



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Community Stakeholders Invited to Forums on New Federal Child Welfare Law

Kentucky is early implementer of federal Family First Prevention Services Act

Note to media: Reporters planning to attend one of the forums should RSVP to Anya Weber at 502-564-3703, ext. 3800 or anya.weber@ky.gov.

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 23, 2019) – The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), part of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, will hold nine regional forums this summer to give the public, providers and other partners an overview of how a new federal law will help keep at-risk families together and prevent youth from entering the foster care system.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), signed into law in 2018, implements widespread child welfare reform that specifically focuses on safely keeping families together to prevent children from entering the foster care system, and encouraging kinship or family foster home placements when they do have to be removed from their parents.

States can choose either to delay implementation until October 2021, or roll out the law's provisions as early as this October. Kentucky intends to be an early implementer of the law.

"We are proud to be at the forefront of this legislation and to have the opportunity to improve outcomes for children sooner rather than later," said Eric Clark, DCBS Commissioner. "Instead of being reactionary, Family First allows child welfare systems to be proactive and put funding and resources at the front end of the system. Family First aims to prevent children from entering foster care by supporting families, identifying risks, and removing safety concerns."

The FFPSA does not provide any new funding, but it dramatically shifts how states' child welfare programs can use federal dollars. It expands the use of funds designated for child welfare programming – sometimes referred to as Title IV-E funding – for quality, evidence-based preventive services for children, parents and/or kin/relative caregivers that could prevent a child's entry into out-of-home care. Under the FFPSA, prevention services could include in-home, skill-based parenting programs, substance use disorder treatment and prevention provided by a clinician, and mental health treatment provided by a clinician.

Clark said that of the approximately 9,700 Kentucky children in out-of-home care, the majority are removed from their home because of neglect, with the kinds of risk factors that could be addressed through preventative services.

Implementation of FFPSA also is a part of the state's Child Welfare Transformation, with goals to safely reduce the number of children entering out-of-home care, improve timeliness for children to have appropriate permanency, and reduce caseloads for frontline staff.

Clark said that he and his staff have welcomed providers and the public to come alongside DCBS in the effort.

"DCBS is the state's child welfare agency, but we are not the child welfare *system*," he said. "We cannot do this alone. At these Family First forums, we are engaging anyone

who is already or who wants to be a part of the solution. Child welfare belongs to all of us.”

The FFPSA also sets limits on how children are placed in group settings. States will only be able to draw funds for time-limited, clinically necessary placements at qualifying treatment programs. There are exceptions for special populations and judicial review requirements.

Clark said anyone interested in child welfare should attend the forum in their region. Each meeting will feature general information about the FFPSA and how it impacts Kentucky, plus region-specific information like statistics on out-of-home care, family preservation resources, and local provider supports.

The list of forums and the counties covered by each region are included below. Registration is required and is available at the link posted for each event.

To learn more about how the Family First law affects Kentucky or DCBS’ programs and assistance go to the Cabinet’s website: <https://chfs.ky.gov> and type “DCBS” in the “What can we help you find?” search tool.

Family First Prevention Services Act Regional Forum Schedule

All meetings are scheduled to be from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. local time.

Salt River Trail Service Region (Anderson, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Franklin, Grayson, Hardin, Henry, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, Trimble, Washington and Woodford counties)

Date: June 5

Location: Little Flock Baptist Church, 5500 N. Preston Highway, Shepherdsville, KY 40165

Partner Lead: New Beginnings Family Services

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstsaltrivertrail.eventbrite.com>

Jefferson Service Region

Date: June 6

Location: Sawyer Hayes Community Center, 2201 Lakeland Road, Louisville, KY 40241

Partner Lead: Kentucky Youth Advocates

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstjefferson.eventbrite.com>

The Lakes Service Region (Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Muhlenberg, Trigg and Todd counties)

Date: June 7 (central time)

Location: Murray State University CSI Auditorium - Paducah Campus, 4430 Sunset Ave., Paducah, KY 42001

Partner Lead: Voices of the Commonwealth

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstlakes.eventbrite.com>

Eastern Mountain Service Region (Breathitt, Floyd, Johnson, Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Owsley, Perry, Pike and Wolfe counties)

Date: June 10

Location: Jenny Wiley Convention Center, 419 Jenny Wiley Drive, Prestonsburg, KY 41653

Partner Lead: Service Region Administrator Susan Howard, Mountain Comprehensive Care

Registration Link: <https://familyfirsteasternmountain.eventbrite.com>

Cumberland Service Region (Adair, Bell, Casey, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, McCreary, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Taylor, Wayne and Whitley counties)

Date: June 12

Location: Somerset Community College, Meece Hall Auditorium, Somerset, KY 42501

Partner Lead: Berea Partners for Education

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstcumberland.eventbrite.com>

Northern Bluegrass Service Region (Boone, Bourbon, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Harrison, Kenton, Nicholas, Owen, Pendleton and Scott counties)

Date: June 14

Location: St. Elizabeth Training and Education Center, 3861 Olympic Blvd., Erlanger, KY 41018

Partner Lead: Family Nurturing Center

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstnorthernbluegrass.eventbrite.com>

Two Rivers Service Region (Allen, Barren, Butler, Daviess, Edmonson, Hancock, Hart, Henderson, Logan, McLean, Metcalfe, Monroe, Ohio, Simpson, Union, Warren and Webster counties)

Date: June 26 (central time)

Location: Owensboro Health Regional Hospital, 1201 Pleasant Valley Road, Owensboro, KY 42303

Partner Lead: CASA of the Ohio Valley

Registration Link: <https://familyfirsttworivers.eventbrite.com>

Southern Bluegrass Service Region (Boyle, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Garrard, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer and Powell counties)

Date: July 10

Location: Life Adventure Center, 570 Milner Road, Versailles, KY 40383

Partner Lead: Life Adventure Center

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstsouthernbluegrass.eventbrite.com>

Northeastern Service Region (Bath, Bracken, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Fleming, Greenup, Lawrence, Lewis, Mason, Menifee, Montgomery, Morgan, Robertson and Rowan counties)

Date: July 12

Location: Rowan County Arts Center, 205 E. Main St, Morehead, KY 40351

Partner Lead: Sunrise Children's Services

Registration Link: <https://familyfirstnortheastern.eventbrite.com>

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.