



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 25-1097: PLACEMENT TRANSITION PLANS FOR CHILDREN

Prime Sponsors:

Rep. Gilchrist; Froelich

Sen. Michaelson Jenet; Daugherty

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Fiscal note status: This revised fiscal note is provided pursuant to House Rule 32 A(c) and reflects amendments adopted by the House Health and Human Services, the Appropriation Committees, as well as Amendments L.008 and L.009 on House Second Reading.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill requires county caseworkers to develop placement transition plans for children moving between different out-of-home placements or back to the child's home.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- Minimal State Workload
- Local Government

Appropriations. No appropriation is required.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$0	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires county departments of human services to develop placement transition plans for a child any time a decision has been made by the county or the courts to move the child to a new placement, outside of emergency placements. This includes placements between foster care homes, kinship foster care homes, and non-certified kinship care homes, as well as placements back to the child's home. Each plan must include certain information on the logistics, communication frameworks, and timelines for child placements. The plans must be developed in a meeting with all parties to the case, unless all parties agree that a meeting is not required.

The Department of Human Services (CDHS) must create a training on the placement transition plan process, which county caseworkers may complete. Foster care parents or non-certified kinship care providers may also access and complete the training.

State Expenditures

The bill minimally affects workload in CDHS, the Judicial Department, and other judicial agencies, as discussed below.

Department of Human Services

Workload will increase for CDHS to develop the caseworker training and support counties with the development of placement plans. This workload can be accomplished within existing resources.

Beginning in FY 2026-27, to the extent that county spending on child welfare services increases to develop new transition plans, the state share of spending for child welfare will increase. It is assumed that the impacts will be addressed through the annual budget process based on actual county spending. See Local Government section.

Judicial Department

Workload will minimally increase to review transition plans during out-of-home placement hearings. If interested parties object to the transition plan, placement hearings may take longer; However, some hearings may be shorter due to the wide scope of required information in the transition plans, which would leave fewer elements of the transition in dispute. Overall, these impacts are expected to be minimal and can be absorbed within existing resources.

Other Judicial Agencies

Workload will increase for Office of the Child's Representative (OCR) and Office of Respondent Parents' Council (ORPC) to work with county caseworkers as necessary to complete transition plans for each placement. To the extent that parties participate in meetings to develop the plan or object contents of the transition plan, there may be increased workload for litigation, research, attending hearings, and potential appeals. The fiscal note assumes legal

representatives are currently involved in all placement planning to some extent and participation in the creation of transition plans may lead to fewer disputes and litigation around placements later. The overall impacts are expected to be minimal and can be accommodated within existing appropriations.

Centrally Appropriated Costs

Pursuant to a Joint Budget Committee policy, certain costs associated with this bill are addressed through the annual budget process and centrally appropriated in the Long Bill or supplemental appropriations bills, rather than in this bill. These costs, which may include employee insurance, supplemental employee retirement payments, leased space, and indirect cost assessments, are shown in the expenditure table(s) above.

Local Government

Currently, when a child is determined by courts to need an out-of-home placement, county caseworkers develop a placement plan based on the child's needs and available placement options, considering several factors and involving relevant stakeholders in the process. The plan and any relevant information is documented in TRAILS. However, the placement and transition process currently varies by county and by caseworker, and beyond the initial planning, there is no standardized requirement for what information must be collected when a child moves between placements.

Beginning in FY 2026-27, the bill requires that county departments of human services develop placement transition plans whenever a child is moved to a new placement. According to the [CDHS data](#), there were approximately 3,400 children in out-of-home placements in the state in from January 2024 through September 2024 with each child experiencing an average of 1.3 placement changes per year ([based on federal placement stability data](#)). While each transition currently requires a caseworker to facilitate the move, there is no requirement for a documented transition plan in TRAILS. The bill will increase the workload for county caseworkers to create detailed transition plans and meet with all parties to the case for each movement, including those between foster homes, kinship care, and returns to the child's family, which are currently not required. The extent of the impact will vary by county depending on the number of children requiring out-of-home placements, the number of transitions experienced, and the hourly rates for caseworkers. Assuming it takes up to 2 hours to develop a transition plan, and an average rate of \$42 per hour for a case worker, this would increase county costs on a statewide basis by \$371,280 annually.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

Departmental Difference

The ORPC estimates that additional attorney time and litigation will be required for children in out-of-home placements requiring a transition plan under the bill, increasing its costs by around \$390,000 per year. This includes time for attorneys to participate, review, and potentially litigate issues that arise related to the development of transition plans.

The fiscal note does not include this cost, as it is assumed that parents and their legal representatives at ORPC are currently reviewing and advocating for appropriate child's transition to different out-of-home placements as part of their existing case responsibilities. While the bill adds a requirement for recorded transition plans in Trails and discussions among affected parties, the fiscal note assumes the content of the plans will largely reflect information that is already being gathered and discussed by caseworkers. In most cases, it is assumed that additional transition planning under the bill will not require more attorney time beyond what is currently needed to monitor a child in, or moving between, out-of-home placement.

Additionally, the fiscal note assumes that requiring parent and attorney involvement in the transition planning process could reduce legal ambiguity and disputes over placements, communications, and expectations for parents in some cases, offsetting potential workload increases. For these reasons, the fiscal note that ORPC can accommodate any workload changes within existing resources.

State and Local Government Contacts

Child Welfare
Counties

Human Services
Judicial