

From: Public Defender Commission <pdcom@subscriptions.in.gov>
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Commission Receives Largest Funding Boost in its History

Nearly \$10 Million in New Funds Budgeted for PD Services

Moments ago, the Indiana House and Senate passed the fiscal year 2022-2023 Biennial State Budget and included an additional \$9.8 million in support to the Public Defender Commission. The budget now heads to the Governor, who is expected to sign it into law.

This is the largest funding boost in the Commission's history. We want to thank Governor Eric Holcomb and the team at the State Budget Agency for supporting the Commission's base budget increase in the Governor's proposed budget. We are also grateful that the House and Senate agreed to this \$2.9 million increase per year (\$5.8 million per biennium), which is projected to prevent the need for any cuts to counties in the upcoming biennium.

In addition, we're pleased to announce that significant new funding was included in the final version of the budget.

New Funding to Support Public Defense Services for At-Risk Youth and Families

The legislature appropriated new funding over the next two years to increase funding, support, and training for public defenders practicing in Children in Need of Services and Termination of Parental Rights (CHINS/TPR) cases involving at-risk youth and families. The PD Commission will use \$4 million to increase funding and support to counties and the PD Council will use \$1 million for training and support for attorneys and their staff.

This funding will be used in targeted efforts to improve the quality of services in CHINS/TPR cases and to expand on current services. The Commission will discuss specific uses of these funds at upcoming meetings. *Details for counties regarding the use of these funds will likely be released in late summer/early fall.*

We know that well-trained and supported attorneys in CHINS/TPR cases lead to better outcomes for Hoosier families and significant cost savings. Research conducted by the Commission's Research and Statistics Analyst, [Dr. Torrin Liddell](#), found the following:

- In 2018, data from DCS showed that children in out-of-home care due to CHINS proceedings were kept out-of-home for a 50-day shorter time period in Commission counties as compared to non-Commission counties. Since that time, the number of children in out-of-home care has decreased by 25%, indicating decreased length of out-of-home placements, or decreased out-of-home placements generally, or both. Despite these changes, out-of-home placements in Commission counties are still 20 days shorter than in non-Commission counties.
 - At the rate of \$23.10 per day for children aged 5-13 in foster care, this constitutes \$462 in savings per child solely in payments to foster families.
 - Even after the decrease referenced above, there were 12,656 children in out-of-home care in Indiana as of July 2020. If each of these children had their time in foster care cut by 20 days it would represent \$5.8 million in cost savings.

We urge you to thank your local State Senator and State Representative for these funding increases. If you have any questions about this budget, please contact [Derrick Mason](#) or [Andrew Cullen](#).

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