

Subject: HF 4125 Amendment – Testimony and Critical Feedback

Greetings,

On behalf of Village Arms and the NAACP Minneapolis, we appreciate the opportunity to provide detailed feedback to ensure HF 4125 fully advances the goals of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation Act.

While we acknowledge that clarifying definitions and expanding oversight in the amendment could support improved implementation, there are critical concerns that must be addressed to protect African American families.

1. Case Review Timeline Must Be Accelerated

The proposed timeline delaying comprehensive case review reporting until 2031 is wholly unacceptable. African American children in Minnesota continue to be removed from their homes at rates far exceeding their representation in the population. These are real children and families experiencing harm today. Waiting until 2031 to evaluate whether the law is achieving its purpose puts thousands of children and families at continued risk.

Case review reporting is the central accountability mechanism of this law. It is intended to identify systemic patterns of unnecessary removal, gaps in safety planning, failures to utilize kinship care, and other practices contributing to racial disparities. Delaying these reviews means that systemic inequities remain unchecked for years, directly undermining the urgency and purpose of the Act. The timeline for case review reporting must be moved forward by 2029 as outlined, beginning with 100% of African American children in each county to ensure effective oversight and meaningful disparity reduction.

2. Every Case Review Must Include 100% of African American Children

The law was explicitly created to reduce disparities for African American children, the population **most impacted** and overrepresented in Minnesota's child protection system. Any shift to a "tiered" or sample-based review that includes other disproportionately represented groups risks diluting focus on African American children. If only a fraction of cases are reviewed across *multiple* groups, the sample of African American cases will be too small to determine whether agencies are complying with the law or achieving better outcomes for the population it was designed to protect.

Every county must review **all African American children** in the child protection system annually. *Only by reviewing 100% of these cases can the state identify patterns of systemic harm,*

ensure accountability, and develop evidence-based strategies to reduce disparities. Anything less constitutes a failure to uphold the law's statutory intent.

3. Definition of Overrepresentation Must Explicitly Center African American Children

HF 4125 includes language allowing the agency to annually define overrepresentation, including additional populations. While it is appropriate to recognize other groups experiencing disparities, the statutory language must continue to clearly prioritize African American children.

Overrepresentation should be measured by comparing African American children's involvement at every stage of the child protection system—including reporting, screening, investigation, removal, out-of-home placement and permanency—against their proportion of the total child population in Minnesota.

The definition must remain robust and specific to prevent narrowing protections for African American children or weakening the law's focus. The statutory language should reflect that African American children are the primary population of concern while allowing additional data to identify other disproportionately represented communities without undermining accountability for the population at greatest risk.

4. Ethical and Legal Responsibility

The state has a legal and ethical obligation to act immediately to reduce racial disparities in child welfare. Thousands of African American children continue to experience **unnecessary removals, extended time in foster care, and disruptions to family and community bonds.**

HF 4125 must ensure that oversight is timely, comprehensive, and focused on the population experiencing the greatest harm. Delays or dilution of focus are not acceptable and would constitute a failure of the state's duty under the law.

We strongly recommend that **case reviews and accountability mechanisms** commence as currently scheduled in 2029, with **100% of African American children in each county reviewed annually.** This will ensure the law's intent is fully realized and help to provide timely oversight and ensure corrective action can occur in real time. The determination of overrepresentation should occur **annually**, using data-driven methods that **clearly center African American children** while still allowing for the identification of additional groups, without diluting the focus on the population most impacted.

Furthermore, the **African American Child and Family Well-Being Advisory Council should not be tasked with identifying all disproportionately represented groups.** The Indian Child Welfare Advisory Council is not responsible for providing data on other racial groups, and it is unjust to place the burden on the African American council when the responsibility to determine statewide overrepresentation lies with the commissioner. The council's mandate must remain **focused on the African American population**, which represents the majority of families affected by disproportionality, allowing them to concentrate on improving outcomes for the community they were created to serve.

We strongly urge our elected officials to:

1. **Maintain a sharp focus on African American families** as the primary population of concern under HF 4125.
2. **Reject proposals to dilute oversight or case review mechanisms** by adding other disproportionately represented populations in ways that reduce accountability for African American children.
3. **Accelerate the timeline for case review reporting by 2029**, ensuring 100% of African American children in each county are included, so that disparities can be identified and **corrected** in real time.
4. **Uphold the law's intent** to implement targeted remedies that address documented systemic harm.

The data is clear. The harm is real. African American children and families cannot wait another decade for oversight or remediation. AAFPA was written to confront these inequities head-on, and weakening its focus or delaying its implementation would be a failure of our moral and legal obligation to protect children and families.

Thank you for your attention and leadership on this critical issue. We urge you to preserve the integrity of AAFPA and ensure that its implementation delivers the equity and justice it was designed to achieve.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and ensure HF 4125 fulfills its statutory and moral purpose.



Subject: Black Women Rising- Written Testimony HF 4125

The proposed delay of comprehensive case review reporting until 2031 is unacceptable given the ongoing harm to African American children in Minnesota, who continue to be removed from their homes at disproportionately high rates.

These reviews are designed to identify systemic failures such as wrongful removals, inadequate safety planning, and underuse of kinship care. Delaying them allows these inequities to persist, undermining the purpose of the Act. Case review reporting must begin no later than 2029, as originally mandated, and must include 100% of African American children in each county to ensure meaningful oversight and accountability.

Because the law was specifically created to address disparities impacting African American children, any shift to tiered or sample-based reviews that include other groups risks diluting its focus and effectiveness. Reviewing only a fraction of cases would produce samples too small to determine compliance or outcomes, weakening accountability. Every county must review all African American child protection cases annually to identify patterns of harm and develop effective, evidence-based solutions.

Similarly, while it is appropriate to acknowledge disparities affecting other communities, the statutory definition of overrepresentation must remain clearly centered on African American children, measured across every stage of the child protection system relative to their share of the population. This ensures the law remains focused on those most impacted while still allowing for the identification of additional disparities without weakening its intent.

The state has both a legal and ethical obligation to act with urgency. Thousands of African American children continue to experience unnecessary removals, prolonged foster care placements, and disruption of family and community ties. HF 4125 must ensure oversight is timely, comprehensive, and focused. This includes maintaining the 2027 timeline for full implementation, conducting annual reviews of all African American cases, and using clear, data-driven methods to define overrepresentation.

