



**Commonwealth of Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**State Workers, County Attorneys Collect
More Than a Thousand Coats for Foster Kids**

Coats, hoodies will go to children in state foster care program

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 21, 2018) – Kentucky state employees and county attorneys have collected more than 1,000 coats and hoodies for children as part of a charity drive this holiday season.

In a collection drive coordinated by staff at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' (CHFS) Division for Income Support (DIS) and the Kentucky County Attorneys Association (KCAA), 1,085 coats and hoodies were collected.

The coats are for children in the CHFS' foster care program. CHFS produced a video story about this event. It's available on the Cabinet's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/kychfs/>.

DIS and county attorney office staff across the state donated new coats and hoodies to the project and invited advocates and the public to drop off items at county DIS and county attorney offices.

DIS Commissioner W. Bryan Hubbard thanked his staff and the county attorneys for both their daily work and their efforts with the coat drive.

“The success of this project shows the generosity of those donating from their pockets -- already tight at this time of year for families’ own Christmases,” he said. “We surpassed our goal of 1,000 coats because so many people wanted to make sure that those in need are given warmth and a demonstration of human compassion.”

Hubbard conservatively estimated the value of the drive at \$22,000 or about \$20 cost per coat.

DIS staff also held fundraisers by taking donations for pancake breakfasts, taco bars, BLT and grilled cheese lunches and the privilege to participate in a “pajama day,” among other events. The Louisville DDS office also held a raffle for a luxury spa gift basket. The fundraisers and other donations raised more than \$4,000, which was used to purchase new coats and hoodies.

KCAA Vice President and Pulaski County Attorney Martin Hatfield said that for the 120 county attorneys across the state, a big part of what they do is helping children through their child support collection efforts, and they appreciated serving children in another way.

“This opportunity to involve ourselves and be a partner in this project extends our ability to help children,” he said. “In court each and every day, we see the results of children in broken homes – including kids in foster care and kids raised by other family members. Those children need all the support we can give them – not just financial support but support such as this coat drive.”

DCBS Commissioner Eric Clark said that the number of children in out of home care is at a record high – 10,000 – and thanked DIS staff and county attorneys for collaborating alongside DCBS and identifying the need for coats independently.

“Children in foster care will benefit from these coats – it will fulfill a physical need to keep kids warm, but also think about the social worker who is giving a child one of these coats,” Clark said. “For a child in a traumatic situation like being removed or being visited by a caseworker, it gives the social worker an opportunity to invest in that child and present them with something that will open up a conversation and perhaps change the trajectory of a child’s path and the family for the rest of their lives.”

Clark said the coat drive is a good example of the partnership it takes to change the child welfare system.

“For too long, we have looked at child protection as a government problem to address. That doesn’t work,” he said. “It can’t be just government agencies. We are trying to change that narrative, and the success of this project is what it can look like when it takes effect.”

Learn more about foster care and adoption programs and ways to help children in foster care at www.chfs.ky.gov and <https://prdweb.chfs.ky.gov/kyfaces>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.