additional supports, and sending a team to ACF’s Adoption Call to Action planning conference.

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“(iii) To support and retain foster families so they can provide quality family-based settings for children in foster care.”.

(b) Support for foster family homes.—Section 436 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629f) is amended by adding at the end the following:
“(c) Support for foster family homes.—Out of any money in the Treasury of the United States not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Secretary for fiscal year 2018, $8,000,000 for the Secretary to make competitive grants to States, Indian tribes, or tribal consortia to support the recruitment and retention of high-quality foster families to increase their capacity to place more children in family settings, focused on States, Indian tribes, or tribal consortia with the highest percentage of children in non-family settings. The amount appropriated under this subparagraph shall remain available through fiscal year 2022.”.
Kinship Navigator Program

Priority: High Category: Child & Family Services Goal

Child and Family Services (CFSD) has partnered with Montana State University Extension Services, Grandparents Raising Grandkids program to develop the Montana Kinship Navigator Program (MKNP). Currently, the program is conducting an evaluation to become evidence-based to be able to utilize IV-E funding. CFSD has applied for and received two rounds of non-competitive grants to provide financial support to the Montana Kinship Navigator Program. The evaluation process is long and complex. CFSD and MKNP will need to develop a plan for sustainability. Montana currently maintains a high percentage of kin placements. Identifying fit and willing relatives is an established and ongoing foster parent recruitment tool.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
TITLE III—Continuing Support for Child and Family Services
Tribal Child Welfare Coordination

Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance

Child and Family Services Division will coordinate and support all federally-recognized Montana Tribes with implementation of FFPSA legislation. The act’s language refers to programs directly operated by tribes or Indian organizations. In Montana, Tribes access IVE funding through these agreements and are obligated to follow the requirements of the state’s Title IVE Plan. The State of Montana has engaged in formal discussions with tribes on this aspect of the FFPSA. All tribal social services agencies have received at least one in-person training on the provisions of the Act.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)
SEC. 134. Effective dates

(2) APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS OPERATED BY INDIAN TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS.—In the case of an Indian tribe, tribal organization, or tribal consortium which the Secretary of Health and Human Services determines requires time to take action necessary to comply with the additional requirements imposed by the amendments made by this title (whether the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium has a plan under section 479B of the Social Security Act or a cooperative agreement or contract entered into with a State), the Secretary shall provide the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium with such additional time as the Secretary determines is necessary for the tribe, organization, or tribal consortium to take the action to comply with the additional requirements before being regarded as failing to comply with the requirements.
The State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), Child and Family Services Division (CFSD), as part of a larger state-wide partnership, will develop and implement a statewide plan to eliminate fatalities among system-involved children that includes input and participation from private agencies, public agencies, law enforcement and the courts. The Child Abuse and Neglect Review Commission (MCA 41-3-123) was created in 2017. This Commission helps Montana move towards compliance with this requirement. Additional steps will be needed to incorporate data from other entities such as Vital Statistics and Fetal, Infant, Child & Maternal Mortality Review (FICMMR).
Children Aging out of Foster Care

**Priority: Urgent Category: FFPSA Compliance**

States may use John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funds for youth up to 23 years of age who have aged out of foster care if that state has extended federal Title IV-E funds to children up to age 23. Providing this in Montana to age 23 would require a statute change allowing youth to remain in foster care until age 21.

Under FFPSA guidelines, the ability to provide Education and Training Vouchers up to age 26, but for no more than five years total, has been fully implemented. Montana is currently compliant with this requirement.

H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671)

**SEC. 302. Extension of child and family services programs.**

(a) Extension of Stephanie Tubbs Jones child welfare services program.—Section 425 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 625) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(b) Extension of promoting safe and stable families program authorizations.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 436(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629f(a)) is amended by striking all that follows “$345,000,000” and inserting “for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.”.

(2) DISCRETIONARY GRANTS.—Section 437(a) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629g(a)) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(c) Extension of funding reservations for monthly caseworker visits and regional partnership grants.—Section 438(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (4)(A), by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”; and

(2) in paragraph (5), by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(d) Reauthorization of funding for state courts.—

(1) EXTENSION OF PROGRAM.—Section 438(c)(1) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(c)(1)) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(2) EXTENSION OF FEDERAL SHARE.—Section 438(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(d)) is amended by striking “2012 through 2016” and inserting “2017 through 2021”.

(e) Repeal of expired provisions.—Section 438(e) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629h(e)) is repealed.

**SEC. 303. Improvements to the John H. Chafee foster care independence program and related provisions.**

(a) Authority To Serve Former Foster Youth Up To Age 23.—Section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(5), by inserting “or 23 years of age, in the case of a State with a certification under subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) to provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained such age, in accordance with such subsection)” after “21 years of age”;

(2) in subsection (b)(3)(A)—

(A) by inserting “(ii) before “A certification”;

(b) by striking “children who have left foster care” and all that follows through the period and inserting “youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age.”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) If the State has elected under section 475(b)(8) to extend eligibility for foster care to all children who have not attained 21 years of age, or if the Secretary determines that the State agency responsible for administering the State plans under this part and part B uses State funds or any other funds not provided under this part to provide services and assistance to youths who have aged out of foster care that are comparable to the services and assistance the youths would receive if the State had made such an election, the certification required under clause (i) may provide that the State will provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 23 years of age.”; and

(3) in subsection (b)(3)(B), by striking “children who have left foster care” and all that follows through the period and inserting “youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained 21 years of age (or 23 years of age, in the case of a State with a certification under subparagraph (A)(i) to provide assistance and services to youths who have aged out of foster care and have not attained such age, in accordance with subparagraph (A)(ii)).”.
H.R. 253 amends the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671) subtitle B—Enhanced support under Title IV–B

SEC. 122. Reducing bureaucracy and unnecessary delays when placing children in homes across State lines.
(a) State plan requirement.—Section 471(a)(25) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 671(a)(25)) is amended—
(1) by striking “provide” and insert “provides”; and
(2) by inserting “, which, not later than October 1, 2026, shall include the use of an electronic interstate case-processing system” before the first semicolon.
(b) Grants for the development of an electronic interstate case-Processing system To expedite the interstate placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption.—Section 437 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 629g) is amended by adding at the end the following:
“(g) Grants for the development of an electronic interstate case-processing system To expedite the interstate placement of children in foster care or guardianship, or for adoption.—
“(1) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this subsection is to facilitate the development of an electronic interstate case-processing system for the exchange of data and documents to expedite the placements of children in foster, guardianship, or adoptive homes across State lines.
“(2) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—A State that desires a grant under this subsection shall submit to the Secretary an application containing the following:
“(A) A description of the goals and outcomes to be achieved during the period for which grant funds are sought, which goals and outcomes must result in—
“(i) reducing the time it takes for a child to be provided with a safe and appropriate permanent living arrangement across State lines;
“(ii) improving administrative processes and reducing costs in the foster care system; and
“(iii) the secure exchange of relevant case files and other necessary materials in real time, and timely communications and placement decisions regarding interstate placements of children.
“(B) A description of the activities to be funded in whole or in part with the grant funds, including the sequencing of the activities.
“(C) A description of the strategies for integrating programs and services for children who are placed across State lines.
“(D) Such other information as the Secretary may require.