Children, Youth & Families Department

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

GRO Pilot Projects
Update to the Legislative Finance Committee

Valerie Sandoval
Acting Cabinet Secretary

July 22, 2026

AGENDA

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

- CYFD at a Glance
- Deep Dives on Pilot Projects
  - Masters-Level Social Worker License Incentive
  - Multi-level Response Statewide Implementation
  - Prevention & Intervention Programs
  - Foster Parent Recruitment, Training & Support
- Conclusion
- Questions?

CYFD AT A GLANCE

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

2026
2,467 FTE - 1,873 Filled
Vacancy Rate: 24%
4% Improvement from 2025

27 County Offices Statewide

21,944
State Central Intake (SCI) Reports
2026

2,227
Children in Care

5,641 Families Served with Prevention Services in 2025 (Jan-Dec)

CBHS
7,384 Children/Youth Served in FY26

2 Secure Facilities
2 Reintegration Facilities

2 Schools
1 Superintendent
2 Principals
33 Educators
88% SY25-26 Grad rate

GRO Pilot Projects Update

MASTERS-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKER LICENSE INCENTIVE

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $562.5K Annually

2024 HB2 Section 9. To implement and evaluate outcomes of a pilot program to incentivize attainment of masters-level social work licensure to develop and retain caseworkers in the child protective services program.

The Children, Youth, and Families Department shall report on the number of caseworkers with a masters-level social work license in a child protective services caseworker position and of Masters-level Social Workers retained more than twelve months in protective services caseworker roles.

Pilot Project Overview

- In FY25, masters-level licensed social workers received a temporary raise of 10%.
- In FY26 CYFD developed a pilot to fund a tiered temporary salary differential based on licensure level:
    - 2% for provisional licensure
    - 5% for bachelors-level licensure
    - 10% for masters-level licensure

- The tiered model supports the legislative goal by building a professional pathway toward masters-level licensure. Bachelors-level education and licensure provide the foundation from which employees may pursue graduate education and advanced licensure.

- Providing incentives across the licensure continuum helps CYFD retain employees during the earlier stages of professional development, rather than waiting to recognize them only after masters-level licensure has been achieved.

Pilot Project Theory of Impact

- If CYFD recognizes and financially supports employees throughout the social work licensure pathway, more staff may obtain, maintain, and advance their professional licensure.

- Increased licensure attainment and retention are expected to strengthen workforce stability, recruitment competitiveness, professional practice, and continuity of services to children and families.

MASTERS-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKER LICENSE INCENTIVE

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $562.5K Annually

Pilot Project Design

- Workforce pilot using HR, payroll, licensure, and retention data.
- Measures participation, licensure level, workforce retention, and progression over time.
- Results are descriptive and will be strengthened as longer-term data become available.

Pilot Project Inputs

- HR and payroll administration
- Licensure verification and employee eligibility review
- Ongoing workforce data collection

Pilot Project Outcomes

Short Term

- Successful implementation and employee participation
- Improved visibility of licensure incentives

Intermediate Term

- Increased licensure attainment and maintenance
- Improved retention beyond twelve months
- Advancement to higher licensure levels

Long Term

- More stable, professionally credentialed CPS workforce
- Stronger recruitment and retention of licensed social workers
- Improved continuity of services to children and families

MASTERS-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKER LICENSE INCENTIVE

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $562.5K Annually

Appropriation	FY25	FY26
Amount	$562,500	$562,500
Expensed	$556,617	$329,534
Reversions	$5,882	$232,965

FY25 Expenditures

- Pay increases for 48 MSWs.

FY26 Expenditures

- Pay increases for 53 MSWs, BSWs and Provisional (half year increases only)
- $50,000 Recruiting Marketing Campaign.
- This reversion occurred as CYFD pivoted to a refined approach, including a plan to develop a pipeline within the agency. This new tiered plan started in the middle of the fiscal year.

MASTERS-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKER LICENSE INCENTIVE

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $562.5K Annually

Early Findings

- Masters-level licensees represent **58.5% of all participants**.
- The remaining 22 participants form a developing pipeline toward advanced licensure.
- The pilot has been successfully implemented across both eligible divisions.