Additionally, the African American Child and Family Well-Being Advisory Council should remain focused on African American families and not be tasked with identifying all disproportionately represented groups—a responsibility that appropriately belongs to the commissioner. Requiring the council to take on a broader mandate is both inequitable and inconsistent with how similar bodies operate.

We urge elected officials to maintain a sharp focus on African American families as the primary population of concern, reject any proposals that dilute accountability, accelerate implementation timelines, and uphold the law's intent to address documented systemic harm.

The data is clear and the consequences are immediate—African American children and families cannot wait another decade for oversight or reform. Preserving the integrity of AAFPA is essential to fulfilling both the moral and legal responsibility to protect children and ensure equitable outcomes.

Black Women Rising Community

blackwomenrising1@gmail.com

March 18, 2026

Co-Chair Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn
Minnesota House Children and Families Finance
and Policy Committee

Co-Chair Nolan West
Minnesota House Children and Families Finance
and Policy Committee

RE: Strong, Timely Implementation of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA)

Co-Chairs Kotyza-Witthuhn and West:

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) writes to urge the Minnesota Legislature's continued commitment to strong, timely, and effective implementation of the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA).

We welcome legislative efforts that advance the objectives of the 2024 MAAFPCWDA law, leverage empirical data about child welfare disparities, and remain rigorously centered on needs of impacted Black children and families. Such legislative work requires multi-sector stakeholder input, again anchored in the voices and values of impacted communities.

African Heritage children and families continue to experience some of the highest rates of child protection involvement and out-of-home placement in Minnesota. These disparities reflect long-standing systemic inequities and inconsistent county practices. MAAFPCWDA addresses these issues through reforms that promote family preservation, cultural responsiveness, and equitable treatment statewide.

Strong implementation of MAAFPCWDA would improve accountability and effectiveness of case reviews, ensuring consistent evaluation of removals, "active efforts," and potential cultural bias. MAAFPCWDA will also reduce harmful county-to-county variability by establishing statewide guidance and commissioner-led reviews, ensuring African heritage families receive equitable treatment regardless of location. Strong implementation would also expand access to culturally grounded services by requiring counties to document referrals to culturally appropriate, strengths-based, and trauma-informed supports. This strengthens partnerships with African heritage-led organizations and increases access to services rooted in community values and lived experience.

MAAFPCWDA implementation will enhance transparency through detailed race-based data reporting on reports, investigations, removals, reunifications, and permanency outcomes. These data will help communities and policymakers identify disparities, track progress, and target interventions where they are most needed.

We thank Representative Agbaje, Senate Champion, DCYF, and community partners for their work on legislation to advance strong implementation of MAAFPCWDA. We urge the House Children and Families Committee to advance these efforts.

Sincerely,

Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH)

The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African Heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the political, social, and economic resources, policies, and procedures of the State of Minnesota. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting People of African Heritage;*
- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules, and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;*
- *Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local government units and private organizations on matters relating to People of African Heritage in Minnesota;*
- *Implementing programs designed to solve problems of People of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule, or order; and*
- *Publicizing the accomplishments of People of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.*

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March 18, 2026

Dear Co-Chair Kotyza Witthun and Co-Chair West, and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of Meeker County, we write to express support for HR 4125, which amends the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act.

In 2019, Meeker County had three child protection workers and 68 children in out-of-home placement. Our system was under strain. This strain was recognized by our County Board, which supported systemic change through a significant county levy investment to hire an additional supervisor and two more child protection workers.

Over the next two years, we partnered with Safe Generations, a child welfare consultation company, to build new skills. With their support, we transformed how we work with families—moving from a compliance-based system to a safety-focused system. Our “old way” of thinking was driven by the assumptions that professionals were the experts, and that services and out-of-home placement equaled child safety. Our work with Safe Generations changed these practice assumptions.

We adopted the core value that children have the fundamental right to belong safely with their families. Recognizing that family separation can cause harm, we began intentionally identifying ways to establish immediate safety without removing children from their homes. This required a shift in practice—centering families and their natural support networks as the expert and building upon the safety that already exists within the family system.

We also focused on drawing out and strengthening families’ existing skills, recognizing their resilience and capacity to protect their children when appropriately supported. In doing so, we leaned into each family’s culture, values, and traditions as critical components of safety planning, ensuring that our approach was respectful, relevant, and sustainable.

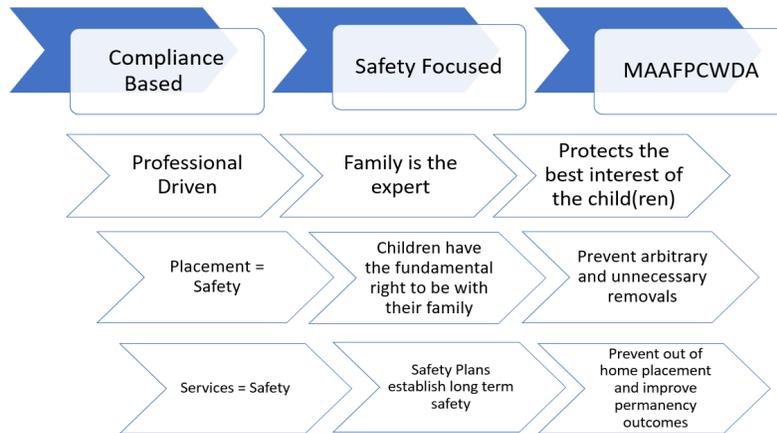
We acknowledged that services alone do not equal safety. As a result, we increased transparency and engaged in more meaningful conversations with families about what safety truly looks like for their children. This included clearly naming our worries, co-creating a shared understanding of risk, and establishing clear, behaviorally specific safety goals.



