

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 19, 2018

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2017–18 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2043

Introduced by Assembly Member Arambula

February 6, 2018

An act to add Chapter 5.4 (commencing with Section 16526) to Part 4 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to foster youth.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2043, as amended, Arambula. Foster youth: *family urgent* response system.

Existing law, commonly known as Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), states the intent of the Legislature in adopting CCR to improve California's child welfare system and its outcomes by using comprehensive initial child assessments, increasing the use of home-based family care and the provision of services and supports to home-based family care, reducing the use of congregate care placement settings, and creating faster paths to permanency resulting in shorter durations of involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Existing law, as part of CCR, requires the State Department of Social Services to implement a resource family approval process, which replaces the multiple processes for licensing foster family homes, certifying foster homes by foster family agencies, approving relatives and nonrelative extended family members as foster care providers, and approving guardians and adoptive families.

~~This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would build upon the current CCR implementation effort by establishing a response system, as specified, for caregivers of current~~

~~or former foster youth who are experiencing emotional, behavioral, or other needs that require immediate support. The bill would state the intent of the Legislature to include a statewide hotline in the response system to provide triage and, as appropriate, deploy a mobile and coordinated in-home response.~~

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations, stating the intent of the Legislature in adopting this bill to build upon the current CCR implementation effort. The bill would require the department to establish a statewide hotline, operational no later than January 1, 2020, as the entry point for a state-based Family Urgent Response System, as defined, to respond to calls from caregivers or current or former foster youth when a crisis arises, as specified. The bill would require the hotline to include, among other things, referrals to the county, as specified, for further support and in-person response. The bill would require the department to ensure that data are collected regarding individuals served through the hotline and to publish a report on the department's Internet Web site on January 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, including specified information.

This bill would require, no later than January 1, 2020, county child welfare, probation, and behavioral health agencies, in each county, to establish a county-based Family Urgent Response System that includes a mobile response and stabilization team to provide stabilization services for caregivers or current or former foster youth who are experiencing a crisis. The bill would require those agencies to submit a single, coordinated plan to the department, no later than November 1, 2019, describing how the system would meet specified requirements. The bill would authorize those agencies to implement these provisions on a per-county basis or by collaborating with other counties to establish regional, cross-county Family Urgent Response Systems. By creating new duties for county officials relating to foster care services, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

This bill would require the department, in collaboration with the State Department of Health Care Services, no later than March 1, 2019, to issue all necessary guidance for county-based Family Urgent Response Systems established pursuant to this bill.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.
State-mandated local program: ~~no~~-yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 *SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of*
2 *the following:*

3 *(a) Existing law establishes the Continuum of Care Reform*
4 *(CCR) effort and states the intent of the Legislature to improve*
5 *California's child welfare system and its outcomes by using*
6 *comprehensive initial child assessments, increasing the use of*
7 *home-based family care and the provision of services and supports*
8 *to home-based family care, reducing the use of congregate care*
9 *placement settings, and creating faster paths to permanency*
10 *resulting in shorter durations of involvement in the child welfare*
11 *and juvenile justice systems.*

12 *(b) Existing law states the intent of the Legislature that CCR*
13 *include the timely provision of an array of appropriate services*
14 *that are coordinated, comprehensive, and community-based, and*
15 *that children in need of services are identified and assessed*
16 *promptly and provided services regardless of placement setting,*
17 *and that child welfare and mental health agencies work together*
18 *in the provision of coordinated services to these children and*
19 *youth.*

20 *(c) Existing law states the intent of the Legislature to reduce*
21 *the frequency of law enforcement involvement and delinquency*
22 *petitions arising from incidents at group homes and other facilities*
23 *licensed to provide residential care to dependent children.*

24 *(d) It is the intent of the Legislature in adopting this act to build*
25 *upon the current CCR implementation effort to provide current*
26 *and former foster youth and their caregivers with immediate and*
27 *timely services at the moment of crisis. The Legislature expects*
28 *that those services, provided by a trained and trauma-informed*
29 *team of practitioners, will prevent placement disruption and*
30 *separation of the child from his or her caregiver, will reduce*
31 *contacts with law enforcement and potential entry into the criminal*
32 *justice system, and will prevent hospitalization and higher-level*
33 *placement into congregate care.*

(e) Establishing a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week response system at the state and local levels for caregivers and current or former foster youth who are experiencing emotional, behavioral, or other needs that require immediate support will lead to improved child and family outcomes, will improve retention of current foster caregivers, will help to maintain children and youth in their current living situation, will improve youth's emotional disposition, will connect youth and caregivers to existing services in their communities, and will provide youth and caregivers with the tools that they need to heal from trauma and to thrive.

