

## Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Priorities Overview

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) Kid’s Net Program and the Massachusetts Alliance for Foster Families (MAFF) provide ongoing support and resources for foster, pre-adoptive, and kinship families throughout Massachusetts. Our goal is to provide the information, resources, respite and support networks that these families need to address the unique challenges that come with raising children in foster care.

### DCF: Services for Children and Families Line Item #4800-0038

FY24 GAA	FY25 Request	FY25 Governor	FY25 House	FY25 SWM	Conference
\$355,808,909	Level Funding	\$376,723,635			

#### Foster Care Supports:

##### Daily Rate of Support for Foster Children

Foster parents are volunteers who are reimbursed for the cost of caring for children placed in their homes through a Daily Rate of Support (DRS). The **current DRS is substantially below the actual costs of caring for a child**. According to U.S.D.A. data<sup>1</sup> and inflation statistics from the BLS,<sup>2</sup> raising a child in 2023 could cost approximately \$17,034 (\$46.67 per day). This does not account for any extracurricular activities or the costs associated with meeting any special needs that a child may have. Bringing the DRS equal to the current **actual** cost of raising a child would require a 27.2% increase over current rates.

MSPCC and MAFF support the Governor’s increase of \$3.4M to raise the DRS by 3.7%.

Age Range	FY23 Daily Rate of Support	DRS Adjusted for FY23 Inflation (+3.4%)	DRS with the Governor’s 3.7% Increase	DRS Adjusted for Actual* Cost of Raising a Child (+27.2%)
0- 5	\$32.10	\$33.19	\$33.28	\$40.83
6-12	\$36.38	\$37.51	\$37.72	\$46.28
13+	\$38.00	\$39.29	\$39.40	\$48.34

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2017/01/13/cost-raising-child>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

**DMH: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Line Item #5042-5000: \$350,000 for Behavioral Health Consultation for Foster Care**

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) classifies children in foster care as a special healthcare needs population. According to the AAP up to **80 percent of children entering foster care have a significant mental health need**, and mental and behavioral health are the largest unmet need among youth in foster care.<sup>3</sup> Yet, youth who enter foster care without a behavioral health provider often wait for months to get an appointment. With philanthropic support, The Foster Child Evaluation Services Clinic at UMass Medical Center in partnership with the UMass MA Child Psychiatry Access Project (MCPAP) team have developed an expedited care model that allows primary care providers in Central MA enrolled in MCPAP to refer a youth who is in foster care for a trauma informed psychiatric consultation, diagnostic face to face evaluation and referral services.

MSPCC and MAFF request **level funding** to support formalizing and expanding this service to the entire Western/Central MCPAP region.

FY24 GAA	FY25 Request	FY25 Governor	FY25 House	FY25 SWM	Conference
\$350,000	Level Funding	Not Included			

**DHE: Tuition and Fees Waivers for Foster and Adopted Youth Line Item #7066-0021**

National data shows that the **college graduation rate for children who spent time in the child welfare system is less than 5%**, compared to the 37.9% graduation rate for all youth. Since 2008, youth who age out of foster care or are adopted from foster care have been entitled to a waiver of tuition and fees to state colleges and universities upon acceptance and enrollment. During the 2021-2022 academic year, 800 students who aged out or were adopted from foster care received a tuition and fee waiver for Massachusetts colleges and universities, totalling more than \$6.5M. Current projections indicate that tuition and fee waivers for the current academic year will exceed the 2021-2022 expenditures, both in number of recipients and total.

FY24 Projected	FY25 Request	FY25 Governor	FY25 House	FY25 SWM	Conference
\$7,294,911	Level Funding	\$7,294,911			

<sup>3</sup>

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/136/4/e1142/73872/Health-Care-Issues-for-Children-and-Adolescents-in?autologincheck=redirected>