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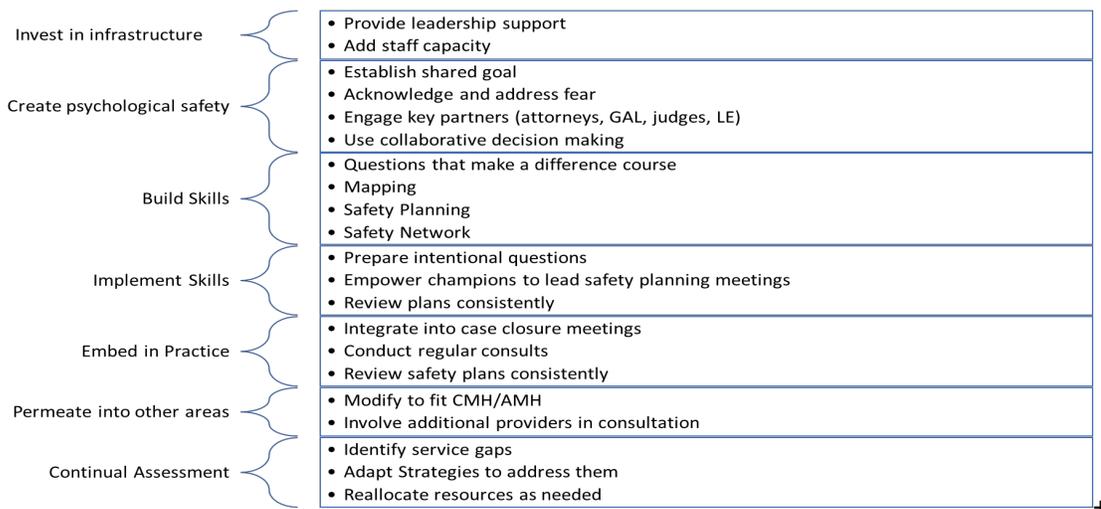
Although we did not initially identify it as such, these efforts often extended beyond the “reasonable efforts” standard into “active efforts.” This was driven by our intentional practice of involving families and their networks in decision-making, individualizing plans, and ensuring that safety strategies were grounded in the family’s strengths, culture, and lived experience.

This graph provides a visual of Meeker County’s progress from a compliance-based system to a safety-focused system and how we see MAAFPCWDA continuing to drive systemic change.

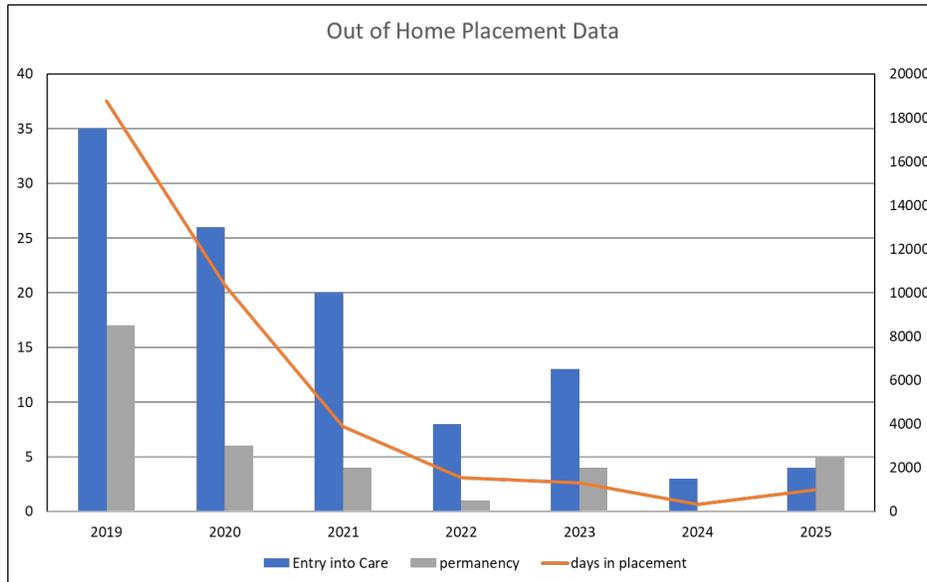


This change did not happen overnight; it has been complex and remains an ongoing process. As a county, we needed support to better understand systemic change management, meaningfully engage our core partners, and ensure our system continued moving in the right direction. Safe Generations provided leadership consultation and technical assistance that helped guide and sustain this work toward true systemic change.

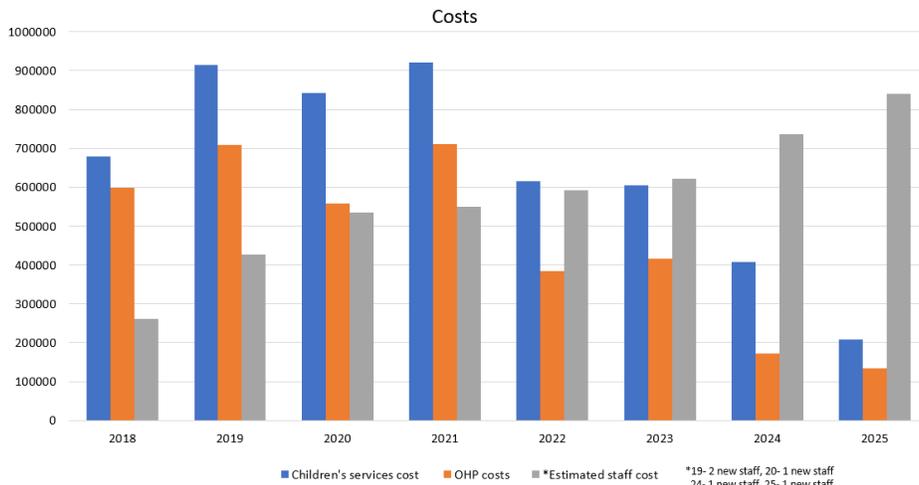
The following graph provides an overview of our change process.



Through these efforts, we began to see results. By 2025 we had 9 children in placement, an 87% decrease from 2019. The graph below demonstrates the continued progress from 2019 to 2025 as it pertains to children entering foster care, children who had permanency established and the number of days children spent out of the home. Although these numbers capture an overview of the outcomes of our work, it is important to recognize and acknowledge the many families and networks that partnered with us to create lasting safety for their children.