SEC. 2. Chapter 5.4 (commencing with Section 16526) is added to Part 4 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

CHAPTER 5.4. FAMILY URGENT RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR
CAREGIVERS AND YOUTH

16526. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Caregiver" means an individual responsible for meeting the daily care and supervision needs of a current or former foster youth.

(b) "Crisis" means an event involving the caregiver and current or former foster youth that causes emotional, physical, or behavioral distress and that, without immediate supports, creates a risk of disruption to the current living situation.

(c) "Current or former foster youth" includes a youth adjudicated under Section 300, 601, or 602 and who is served by a county child welfare agency or probation department, and a youth who has exited foster care to reunification, guardianship, or adoption. A current or former foster youth shall be eligible for services under this chapter until he or she attains 21 years of age.

(d) "Department" means the State Department of Social Services.

(e) "Family Urgent Response System" means a collaborative, timely, in-home, in-person mobile crisis response for purposes of stabilizing the living situation, mitigating the distress of the caregiver or youth, and providing the caregiver and youth with linkages to the existing array of local services.

1 (f) “In-home” means where the youth and caregiver are located,
2 preferably in the home, or at some other mutually agreeable
3 location.

4 16527. (a) The department shall establish a statewide hotline
5 as the entry point for a state-based Family Urgent Response
6 System, which shall be available 24 hours a day, seven days a
7 week, to respond to calls from caregivers or current or former
8 foster youth when a crisis arises. All of the following shall be
9 available through this hotline:

10 (1) State hotline workers who are trained for deescalation and
11 conflict resolution telephone response specifically for children
12 impacted by trauma.

13 (2) Referrals to a county-based Family Urgent Response System,
14 established pursuant to Section 16529, for further support and
15 in-person response. Referrals shall occur by one of the following
16 means:

17 (A) A warm hand-off whereby the state hotline worker
18 establishes direct and live connection through a three-way call
19 that includes the caregiver or youth and the county contact.

20 (B) If a direct communication cannot be established pursuant
21 to subparagraph (A), a referral directly to the community- or
22 county-based service and a followup call to ensure a connection
23 to the caregiver or youth occurs.

24 (3) The state hotline worker shall contact the caregiver or youth
25 within 24 hours after the referral required under subparagraph
26 (A) or (B) of paragraph (2) to offer additional support if needed.

27 (b) The statewide hotline shall maintain contact information
28 for county-based Family Urgent Response Systems, based on
29 information provided by counties, for referrals to local services,
30 including, but not limited to, county-based mobile response and
31 stabilization teams.

32 (c) The department shall ensure that data are collected
33 regarding individuals served through the statewide hotline and
34 shall publish a report on the department’s Internet Web site on
35 January 1, 2021, and annually thereafter, in consultation with
36 stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the County Welfare
37 Directors Association of California and the County Behavioral
38 Health Directors Association of California, to include all of the
39 following information:

1 (1) *The number of caregivers served through the hotline,*
2 *separated by placement type and status as a current or former*
3 *foster caregiver.*

4 (2) *The number of current and former foster youth served*
5 *through the hotline, separated by county agency type, current or*
6 *former foster care status, age, gender, race, and whether the call*
7 *was made by the caregiver or the youth.*

8 (3) *The disposition of each call, including, but not limited to,*
9 *whether mobile response and stabilization services were deployed*
10 *or a referral was made to other services.*

11 (4) *Deidentified, aggregated outcome data, including, but not*
12 *limited to, placement stability, return into foster care, movement*
13 *from child welfare to juvenile justice, and timeliness to*
14 *permanency.*

15 (d) *The department may meet the requirements of this section*
16 *through contract with an entity with demonstrated experience in*
17 *working with populations of children who have suffered trauma*
18 *and with capacity to provide 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week*
19 *response.*

20 (e) *The department, in consultation with stakeholders, shall do*
21 *all of the following:*

22 (1) *Develop methods and materials for informing the caregivers*
23 *and current or former foster youth about the statewide hotline.*

24 (2) *Establish protocols for triage and response.*

25 (3) *Establish minimum education and training requirements for*
26 *state hotline workers.*

27 (f) *The statewide hotline shall be operational no later than*
28 *January 1, 2020.*

29 16528. *No later than March 1, 2019, the department, in*
30 *collaboration with the State Department of Health Care Services,*
31 *and in consultation with the County Behavioral Health Directors*
32 *Association of California and the County Welfare Directors*
33 *Association, shall issue all necessary guidance for county-based*
34 *Family Urgent Response Systems for purposes of this chapter,*
35 *including, but not limited to, data tracking and claiming of federal*
36 *funding.*

37 16529. (a) *County child welfare, probation, and behavioral*
38 *health agencies, in each county, shall establish a county-based*
39 *Family Urgent Response System that includes a mobile response*
40 *and stabilization team for the purpose of providing stabilization*

1 services for caregivers or current or former foster youth who are
2 experiencing a crisis.