Evaluation Status

- Retention beyond twelve months is still being tracked.
- Additional time is needed to measure licensure advancement and the incentive's effect on employee retention.

Next Steps

- Monitor retention at 12-, and 24-month intervals.
- Track movement between licensure levels.
- Compare actual spending with available funding.
- Use exit and stay interview data to add context to retention findings.

54
Currently receiving licensure incentive pay

31
Masters-level: 10% pay differential

47
Participants are in PSD; 6 are in FSD

17
Bachelors-level: 5% pay differential

6
Provisional: 2% pay differential

MULTI-LEVEL RESPONSE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.4M Annually

2024 HB2 Section 9. For a pilot to expand implementation of multi-level response statewide in the child protective services program, pursuant to Section 32-4-4.1 NMSA 1978.

The Children, Youth, and Families Department shall report on the number of families receiving a multilevel response, the percentage of multi-level response eligible families who engage in services, the percentage of participating families in multi-level response who have a traditional child protective services investigation within a twelve-month period and the percentage of participating families in multi-level response with a substantiated case of child maltreatment.

Pilot Project Overview

- New Mexico's Multi-Level Response (MLR) program responds to qualifying Priority 2 (P2) neglect reports received by CYFD's Statewide Central Intake.
- Qualifying reports are routed to a family support advocate instead of an investigator. The Advocate then completes a comprehensive family assessment, and the family may receive intensive case management and support services specific to their needs.
- The goal is to offer help to families earlier, reduce repeat maltreatment, and avoid unnecessary entry into foster care.

Pilot Project Theory of Impact

- If CYFD offers supportive responses, families experience reduced stress, greater trust, and fewer future system contacts.
- We expect the program to result in decreased SCI reports for families receiving these services.

MULTI-LEVEL RESPONSE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.4M Annually

Pilot Project Model Design

- CYFD's Office of Performance and Accountability is evaluating the MLR program to see whether it improves family outcomes and aligns with national benchmarks.
- OPA is using a mixed-methods approach with administrative data plus surveys and interviews.
- The evaluation uses quasi-experimental methods with matched comparison groups and pre/post outcome analysis.

Pilot Project Inputs

- Trained staff, MLR protocols, engagement from community partners, funding, and data systems.
- Key activities include triage, family engagement, service connection, and warm handoffs.

Pilot Project Outcomes

- % of families with no repeat maltreatment report within 6–12 months
- % not re-referred
- % reporting reduced stress
- % reporting improved family functioning

MULTI-LEVEL RESPONSE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.4M Annually

Appropriation	FY25	FY26
Amount	$1,400,000	$1,400,000
Expensed	$15,000	$773,574
Reversions	$1,385,000	$626,425

FY25 Expenditures

- Evident Change
- This reversion occurred largely due to MLR expansion being in the planning/development phase. Delays in approval and posting of positions impacted the ability to utilize the funding for the intended purpose.

FY26 Expenditures

- Payroll and Operations
- Evident Change
- This reversion reflects challenges in obtaining approval to create and post additional positions, and challenges with hiring qualified candidates.

MULTI-LEVEL RESPONSE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

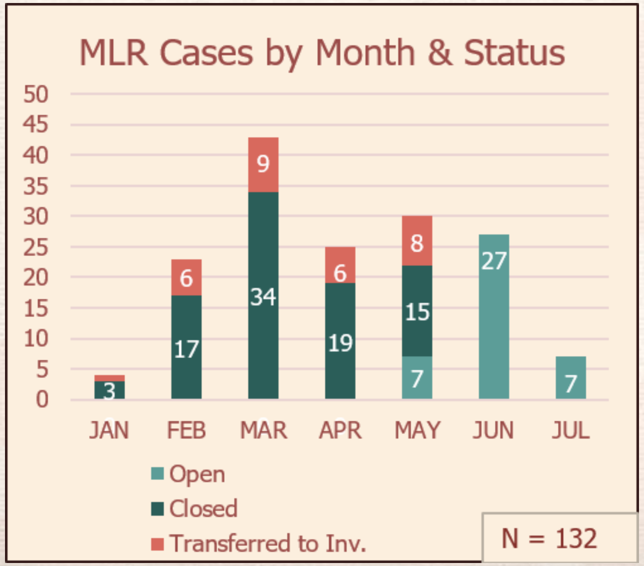
Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