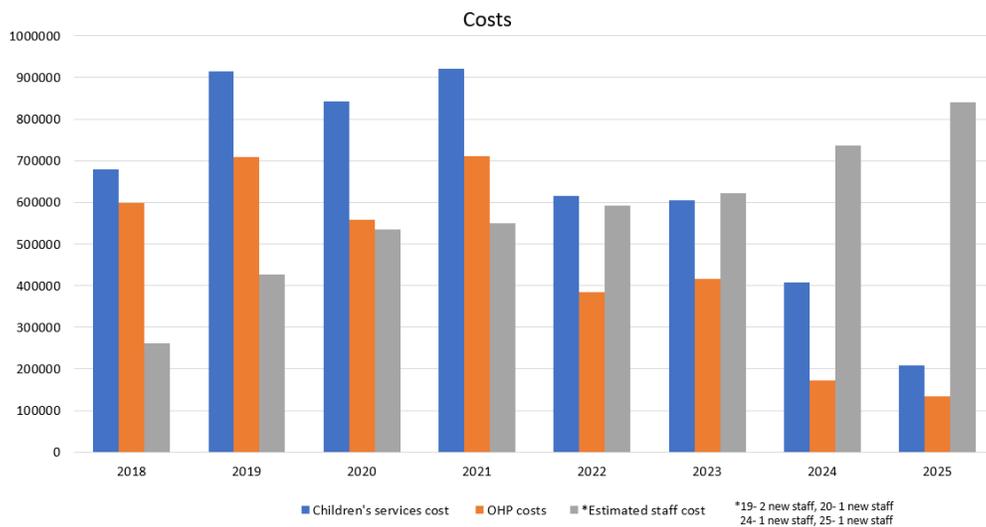
As our system evolved and the number of children in placement decreased, our agency’s capacity increased, allowing for a stronger emphasis on prevention. We intentionally expanded our Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) and Truancy Prevention programs and are developing a Family Resource Center to provide earlier, more supportive interventions, helping prevent unnecessary involvement in the child protection system. This graph demonstrates our number of screened in reports, PSOP cases and Truancy Prevention cases per year.



As these prevention programs have grown, so has our ability to collaborate more meaningfully with schools. Together, we are shifting our response to better partner with families, addressing underlying needs—such as poverty and access to resources—rather than defaulting to an arbitrary child protection report. This approach strengthens trust, supports family stability, and promotes more effective, community-based solutions.

To initiate and sustain these systemic changes, Meeker County has continued to invest in its child welfare workforce. Although out-of-home placement costs have decreased from all-time highs, we are maintaining strong staffing patterns and infrastructure to support this work. For example, in 2026 we will seek a grant to develop a Family Resource Center.

The graph below illustrates trends in out-of-home placement costs, children’s services costs, and staffing costs from 2018, prior to systemic change, through 2025, as we continued to invest in a strong workforce.



No system is perfect and we continue to recognize areas where we can grow. Despite the outcomes that we have already achieved, implementation of MAAPFCWDA will require Meeker County to invest additional financial resources, including five new staff at a cost of nearly \$500,000. However, unlike in 2019, the landscape for counties, including Meeker County, is very different resulting from the cost shifts included in HR1, the tightened workforce environment, among other factors which are placing strain on our local tax levy.

Today, we look to you for support for funding the staff and services we need for implementation and continued growth. And we ask for the state to complete the case reporting requirements under the Act, so counties can remain grounded in work with our families.

Our goal is to implement MAAPFCWDA in a way that doesn't just check a box but brings the full intent and vision of the Act to fruition- strengthening support for our families and creating lasting safety.

Sincerely,

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Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act

Legislative Action Needed for Successful Implementation



In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature enacted the **Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA or the Act)**. This transformational law is intended to reduce disproportionality in Minnesota’s child protection system, reduce trauma, and improve permanency outcomes for children and families. Counties support the purpose of the Act, including reducing racial, economic, and disability disparities in the child welfare system. However, counties recognize that substantial financial investment and targeted statutory fixes are needed to achieve statewide implementation in January 2027. Absent these changes, there is a real risk of failing both families and the county-based workforce. **AMC, MACSSA, and MICA support legislation that addresses these implementation needs and concerns.**

Counties recognize that substantial financial investment and targeted statutory fixes are needed to achieve statewide implementation in January 2027.

Critical Components for Successful Implementation

Requiring counties to assume responsibility for case review at the local level would necessitate the creation of new data and analytic teams and would increase the risk of inconsistent practice and inequitable implementation across the state.

1 Responsibility for Case Review and Quality Assurance

Counties strongly support Minnesota’s Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) serving as the responsible entity to establish and implement a statewide case review and quality assurance process. Consistent with other statewide review functions, such as the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), **DCYF is best positioned to serve as the centralized body for evaluation, monitoring outcomes, and ensuring consistent implementation.**

Counties also support legislative changes authorizing DCYF to determine the number of cases needed for review and to provide clear guidance on how that number is established. These recommendations align with those of the [statewide working group](#).

Requiring counties to assume responsibility for case review at the local level would necessitate the creation of new data and analytic teams and would increase the risk of inconsistent practice and inequitable implementation across the state. Counties strongly support a collaborative partnership with DCYF to carry out this function.

2 Resourcing Staffing, Services, and Supports

Counties strongly support investments in a variety of community-based prevention programming, including Community and Family Resource Centers and the Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP). Counties also support investments in economic supports like housing, transportation, child care, and other direct assistance programs that are associated with reduced maltreatment rates.

Community-based programming must meaningfully center the community’s voice in both design and implementation to ensure cultural relevance and responsiveness. As economic supports become increasingly central to preventing and addressing maltreatment under MAAFPCWDA, counties need clear guidance on financial expectations and obligations related to safety planning and family stability. Sustained funding for safety planning, family group decision-making, and collaborative safety practices is also essential to promote equity, consistency, and long-term sustainability, supporting both families and the workforce in implementing the Act.

Community-based prevention programming like Family Resource Centers is essential to successful implementation of the Act.

Without state legislative funding, counties will rely on increasing property taxes to fund the cost of implementation the Act.

3 Training

In order to ensure that staff can complete required culturally responsive training, **counties seek a policy change extending the training timeframe from six months to twelve months after training becomes available.** This change will allow county staff to continue performing essential core functions while adequately preparing for full implementation.

4 Definitions of Disproportionality

Successful implementation of the Act requires that definitions of disproportionality be clearly established by DCYF and communicated to counties in a timely manner. While DCYF is currently developing these definitions, at present only African American children (and populations for which SSIS data can be compared to total state child population data showing overrepresentation) are eligible for MAAFPCWDA protections.

Counties support clarifying applicability of MAAFPCWDA to child welfare cases, child protection cases, or both.

Successful Implementation Depends on Legislative Action

1 Statewide Case Review Authority

Authorize the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to serve as the responsible entity for the statewide case review and quality assurance function. Additionally, authorize DCYF to determine the number of cases needed for review and to provide guidance on how that determination is made, consistent with recommendations from the [statewide working group](#).

2 Training Timeline Flexibility

Ensure counties have a minimum of twelve months for child protection and child welfare staff to complete culturally responsive training after the training is made available by the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Child Welfare Training Academy (CWTA). This in-person training should be offered regionally throughout the state.

