



Ohio Children's Alliance

Leading change for child and family service providers

HB 96 Should Strengthen Foster Care, Not Undermine It

Overview

The as-introduced version of HB 96 grants the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) the authority to issue a **Request for Proposals (RFP) to establish statewide rate cards** for the placement and care of foster children. If an RFP is issued, DCY will "review and accept reasonable costs associated with providing foster care services."

(2) The department may issue a request for proposals to establish statewide rate cards for placement and care of children eligible for foster care maintenance payments. If a request for proposals is issued, the department shall review and accept the reasonable cost of providing the items described in division (C) of this section.

Foster Care Rate RFP: The Problem

This language would overhaul how foster care is funded in Ohio, marking the biggest change in decades - and it's being rushed.

There's been no standalone bill, no public hearings, and no input from the people it impacts most.

What's more, HB 96 would require one statewide rate for services but keeps all the county red tape. This will create an unsustainable foster care system and heighten the placement crisis, **meaning higher costs, more chaos, and kids getting sent out of state.**

Solution: Legislator-Led Workgroup

To ensure a **fair and sustainable approach**, the **Ohio Children's Alliance** recommends replacing the **DCY-led RFP process** with a **legislative-led workgroup** to:

1. Develop strategies to maximize federal reimbursement of the Title IV-E Foster Care program;
2. Identify improved and standardized contracting policies and practices for purchased foster care;
3. Submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly not later than December 31, 2026.

A legislative-led workgroup is the smart path forward as it protects local control, ensures fiscal responsibility, and brings the right voices to the table. A rate card may look like savings, but **it'll cost more in the long run and drive even more foster parents away. Let's get this right: we can save money, support counties, & keep quality providers in Ohio.**

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