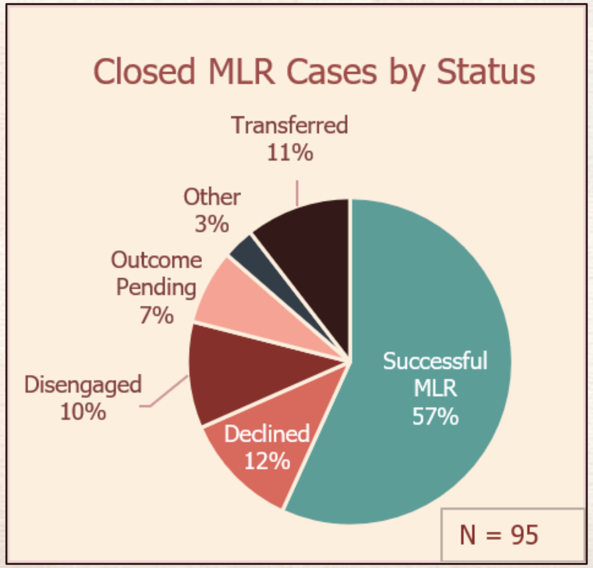
FY25-FY27 $1.4M Annually

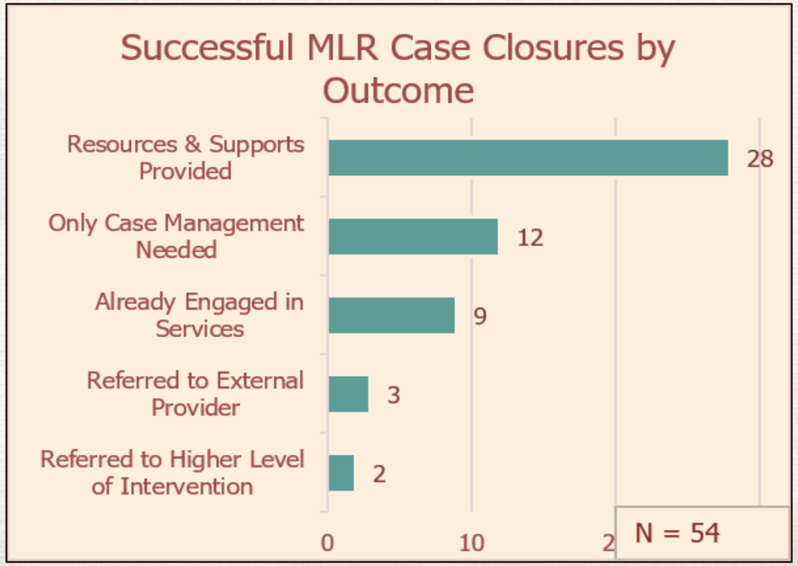
Preliminary Data **(Jan – June 2026)**

168 MLR Cases to Date, 432 Children Impacted
- 42 Open (25%)
- 95 Closed (56%)
    - ***54 Successful Cases***
- 31 Transferred to CYFD Investigations (18%)

Of those cases closed successfully, 28 cases (52%) were provided resources or supports directly by MLR workers, 12 reported no additional services were needed after initial case management supports, and 9 reported already being engaged in other services to meet their needs. Another 5 families were referred to external community-based programs such as Family Outreach.