3 Infrastructure and Implementation Investments

In alignment with investments made to DCYF and phase-in counties in 2024, successful implementation of the Act will require sustained financial support available for the remaining 85 counties across the state. Funding should support both infrastructure and practice changes necessary for active efforts, including:

- **Increased staffing levels**

Reduced caseloads are essential to allow staff the time and capacity to engage in the intensive, relationship-based work required under MAAFPCWDA. Research consistently shows that lower caseloads improve family engagement, safety planning, permanency outcomes, and workforce retention (CWLA, 2015; Casey Family Programs, 2019; Children’s Bureau, 2021).

- **Expanded access to concrete supports**

Increased access to housing assistance, transportation, child care, and other basic needs is critical. Research shows that these concrete supports significantly reduce maltreatment risk and repeat system involvement and are foundational to successful active efforts (Chapin Hall, 2020, 2024; ACF, 2022; CEBC, 2025).

- **Upstream prevention and culturally responsive services**

Expanded access to culturally responsive prevention services, such as PSOP, Community and Family Resource Centers, and other community-based programs, is essential to supporting families before more intensive interventions are needed. Evidence demonstrates these programs reduce foster care entry and strengthen family stability, particularly in communities experiencing disproportionality (CDC, 2021; Casey Family Programs, 2022; Chapin Hall, 2024).

For more information, please contact:

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Additional Consideration: Strategic Investments

Support state–county collaboration to identify capacity gaps and strategically invest in services such as:

- Child and family mental health services
- Community-based prevention programs, including PSOP and Community and Family Resource Centers
- Family Group Decision Making, Safety Planning, and Collaborative Safety practices



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www.macssa.org

March 18, 2026

Representative Kotyza-Witthuhn and Representative West
House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF 4125 – Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA)

Dear Chair Kotyza-Witthuhn, Chair West and Members of the House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) and the Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) recognize the urgency to address disproportionality in Minnesota’s child welfare system and support the successful implementation of The Act. We urge the committee’s support of HF 4125.

Counties submit that addressing disproportionality and ensuring successful implementation of MAAFPCWDA is contingent on our ability as a system to make necessary adjustments in the area of case review responsibility and investments in community-based services and staffing that support implementation of active efforts. HF 4125 addresses both areas and we thank Representative Agbaje and Representative Gillman for their commitment to addressing these areas.

Passed in 2024, the originating law made case review the responsibility of counties. As such, counties will be required to build and staff data analytic infrastructure, currently not existent in the majority of counties, that support this requirement. These gaps put the effective implementation of the program in jeopardy and could negatively impact the population that the law is trying to reach. Not only are counties concerned about the inconsistencies in application, hiring staff to meet this requirement is difficult in many parts of the state - and, the costs associated with this functionality comprise the most significant fiscal concerns associated with implementation.

Furthermore, counties draw attention to the critical nature of resourcing services and staffing at the local level. The appropriation included in HF 4125 will begin to address the much needed and woefully underdeveloped service array that supports this work - including mental health, parenting and community-based prevention programming. This appropriation also allows counties the necessary flexibility to adjust to

their local staffing capacity – to accommodate rural and geographic service deserts where services and providers are sparse.

Short of the legislature adjusting the case review responsibility and resourcing staffing and services, counties are concerned about our ability to successfully implement MAAFPCWDA. Without addressing these needs, this will work will fall to counties – likely resulting in significant county levy increases at a time when counties face increasing financial burdens associated with federal policy implementation and increasing demand for services and supports. Even if cost were not a factor, if HF 4125 does not pass, the time and expertise it would take for counties to effectively implement existing law in all parts of Minnesota could be at risk.

In closing, AMC, MICA, and MACSSA thank Rep. Agbaje and Rep. Gillman for their leadership and look forward to continued partnership as we address these critical areas and establish a full continuum of supports so that families can access community-based pathways that provide necessary support and connections, with the goal of reducing involvement with child protection.

