

RCW 74.13.270 Respite care. (1) The legislature recognizes the need for temporary short-term relief for foster parents who care for children with emotional, mental, or physical disabilities. For purposes of this section, respite care means appropriate, temporary, short-term care for these foster children placed with licensed foster parents. The purpose of this care is to give the foster parents temporary relief from the stresses associated with the care of these foster children. The department shall design a program of respite care that will minimize disruptions to the child and will serve foster parents within these priorities, based on input from foster parents, foster parent associations, and reliable research if available.

(2) (a) For the purposes of this section, and subject to funding appropriated specifically for this purpose, short-term support shall include case aides who provide temporary assistance to foster parents as needed with the overall goal of supporting the parental efforts of the foster parents except that this assistance shall not include overnight assistance. The department shall contract with nonprofit community-based organizations in each region to establish a statewide pool of individuals to provide the support described in this subsection. These individuals shall be employees or volunteers with the nonprofit community-based organization and shall have the appropriate training, background checks, and qualifications as determined by the department. Short-term support as described in this subsection shall be available to all licensed foster parents in the state as funding is available and shall be phased in by geographic region. To obtain the assistance of a case aide for this purpose, the foster parent may request the services from the nonprofit community-based organization and the nonprofit community-based organization may offer assistance to licensed foster families. If the requests for the short-term support provided in this subsection exceed the funding available, the nonprofit community-based organization shall have discretion to determine the assignment of case aides. The nonprofit community-based organization shall report all short-term support provided under this subsection to the department.

(b) Subject to funding appropriated specifically for this purpose, the Washington state institute for public policy shall prepare an outcome evaluation of the short-term support described in this subsection. The evaluation will, to the maximum extent possible, assess the impact of the short-term support services described in this subsection on the retention of foster homes and the number of placements a foster child receives while in out-of-home care as well as the return on investment to the state. The institute shall submit a preliminary report to the appropriate committees of the legislature and the governor by December 1, 2018, that describes the initial implementation of these services and descriptive statistics of the families utilizing these services. A final report shall be submitted to the appropriate committees of the legislature by June 30, 2021. At no cost to the institute, the department shall provide all data necessary to discharge this duty.

(c) Costs associated with case aides as described in this subsection shall not be included in the forecast.

(d) Pursuant to *RCW 41.06.142(3), performance-based contracting under (a) of this subsection is expressly mandated by the legislature and is not subject to the processes set forth in *RCW 41.06.142 (1), (4), and (5). [2019 c 470 § 29; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 20 § 1; 1990 c 284 § 8.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 41.06.142 was amended by 2020 c 296 § 2, removing subsection (3) and its references to the processes in subsections (1), (4), and (5).

Construction—Competitive procurement process and contract provisions—2017 3rd sp.s. c 20: "Pursuant to RCW 41.06.142(3), the competitive procurement process and contract provisions in this act are expressly mandated by the legislature and are not subject to the processes of RCW 41.06.142 (1), (4), and (5)." [2017 3rd sp.s. c 20 § 19.]

Conflict with federal requirements and Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978—2017 3rd sp.s. c 20: "If any part of this act is found to be in conflict with P.L. 95-608 Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 or federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements of P.L. 95-608 Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 and federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state." [2017 3rd sp.s. c 20 § 23.]

Finding—Effective date—1990 c 284: See notes following RCW 74.13.250.