

NCHCW 2021 Housing-Child Welfare Cost Study

In the absence of resources to help families access safe, decent, and affordable housing, child welfare workers are often placed in the unenviable position of placing homeless and precariously housed children into foster care. In fact, one in ten children placed in foster care are separated from their parents due to inadequate housing.

The main source of federal funding, Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, covers the cost of foster care and therapeutic services, but states are prohibited from using this source of funds to cover the cost of providing housing resources to keep families together and safe. This does not mean that child welfare professionals cannot help with housing costs such as time-limited rental assistance, security deposits, and motel rooms. However, Title IV-E cannot cover permanent housing costs.

Thus, solving these housing problems is best solved through partnerships between housing agencies and child welfare agencies. NCHCW conducts an annual study of federal child welfare funds (Title IV-E) compared to the costs of housing investments to keep families together and safe.

This research shows considerable savings to states when funding is used to subsidize housing and supportive services to preserve families. In fact, the U.S. would save \$577,143,562 if housing plus services intervention were applied to all Title IV-E eligible families who need it, or an average of \$61,388 per family. The provision of housing and services is a good use of public dollars but also offers front line workers the resources they need to adequately address the problems they confront along with the families they serve every day. The state-by-state savings are included in the chart below.

State	Total Spending Title IV-E in 2018	number of eligible families	cost of foster care for homeless families	total cost of housing plus services for families	Overall savings
Alabama	\$52,759,074	157	\$5,275,676	\$2,220,608	\$3,055,068
Alaska	\$45,842,975	51	\$4,584,200	\$1,043,868	\$3,540,332
Arizona	\$313,720,976	345	\$31,371,938	\$5,699,400	\$25,672,538
Arkansas	\$70,094,095	110	\$7,009,405	\$1,500,400	\$5,509,005
California	\$1,976,753,167	969	\$197,674,232	\$24,600,972	\$173,073,260
Colorado	\$98,160,197	102	\$9,815,990	\$2,033,880	\$7,782,110
Connecticut	\$126,099,434	78	\$12,609,935	\$1,602,120	\$11,007,815

Delaware	\$8,862,736	15	\$886,244	\$279,480	\$606,764
District of Columbia	\$49,769,508	18	\$4,976,912	\$477,288	\$4,499,624
Florida	\$408,209,399	550	\$40,820,756	\$10,128,800	\$30,691,956
Georgia	\$142,556,202	345	\$14,255,122	\$5,496,540	\$8,758,582
Hawaii	\$33,342,581	33	\$3,334,250	\$909,084	\$2,425,166
Idaho	\$9,254,503	47	\$925,402	\$687,892	\$237,510
Illinois	\$282,316,077	313	\$28,231,078	\$5,538,848	\$22,692,230
Indiana	\$98,423,028	453	\$9,841,485	\$6,662,724	\$3,178,761
Iowa	\$64,710,311	138	\$6,471,030	\$1,983,336	\$4,487,694
Kansas	\$46,909,533	170	\$4,690,672	\$2,512,600	\$2,178,072
Kentucky	\$115,771,169	248	\$11,577,055	\$3,469,024	\$8,108,031
Louisiana	\$58,954,049	109	\$5,895,313	\$1,676,420	\$4,218,893
Maine	\$37,961,543	42	\$3,796,067	\$700,896	\$3,095,171
Maryland	\$89,156,458	73	\$8,915,611	\$1,687,760	\$7,227,851
Massachusetts	\$146,384,362	196	\$14,638,190	\$4,482,128	\$10,156,062
Michigan	\$181,334,972	289	\$18,133,178	\$4,482,968	\$13,650,210
Minnesota	\$95,811,521	171	\$9,581,115	\$2,863,908	\$6,717,207
Mississippi	\$43,379,546	133	\$4,337,731	\$1,869,980	\$2,467,751
Missouri	\$116,102,523	306	\$11,609,622	\$4,482,288	\$7,127,334
Montana	\$22,954,631	95	\$2,295,260	\$1,431,460	\$863,800
Nebraska	\$38,299,468	68	\$3,829,799	\$1,005,040	\$2,824,759
Nevada	\$87,575,741	108	\$8,757,399	\$1,791,936	\$6,965,463
New Hampshire	\$16,911,724	24	\$1,691,168	\$454,368	\$1,236,800
New Jersey	\$179,104,876	102	\$17,910,319	\$2,303,160	\$15,607,159
New Mexico	\$44,193,671	67	\$4,419,247	\$999,908	\$3,419,339
New York	\$589,476,606	307	\$58,946,993	\$7,285,724	\$51,661,269
North Carolina	\$149,002,141	262	\$14,899,872	\$3,982,400	\$10,917,472
North Dakota	\$22,383,642	29	\$2,238,314	\$442,540	\$1,795,774
Ohio	\$409,726,256	367	\$40,972,462	\$5,327,372	\$35,645,090
Oklahoma	\$133,335,643	199	\$13,333,263	\$2,907,788	\$10,425,475
Oregon	\$152,396,516	175	\$15,239,650	\$3,195,500	\$12,044,150
Pennsylvania	\$332,180,020	320	\$33,217,249	\$5,497,600	\$27,719,649
Rhode Island	\$19,641,515	38	\$1,964,118	\$663,328	\$1,300,790

South Carolina	\$63,244,009	117	\$6,324,277	\$1,781,208	\$4,543,069
South Dakota	\$11,176,869	32	\$1,117,611	\$446,080	\$671,531
Tennessee	\$135,701,170	217	\$13,569,871	\$3,217,676	\$10,352,195
Texas	\$331,070,043	710	\$33,105,604	\$12,112,600	\$20,993,004
Utah	\$36,752,114	67	\$3,675,203	\$1,077,896	\$2,597,307
Vermont	\$21,629,721	26	\$2,162,928	\$493,480	\$1,669,448
Virginia	\$131,541,469	91	\$13,154,015	\$1,800,344	\$11,353,671
Washington	\$172,734,561	211	\$17,272,905	\$4,592,204	\$12,680,701
West Virginia	\$116,606,821	196	\$11,660,260	\$2,704,016	\$8,956,244
Wisconsin	\$128,554,441	171	\$12,855,015	\$2,617,668	\$10,237,347
Wyoming	\$5,027,709	20	\$502,733	\$305,440	\$197,293
US Total/Average	\$8,063,861,315	9504	\$744,673,510	\$167,529,948	\$577,143,562