Sincerely,



Julie Ring
Executive Director, AMC



Paul Verrette
Director, MACSSA
Human Services Policy Analyst, AMC



Nathan Jesson
Executive Director, MICA



MAAFPCWDA

Full Implementation Cost Estimate

Prepared by
DeYoung Consulting Services

Submitted: July 7th, 2025

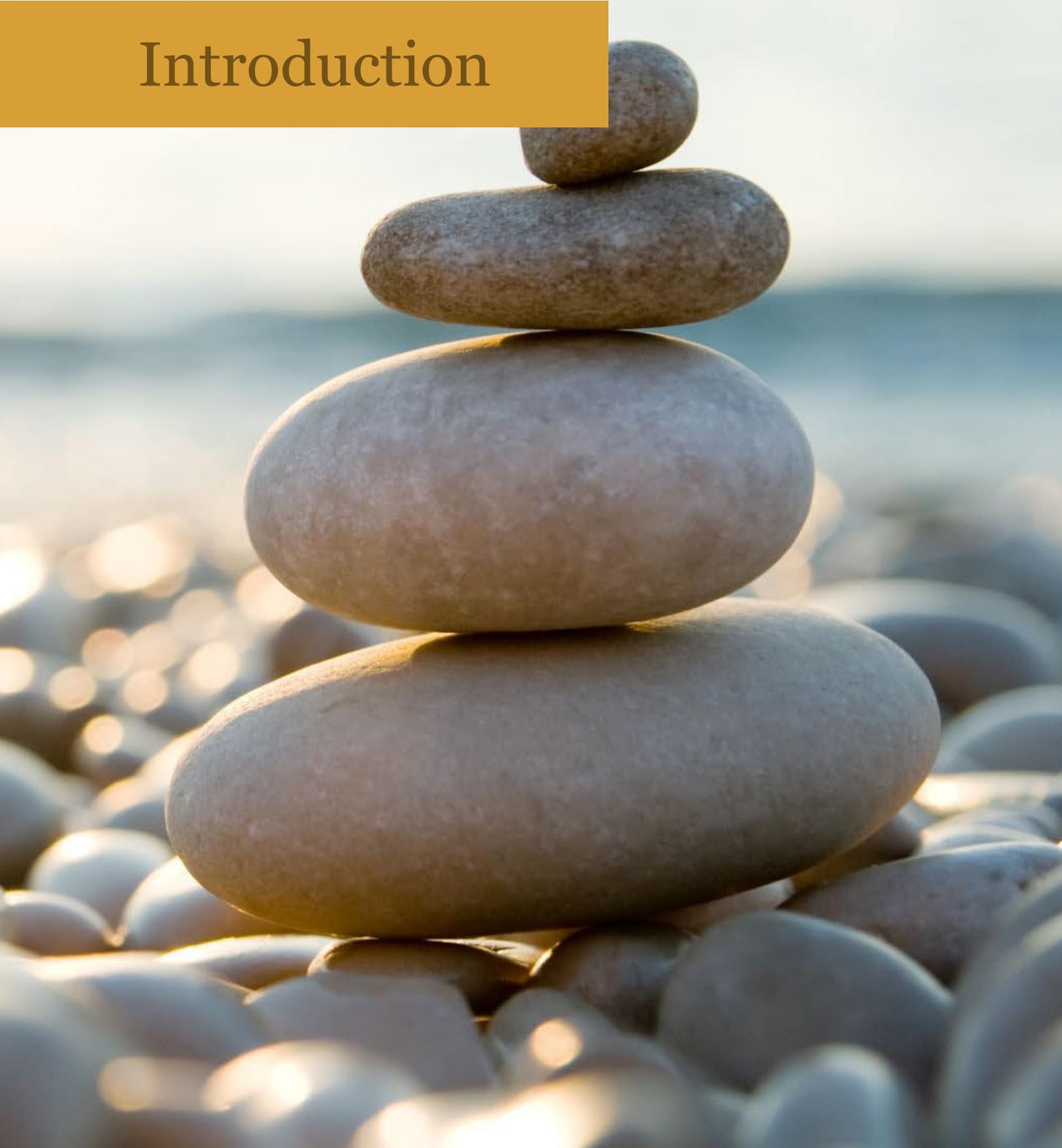




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Introduction



Introduction

Project Purpose

The purpose of this cost estimate plan is to create a financial picture for fully implementing the Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA) in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. It will also provide guidelines for funding recommendations to the legislature.

MAAFPCWDA is a comprehensive statute enacted to address racial disparities in Minnesota's child welfare system, particularly affecting African American and other disproportionately represented children. The goal of the program is to protect the best interests of African American and disproportionately represented children by:

- Preventing unnecessary family separations.
- Promoting family reunification.
- Ensuring culturally informed practices.

Impact of the Legislation

MAAFPCWDA has two major requirements that will have financial implications for the counties. The use of active efforts and an emphasis on disproportionately represented children requires special efforts from the counties to fulfill, thus requiring additional expenses in training, case review requirements, safety planning, etc. According to MAAFPCWDA,

- "Active efforts" require social services to work intensively and continuously with African American or disproportionately represented families to keep children at home or reunite them quickly, while respecting their cultural values and involving them in all decisions.
 - The counties are expected to do more than the minimum requirements to keep the family together.
- A "disproportionately represented child" is anyone under 18 from a racial, cultural, ethnic, disability, or low-income group that appears in the child welfare system more often than their share of the state's child population, as determined annually.
 - The definition of a disproportionately represented child will vary from county to county based on the county data in case reviews. Therefore, the cost per child will also vary depending on the county's needs to meet the specific requirements.

Financial Implications

Active efforts will have significant financial implications for the counties' social services. Active efforts are expected to involve the following:

- **Social services staffing cost.** Child welfare social workers are expected to spend more time engaging the families of disproportionately represented children. They will spend more time on safety planning, prevention of out-of-home placements, providing resources and information to



parents, increasing visitation, etc. This is expected to reduce the caseloads of social workers and increase the need for more social workers. In addition, the program will require retraining of the current workforce and more intensive training for new staff. Apart from the child social workers' staffing cost, there will be increased staffing costs for program supervision and oversight, quality assurance, administrative support, etc.

- **Program cost.** Increased case review requirements will lead to increased costs for assessments, investigations, side-by-side assistance, relative search, and prevention services and support at the front end of the child welfare system. This requirement will also lead to increased administrative costs for data collection and analysis, technology, documentation, administrative overhead, etc.
- **Family assistance and professional services.** Active efforts will lead to increased family assistance, such as transportation, economic support, professional and contract services provided to families, mental health counseling, housing support, training in parenting skills, etc.
- **Out-of-home placement cost.** One of the major benefits of the Act is the expectation that it will lead to a long-term reduction in out-of-home placement costs. This is expected to offset the upfront cost of active efforts in the long term. However, the cost benefits are not expected to be immediate.
- **County Attorneys.** While not as significant as Child welfare social workers, Active efforts will also impact the County Attorneys' offices. The hearings are expected to be longer than those associated with reasonable efforts and lead to more consultations with families. It is also expected that county attorneys will spend more time advising social services agencies during the early stages of implementation.

Scope, Assumptions, and Limitations

Data limitations. The counties did not gather any financial data from the phase-in process, thus making it difficult to estimate the cost of the full implementation accurately. The caseload data from Ramsey and Hennepin Counties' MAAFPCWDA Local Fiscal Impact Surveys differ significantly from the program reality, thus making the documents unreliable to provide an estimate. The data limitations also made it impossible to use the intended methodology of estimating the cost per participant.

Therefore, this report provides insight into the counties' social service personnel's estimated costs instead of the cost of the entire program.