MULTI-LEVEL RESPONSE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

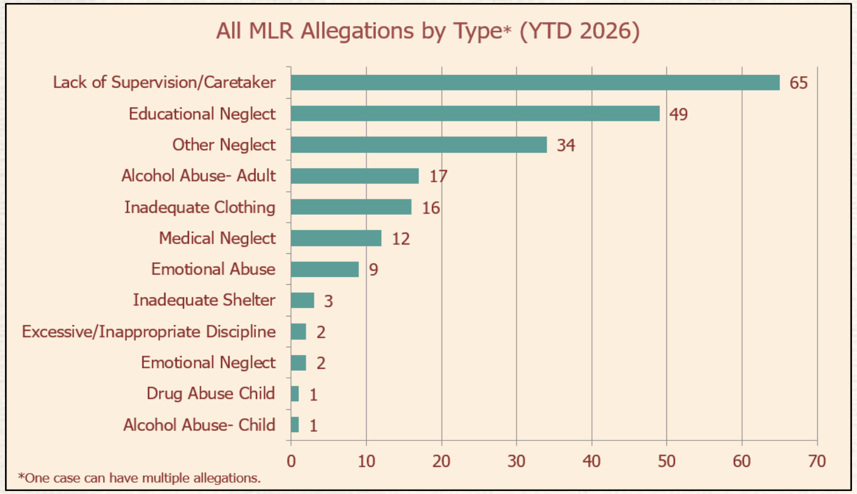
FY25-FY27 $1.4M Annually

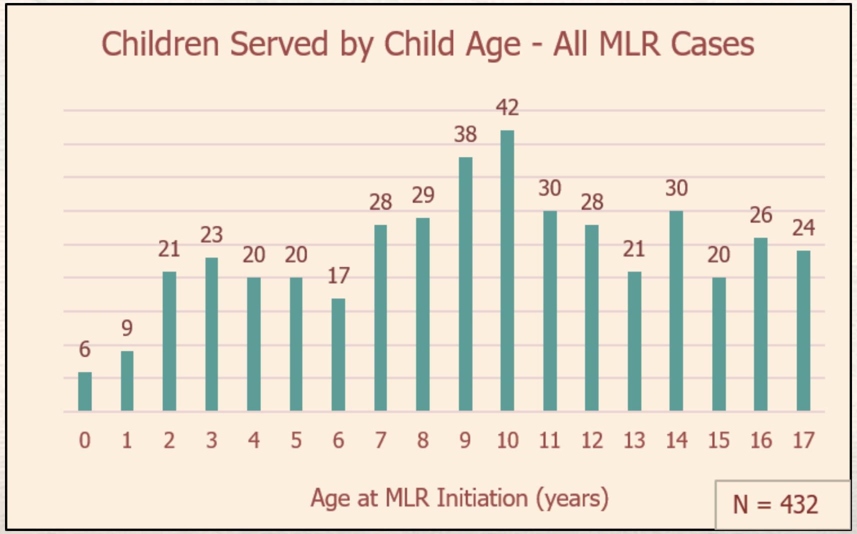
Lack of Supervision/Caretaker (31%) and Educational Neglect (23%) are the most common neglect allegations referred to MLR

Re-Reports
Preliminarily, 87.5% of families who received MLR Services did NOT experience a new report of neglect or maltreatment in the past 6 months (137 families). Only two MLR cases have received a new substantiated report—both for educational neglect.

Qualitative Impacts
Families reported accepting services "because they wanted to get the best help possible for their children. When it came to attempting to meet these needs, participants felt that staff understood families' needs well." Families were supported with counseling, mental health services, survivor services, traditional healing resources, and other supports.

(Source: Evident Change Multi-Level Response Report, 2026)





PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

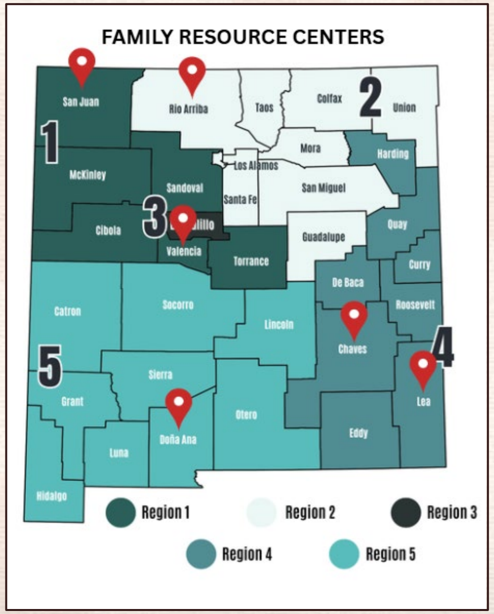
Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $3.0M Annually

2024 HB2 Section 9. For a pilot to expand prevention and intervention programs, including safe care home visiting. The Children, Youth, and Families Department shall report on the number of families participating in community-based prevention and intervention programs, the percentage of participating families subject to a child protective services investigation and the percentage of participating families with a substantiated case of child maltreatment.

