

RCW 74.14C.030 Department duties. (1) The department shall be the lead administrative agency for preservation services and may receive funding from any source for the implementation or expansion of such services. The department shall:

(a) Provide coordination and planning with the advice of the community networks for the implementation and expansion of preservation services; and

(b) Monitor and evaluate such services to determine whether the programs meet measurable standards specified by this chapter and the department.

(2) The department may: (a) Allow its contractors for preservation services to use paraprofessional workers when the department and provider determine the use appropriate. The department may also use paraprofessional workers, as appropriate, when the department provides preservation services; and (b) allow follow-up to be provided, on an individual case basis, when the department and provider determine the use appropriate.

(3) In carrying out the requirements of this section, the department shall consult with qualified agencies that have demonstrated expertise and experience in preservation services.

(4) The department may provide preservation services directly and shall, within available funds, enter into outcome-based, competitive contracts with social service agencies to provide preservation services, provided that such agencies meet measurable standards specified by this chapter and by the department. The standards shall include, but not be limited to, satisfactory performance in the following areas:

(a) The number of families appropriately connected to community resources;

(b) Avoidance of new referrals accepted by the department for child protective services or family reconciliation services within one year of the most recent case closure by the department;

(c) Consumer satisfaction;

(d) For reunification cases, reduction in the length of stay in out-of-home placement; and

(e) Reduction in the level of risk factors specified by the department.

(5) (a) The department shall not provide intensive family preservation services unless it is demonstrated that provision of such services prevent out-of-home placement in at least seventy percent of the cases served for a period of at least six months following termination of services. The department's caseworkers may only provide preservation services if there is no other qualified entity willing or able to do so.

(b) Contractors shall demonstrate that provision of intensive family preservation services prevent out-of-home placement in at least seventy percent of the cases served for a period of no less than six months following termination of services. The department may increase the period of time based on additional research and data. If the contractor fails to meet the seventy percent requirement the department may: (i) Review the conditions that may have contributed to the failure to meet the standard and renew the contract if the department determines: (A) The contractor is making progress to meet the standard; or (B) conditions unrelated to the provision of services, including case mix and severity of cases, contributed to the failure; or (ii) reopen the contract for other bids.

(c) The department shall cooperate with any person who has a contract under this section in providing data necessary to determine the amount of reduction in foster care. For the purposes of this subsection "prevent out-of-home placement" means that a child who has been a recipient of intensive family preservation services has not been placed outside of the home, other than for a single, temporary period of time not exceeding fourteen days.

(6) The department shall adopt rules to implement this chapter. [1996 c 240 § 4; 1995 c 311 § 4; 1992 c 214 § 4.]