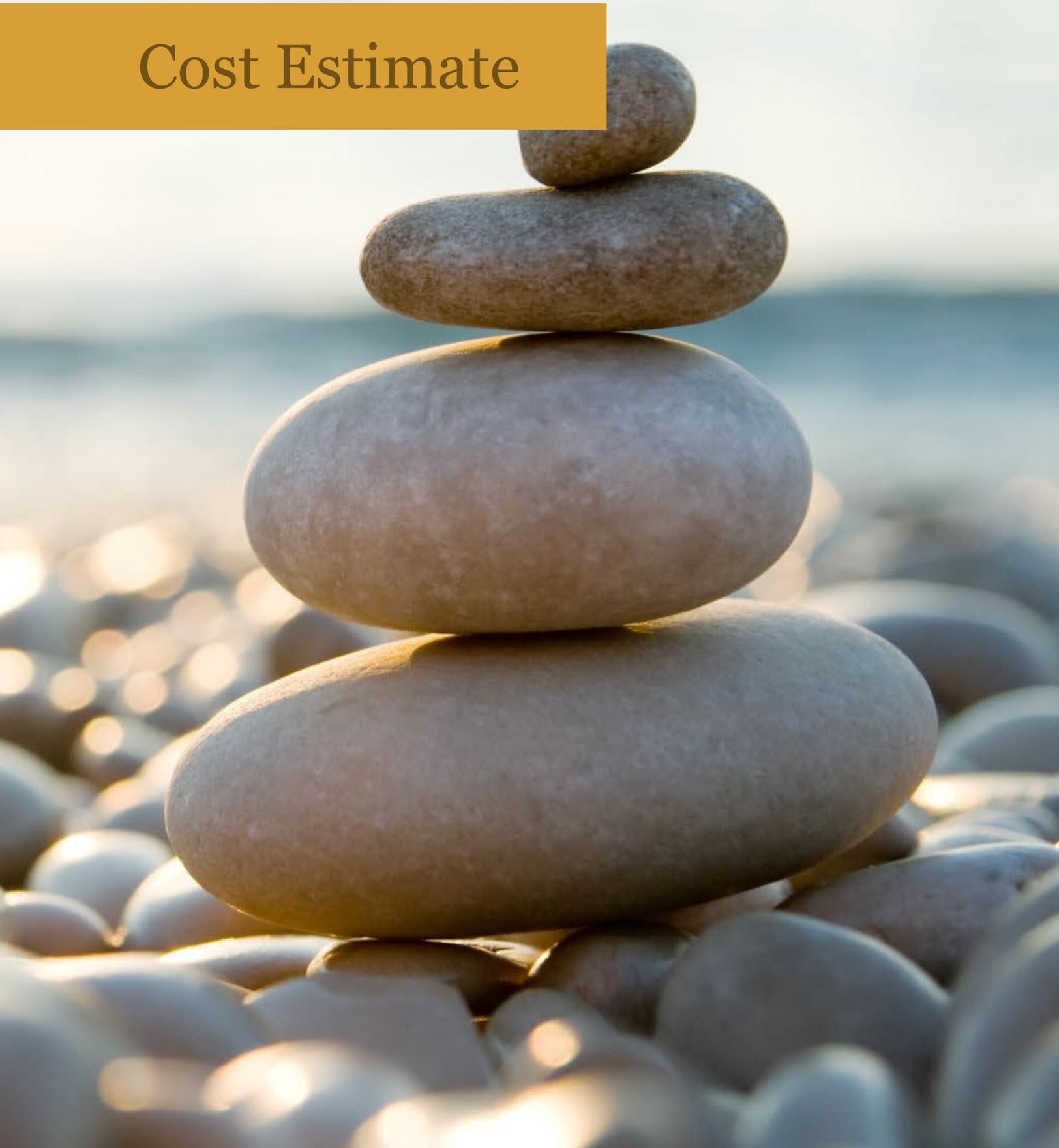
MAAFPCWDA Local Fiscal Impact Surveys:

- "Local fiscal impact" means increased or decreased costs or revenues that a political subdivision would incur as a result of an enacted law or rule.
- Both Ramsey and Hennepin Counties completed the survey from the Minnesota Legislative Budget Office for the MAAFPCWDA

Time factor. The cost estimates in this document are for average caseloads in a specific period. The estimates should be used with the understanding that the caseloads can increase or decrease monthly.



Cost Estimate



Cost Estimate

Assessment and Case Management Cost

Due to its rigorous requirements, the program requires additional personnel. The active efforts requirements will lead to reduced caseloads for the social workers due to increased family support, paperwork, administrative duties, and overall case activities. This will also increase the need for other service areas within the County Social Services.

Caseload

According to the study conducted by the American for Professional Excellence, CWLA suggests a caseload of 12 to 15 children per caseworker, depending on the tasks performed. The Council on Accreditation (COA) recommends that each caseworker's caseload should not exceed 18 children. The American for Professional Excellence suggested that the case complexity should be used to determine the average caseload. They added that case complexities can vary from month to month, and other factors such as legislative changes, trends in poverty, changes in social work practice, partnership efficiencies, and others should be considered.

Based on the discussion with the Ramsey and Hennepin counties' Program managers, the Local Fiscal Impact survey, and the Council on Accreditation, the ideal

- Social worker to Case ratio for MAAFPCWA Case Management is 1:8
- Social worker to Case ratio for MAAFPCWA Assessment is 1:12
- Social worker to Case ratio for Non-MAAFPCWA Case Management is 1:12
- Social worker to Case ratio for Non-MAAFPCWA Assessment is 1:15

Current Caseloads

According to the data from the Hennepin and Ramsey counties' program managers, below are the current case management data. The current numbers are consistent with the data from the Local Fiscal Impact for 2024.

Ramsey County	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Average
Total Cases	223	237	227	254	221	232.4
MAAFPCWDA Eligible at Screening	106	127	103	121	108	113
Hennepin County	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Total Cases	500	500	566	532	645	548.6
MAAFPCWDA Eligible at Screening	291	298	329	284	395	319.4

Based on the Local Fiscal Impact data:

- Average Monthly Assessment for Ramsey County: 371
- Average Monthly MAAFPCWA Assessment for Ramsey County: 186



- Average Monthly Assessment for Hennepin: 871
- Average Monthly MAAFPCWA Assessment for Hennepin County: 523

The table below shows the cost of MAAFPCWA staffing using the following assumptions:

- Case to social worker ratio for Case Management of 8:1
- Case to social worker ratio for Case Management of 12:1
- Supervisor to social worker ratio of 6:1

Ramsey County				
Case Management	Cases	Staff	Wage	Total
Social Worker (8:1 ratio)	113	16	\$120,000.00	\$1,920,000.00
CW Supervisors (6:1 ratio)		3	\$140,000.00	\$420,000.00
Case Management Total				\$2,340,000.00
Assessment	Cases	Staff	Wage	Total
Social Worker (12:1 ratio)	186	17	\$120,000.00	\$2,040,000.00
CW Supervisors (6:1 ratio)		3	\$140,000.00	\$420,000.00
Assessment Total				\$2,460,000.00
Support Staff				
Clerks (1:40 ratio)		4	\$70,000.00	\$280,000.00
Case Aides (1:20 ratio)		7	\$90,000.00	\$630,000.00
QA- (1:30 ratio)		5	\$120,000.00	\$600,000.00
QA Supervisor (6:1 ratio)		1	\$140,000.00	\$140,000.00
Support Staff Total				\$1,650,000.00
Staffing Total				\$6,450,000.00
Hennepin County				
Case Management	Cases	Staff	Wage	Total
Social Worker (8:1 ratio)	320	44	\$120,000.00	\$5,280,000.00
CW Supervisors (6:1 ratio)		9	\$140,000.00	\$1,260,000.00
Case Management Total				\$6,540,000.00
Assessment	Cases	Staff	Wage	Total
Social Worker (12:1 ratio)	523	48	\$120,000.00	\$5,760,000.00
CW Supervisors (6:1 ratio)		9	\$140,000.00	\$1,260,000.00
Assessment Total				\$7,020,000.00
Support Staff	Cases	Staff	Wage	Total
Clerks (1:40 ratio)		10	\$70,000.00	\$700,000.00