Pilot Project Overview

Goal: To strengthen family stability, safety, and wellbeing by expanding access to community-based supports, including:



SafeCare*
An evidence-based, in-home parenting program for families with children age 0-5 years. SafeCare consists of 3 modules (delivered over 18 weekly sessions) to teach practical skill, strengthen parent-child interactions, improve home safety, and support child health.

Family Resource Centers (FRCs)
Community hubs with dedicated navigators to help families identify needs and connect to resources by bringing supports together in one place. FRCs are currently located in 6 counties.

Pilot Project Theory of Impact
Expanding prevention and intervention programs, such as SafeCare and Family Resource Center programming, helps families strengthen protective factors, reduce stress, and reduce the likelihood of future CYFD involvement/SCI Reports.

**This is a program not related to Plans of Safe Care required for CARA compliance.*

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $3.0M Annually

Pilot Program Model Design

- OPA is undergoing a combined evaluation of Family Resource Centers and SafeCare to see whether they strengthen protective factors, improve caregiver skills and child well-being, and reduce maltreatment risk.
- The evaluation uses quasi-experimental methods with matched comparison groups, pre/post measures, and analyzes trends in administrative data on recurrence of maltreatment Statewide Central Intake (SCI) reports.
- Results will be compared to national benchmarks for other community-based prevention programs.

Pilot Program Inputs

- Staff, trained navigators/advocates, partnerships with community organizations, referral protocols, fidelity monitoring, outreach and training materials, equipment and other parenting supplies needed for program delivery.
- Key activities include needs assessments, connection to resources, basic needs assistance, parent workshops, and home visiting sessions using SafeCare Modules, using modeling and feedback cycles, and goal setting.

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

FY25-FY27 $3.0M Annually

Appropriation	FY25	FY26
Amount	$3,000,000	$3,000,000
Expensed	$109,766	$2,200,000*
Reversions	$2,890,233	TBD

* Also includes encumbered expenditures.

FY25 Expenditures

- SafeCare Training
- This reversion occurred because of delays with RFP, resulting in contracts being executed with less than 6 months left in the fiscal year.

FY26 Expenditures

- Family Resource Centers, Payroll, SafeCare, Operations
- This reversion reflects challenges in obtaining approval to create and post additional positions, and challenges with hiring qualified candidates.

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $3.0M Annually

SafeCare*

Pilot Project Outcomes

- % of families with no repeat maltreatment (SCI) reports within 6–12 months.
- % of participating families demonstrating satisfactory or mastery level skills in each of the three modules:
    - Parenting skills
    - Home hazards/safety
    - Health knowledge
- Enhanced implementation fidelity and alignment with national SafeCare standards.

**Also received FY27-29 GRO funding : For a dedicated SafeCare unit. $4 million ($2M state, $2M anticipated Federal match)*

Preliminary Data

Families Served: 25 families have been enrolled in SafeCare services to date.

78 families who were offered SafeCare declined to participate, as services are voluntary.

Of those who accepted:

- 17 families are currently enrolled and actively participating.
- 8 families have exited services completing at least 1 module.

1 family has completed all 3 SafeCare modules to date (requiring a minimum 18 one-hour in-home sessions across 3 modules). Most enrolled families remain actively engaged and have not yet had sufficient time to complete the full curriculum.

PREVENTION & INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $3.0M Annually

Family Resource Centers

Pilot Project Outcomes

- % of families with no repeat SCI reports within 6–12 months.
- % reporting reduced stress.
- % of families demonstrating improvements in family functioning or protective factors.
- % of families accessing at least one new support via an FRC.

Preliminary Data

Family Resource Centers served more than 1,400 families and individuals in calendar year 2025, up from ~1,000 in the 2024. OPA is assessing new SCI report rates, engagement, and utilization trends among participating families.

FRC participants access a wide range of supports, including mental health services, utility and food assistance, application help, vehicle and household support, and classes, among other services.

CYFD has expanded monthly FRC data requirements to include more detailed information on family outcomes, discharges, and referrals. In FY27, FRCs will now provide verification of outcomes, improving data quality and reporting consistency.

FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.25M Annually

2024 HB2 Section 9. For recruitment, training and support of treatment foster care and foster care providers to support hard-to-place children.

The Children, Youth, and Families Department shall report on the number of treatment foster and foster care families recruited, trained and have a child in custody of child protective services in their care, number of treatment foster and foster care families recruited and trained that maintain their provider status and the number of youth in child protective services care placed in an office, out-of-state, congregate care or shelter setting.

Pilot Project Overview

Legislative funding enabled CYFD to partner with subject matter experts and service providers to strengthen foster parent recruitment, retention, and support efforts. These investments supported a comprehensive review of policies, processes, and organizational structure, leading to meaningful improvements and growth in both traditional and therapeutic foster family capacity.

Pilot Project Theory of Impact

By improving recruitment efforts, CYFD will have an increase in the pool of foster homes serving children in state custody.

By improving training and support, CYFD will have a pool of foster homes able to meet the unique and higher acuity needs of children in state custody.

FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.25M Annually

Pilot Project Model Design:

- Contracting with the Human Services Group, the Department will seek a review and assessment of the Recruitment and Retention Plan, and lead to licensure pipeline.

Pilot Project Inputs:

- Assess lead to licensure process, implement Foster Care Plus, an enhanced foster care program, implement evidenced based training, and conduct recruitment and retention activities.

Pilot Project Outcomes

Short Term

- Increased inquiries, faster home study completion, improved training and skill development of foster parents.

Intermediate Term

- Increased inquiries, increased foster home Licensure, Improved Foster Home Retention and Support.

Long Term

- Improved placement stability, wellbeing outcomes, and timeliness to permanency.
- Decreased maltreatment in foster care, and sub-optimal/out of preferred placements for children and youth.

FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.25M Annually

Appropriation	FY25	FY26
Amount	$1,250,000	$1,250,000
Expensed	$1,188,033	$1,239,474
Reversions	$61,966	$10,525

FY25 Expenditures

- Training
- Home Studies
- Events/Booths
- Educational and promotional items
- Marketing/Advertising
- Contracts with Consultants

FY26 Expenditures

- Training
- Home Studies
- Events/Booths
- Educational and promotional items
- Marketing/Advertising
- Contracts with Consultants
- Foster Care Plus

FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.25M Annually

Ongoing Projects:

- **Recruitment**
  - Events (booths, lunch and learns, community outreach. marketing/advertising, partnering with community and stakeholders).
  - Targeted recruitment in top high need counties (San Juan, Santa Fe, Bernalillo, Chavez, Eddy, Dona Ana).

- **Retention**
  - Foster Alliance (supplies/resources).
  - All Faiths (ongoing training, warm-line, support groups).
  - Retention events (network building, appreciation activities)

Successes:

- Met Kevin S. targets for July 1, 2026, for:
  - Newly recruited non-relative foster homes.
  - Foster Care Plus enrollment.
- Established Foster Parent Advisory Council in 2026.
- Provided evidenced-based pre-service training certifications for Treatment Foster Care agencies and Tribal Partners throughout New Mexico.

FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

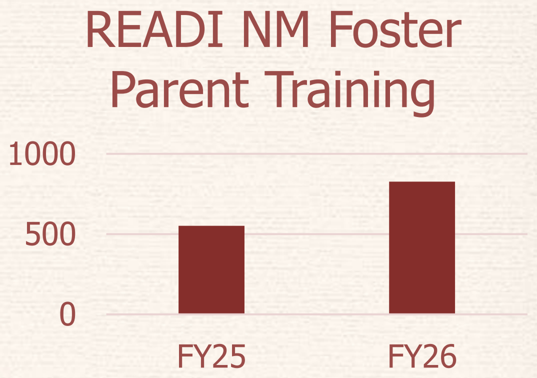
FY25-FY27 $1.25M Annually

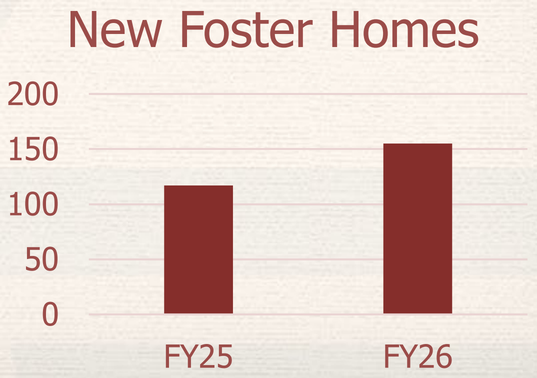
Foster Parent Recruitment

- **Recruitment Events/Activities**
  - FY25 and FY26: 450+
    - Orientation/Informational Sessions
    - Tabling Events
    - Lunch and Learns
    - Navajo Nation partnerships
    - Neighborhood Association Meetings
    - National Night Outs
    - Public School Meetings/Presentations
    - Comic Con
    - Zozobra
    - Religious Community Outreach
    - Juneteenth Celebrations
    - Pride Events
    - Railyard Markets
    - Children's Museums

Foster Home Licensure

- **Individuals Trained in READI NM Pre-Service Training**
  - FY25: 552
  - FY26: 826
- **Newly Licensed Foster Homes**
  - FY25: 117 (non-relatives)
  - FY26: 155 (non-relatives)
- **Kevin S. Targets (CY2026)**
  By July 1:
  - 73 Non-Relatives
  - 324 Relatives





FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT, TRAINING & SUPPORT

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

FY25-FY27 $1.25M Annually

Foster Care Plus Training

Pressley Ridge T4T (Training for Trainers) Certification

- FY25:
  - 17 CYFD Staff
  - 18 TFC Agency Staff
  - 4 Tribal Partners
  - 3 NMSU Center of Innovation Staff
- FY26 :
  - 5 CYFD Staff
  - 5 TFCs Agency Staff
  - 2 Tribal Partners
  - 5 NMSU Center of Innovation Staff

Foster Parents registered for Pressley Ridge Pre-Service Training (as part of the FC+ Program)

- FY25 : 5 foster parents
- FY26: 66 foster parents

Foster Care Plus Enrollment

Served in CY2025

- 36 Children/Youth
- 25 Foster Homes

Served in CY2026

- 80 Children/Youth (30 carried over from 2025)
- 50 Foster Homes (14 carried over from 2025)

Foster Care Plus Supplemental Stipend (11/1/25 – 6/30/26)

- 213 additional $400 stipends dispersed
- ~ $85,200.00

CONCLUSION

Children, Youth & Families Department
STATE OF NEW MEXICO

RECOMMENDATIONS

Masters-Level Social Worker License Incentive

The Licensure Incentive Program strengthens CYFD's ability to recruit and retain qualified social workers while building a sustainable pipeline of future master's-level licensed professionals. By recognizing licensure, supporting career advancement, and improving workforce stability, the program advances legislative intent, enhances organizational capacity, and ultimately improves the quality and continuity of services provided to New Mexico's children and families.

Multi-level Response Statewide Implementation

The expansion of Multi-Level Response can help increase family engagement in community-based supports, helping CYFD reduce repeat child welfare concerns, and ease investigation caseloads through stronger assessment, navigation, and resource connections. MLR advances New Mexico’s child welfare goals by keeping families safely together through early support and reduced maltreatment risk and continued legislative funding will allow CYFD to further expand this prevention-focused model and strengthen statewide progress toward safety, stability, and family well-being.

Prevention & Intervention Programs

No-barrier and low-barrier prevention programs like Family Resource Centers and SafeCare help families access support earlier, strengthen parenting skills, and reduce risk before maltreatment occurs, leading to greater safety, stability, and reduced child welfare involvement. Continued funding will allow New Mexico to build on these promising results and sustain a statewide prevention strategy that keeps families connected to the resources they need.

Foster Parent Recruitment, Training & Support

Continued funding is essential to sustain the programs that strengthen Foster Parent recruitment, training, and ongoing support across New Mexico. These investments help build a larger, better-prepared pool of foster families, improve retention, and increase placement stability for children and youth in care. Maintaining this funding allows CYFD to continue expanding access to safe, nurturing homes while reducing placement disruptions and improving outcomes for children and families.

Thank you! Questions?