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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 75

SHORT TITLE: Fostering Connections Program Eligibility

SPONSOR: Padilla

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 2/11/2026 **ANALYST:** Malone

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT*

(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
CYFD		Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal	Recurring	General fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 75

Senate Bill 75 (SB75) amends the Fostering Connections Act (32A-26-1 through 32A-36-12 NMSA 1978) to remove the requirement that a youth to be adjudicated pursuant to the Children’s Code or tribal law prior to being eligible for the Children, Youth and Families Department’s (CYFD) Fostering Connections Program. SB75 expands eligibility to youth who were in CYFD custody as a result of abuse and neglect proceedings, families in need of court-ordered services proceedings, or under a voluntary placement agreement.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns, which is May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SB75 does not contain an appropriation.

CYFD already has an extended foster care program in place and is able to draw down federal

Title IV-E funds to cover the costs associated with this service population. Additionally, the agency has received general fund and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to support the Fostering Connections Program.

In March 2024, the governor issued an executive order that rendered the population of young adults considered in this bill eligible for the Fostering Connections Program. At that time, CYFD estimated expanding the Fostering Connections population by 10 to 20 adults. Given the relatively small number of adults who might now be eligible for the Fostering Connections Program because of this bill (roughly 10 to 20 adults), the LFC estimates the fiscal impact of this bill to be minimal and CYFD notes that the agency will absorb any fiscal implications with existing resources.

In analysis on a similar bill introduced in 2025, the Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA) noted the bill may result in a relatively small increase in Extended Foster Care petitions (an estimated 10 annually) and the corresponding need to appoint counsel by OFRA to represent these adults. However, OFRA reported the financial impact would be minimal and could be absorbed within the agency's existing budget.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) notes that there will be a minimal administrative cost for statewide update, distribution and documentation of statutory changes.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the federal Administration for Children and Families, youth aging out of foster care experience considerable challenges. One in four adults who age out will experience homelessness by age 19, one in five will be incarcerated by age 19, and one in 10 will become parents by age 19. Additionally, just 57 percent of adults who age out of foster care report being employed at age 21.

In 2019, the Legislature adopted the Fostering Connections Act, which created an extended foster care program and extended the available age for support and services to young adults involved with CYFD from age 18 to age 21. Extended support programs include supportive housing, connections to community-based behavioral health services, job assistance, food access, and financial assistance for higher education. The Fostering Connections Program is voluntary, and young adults who age out of foster care are not required to receive services.

In FY23—the most recent year for which data was reported to the Legislature—CYFD reported that roughly 280 young adults received in-home services through the Fostering Connections Program, roughly 58 young adults participated in extended foster care behavioral health service coordination, and roughly 34 young adults received transitional living supportive housing. In FY25, CYFD reported that 84 percent of eligible youth enrolled in Fostering Connections upon emancipation from foster care.

Currently, young adults who are the subject of abuse, neglect, or are in families in need of court-ordered services actions but who turn 18 before being adjudicated and youth who emancipate from CYFD custody while the subject of voluntary placement agreements are not statutorily eligible for the Fostering Connections Program.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

CYFD currently tracks several performance measures associated with child wellbeing and the Fostering Connections program, including percent of eligible youth participating in Fostering Connections.

CEM/SEC/dw