Case Aides (1:20 ratio)		18	\$90,000.00	\$1,620,000.00
QA- (1:30 ratio)		12	\$120,000.00	\$1,440,000.00
QA Supervisor (6:1 ratio)		2	\$140,000.00	\$280,000.00
Support Staff Total				\$4,040,000.00
Staffing Total				\$17,600,000.00

County Attorney Staff

There is not enough data to accurately estimate the financial impact of the MAAFPCWA on the counties' attorney offices. The program will have a significant impact on the offices because the attorneys will be consulting more with the families and caseworkers.

Administrative Support

Below is the list of administrative supports that may be needed to execute the program. There is not enough data to create an estimate of the financial impact on the counties.

- Technology
- Personnel Transportation
- Supplies and materials
- Record management
- Client financial management
- Court paperwork filing
- Administrative tracking
- Client telephone calls
- Support services (HR, Accounting, etc.)
- Admin overhead (Office expenses, etc.)
- Training and Development

Case Aid Support

Based on the requirements of MAAFPCWA, the counties will provide more economic and administrative support to keep the families together. Below are some of the services that we anticipate. However, we do not have enough data to accurately estimate the financial impact.

- Transportation
- Housing assistance
- Cash assistance
- Supervised visits
- Family Group Decision Making
- Cash Assistance Distribution System Support
- Drug testing and monitoring
- Parent mentoring
- Culture-competent third-party contracting services



Recommendations

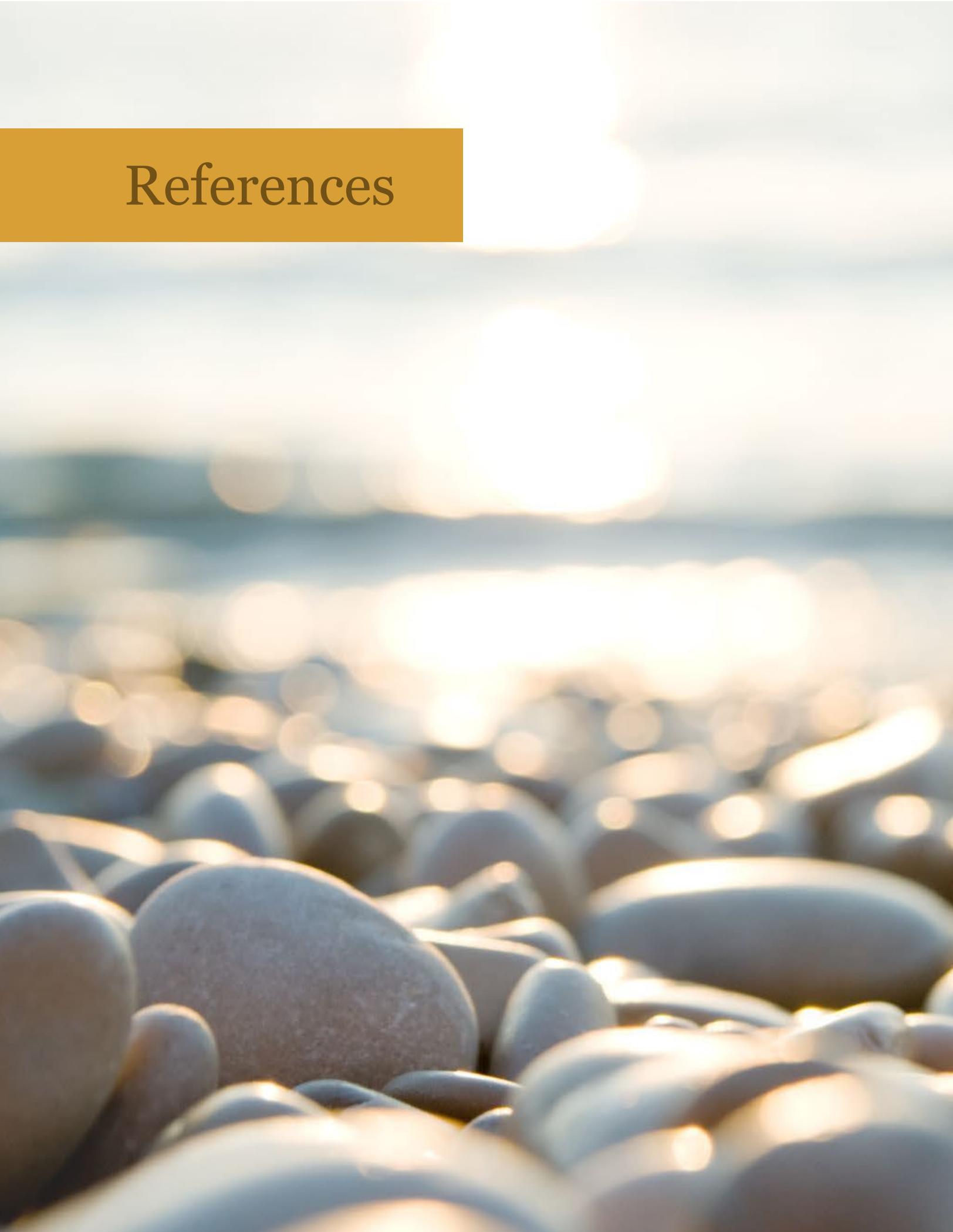


Recommendations

- **Separation of MAAFPCWA families in the database.** We recommend that each county create a separate program for children and families that qualify under the MAAFPCWA in the database. This will ensure accurate data tracking and collection.
- **Program data collection.** Counties should track the program data more accurately based on the definition of “active efforts” and “disproportionately represented child.”
- **Financial data collection.** We also recommend creating a template for the counties to track the program's finances. This will provide a clear picture of the financial implications of MAAFPCWA.



References



References

Joanne Chen, MA, CPC (2019): Research Summary: Caseload Standards & Weighting Methodologies

Ramsey County Local Fiscal Impact Survey

Hennepin County Local Fiscal Impact Survey