3 (b) In each county, the county child welfare, probation, and
4 behavioral health agencies shall submit a single, coordinated plan
5 to the department no later than November 1, 2019, that describes
6 how the county-based Family Urgent Response System shall meet
7 the requirements described in subdivision (c). The plan shall also
8 describe all of the following:

9 (1) How the county will track and monitor calls.

10 (2) Data collection efforts, consistent with guidance provided
11 by the department.

12 (3) Transitions from mobile response and stabilization services
13 to ongoing services.

14 (4) Coordination with the child and family team.

15 (5) Process and criteria for determining response.

16 (6) Composition of the responders.

17 (7) Both existing and new services that will be used to support
18 the mobile response and stabilization services.

19 (c) A county-based Family Urgent Response System shall include
20 all of the following:

21 (1) Phone response at the county level that facilitates entry of
22 the caregivers and current or former foster youth to crisis response
23 services.

24 (2) A process for determining when a mobile response and
25 stabilization team will be deployed, or when other services will
26 be used, based on the urgent and critical needs of the caregiver
27 or youth.

28 (3) A mobile response and stabilization team available 24 hours
29 a day, seven days a week.

30 (4) Ability to provide immediate, in-person, face-to-face
31 response preferably within one hour, but not to exceed three hours
32 in extenuating circumstances for urgent needs, or same-day
33 response within 24 hours for nonurgent situations.

34 (5) Utilization of responders with specialized training in trauma
35 of children and the foster care system.

36 (6) Provision of in-home or in-community crisis deescalation,
37 stabilization, and support, including all of the following:

38 (A) Establishing in-person, face-to-face contact with the youth
39 and caregiver.

1 (B) Identifying the underlying causes of, and precursors to, the
2 behavior.

3 (C) Identifying the caregiver interventions attempted.

4 (D) Observing the child and caregiver interaction.

5 (E) Diffusing the immediate situation.

6 (F) Coaching and advising the caregiver to maintain the child
7 in the current living situation.

8 (G) Establishing connections to other county- or
9 community-based supports and services to ensure continuity of
10 care.

11 (H) Following up after the initial face-to-face response, for up
12 to 72 hours, to determine if additional supports or services are
13 needed.

14 (I) Identifying any additional support or ongoing stabilization
15 needs for the family and making a plan for, or referral to,
16 appropriate community services within the county.

17 (d) (1) Each county shall establish a Family Urgent Response
18 System no later than January 1, 2020.

19 (2) The county agencies described in subdivisions (a) and (b)
20 may implement this section on a per-county basis or by
21 collaborating with other counties to establish regional,
22 cross-county Family Urgent Response Systems.

23 SEC. 3. To the extent that this act has an overall effect of
24 increasing the costs already borne by a local agency for programs
25 or levels of service mandated by the 2011 Realignment Legislation
26 within the meaning of Section 36 of Article XIII of the California
27 Constitution, it shall apply to local agencies only to the extent that
28 the state provides annual funding for the cost increase. Any new
29 program or higher level of service provided by a local agency
30 pursuant to this act above the level for which funding has been
31 provided shall not require a subvention of funds by the state or
32 otherwise be subject to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
33 Constitution.

34 ~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~
35 ~~legislation that would build upon the current Continuum of Care~~
36 ~~Reform implementation effort through the following actions:~~

37 ~~(a) Establish a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week response system at~~
38 ~~the state and local levels for caregivers of current or former foster~~
39 ~~youth who are experiencing emotional, behavioral, or other needs~~
40 ~~that require immediate support.~~

- 1 (b) ~~Include a statewide hotline in the response system to provide~~
2 ~~triage and, as appropriate, deploy a mobile and coordinated~~
3 ~~in-home response that includes face-to-face intervention and~~
4 ~~support to the youth and caregiver.~~
- 5 (c) ~~Ensure the response system increases coordination between~~
6 ~~state and local child welfare and behavioral health systems to~~
7 ~~stabilize a foster care placement, prevent placement disruptions~~
8 ~~that often lead to worse outcomes, reduce law enforcement contacts~~
9 ~~with foster youth, and connect the foster youth and caregiver to~~
10 ~~existing services in their communities.~~