

FAMILY COURT SERVICES

Budget 2022

Presented 9/14/21

Director, Jenny Cooke, LMFT

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

LOCATED IN THE COURTHOUSE

Serving court ordered families through Parent Education, Mediation, Family Studies and Brief Focused Assessments as defined in Wisconsin State Statutes (767.401, 767.405, 767.41)

Front Office Staff

- Anchored by two administrative support professionals
 - Doors open to the public with face to face answers to brief questions from citizens
 - Phones answered directly in person
 - Manage correspondence
 - Maintain the database with up to date information
 - Input referrals
 - Track fees owed and fee payments
 - Keep supplies current, manage accounts in MUNIS
 - Complete biweekly payroll
 - Track case assignments
 - Assign to Parent Education classes
 - Arrange interpreter services

Limited-Term Employees

- 2 LTE's
 - One assists with front office responsibilities and office projects as needed
 - One assists with back scanning/scanning to eliminate paper files
 - Labor intensive process started by the previous Director

FAMILY COURT COUNSELORS

- Eight counselor positions with 2 current openings
- All hold Master's Degrees
- All hold Licenses from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services
 - 3-Advanced Practice Social Workers, 1 Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, 1 Licensed Professional Counselor and 1 Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Conduct mediations, brief focused assessments, family custody/placement evaluations and facilitate Parent Education classes
- Follow guidelines of the American Association of Family and Conciliatory Courts (AFCC)
- Seek resolutions that are in the best interest of children

2021 Numbers (as of 8/31/21)

- 362 families referred for mediation
 - 371 August 2020
 - 489 total 2020
- 120 families referred for Family Study
 - 113 August 2020
 - 184 total 2020
- 6 families referred for Brief Focused Assessment
 - 10 August 2020
 - 14 total 2020

Pandemic Issues

- The case referrals continue to be steady, in spite of the Pandemic
- It was unclear how to safely accomplish our jobs when the Pandemic first arrived
- Due to the Pandemic, we experienced significant delays in receiving collateral records from community sources
- Parents sometimes struggled with technology access; this improved over time
- A wait list for families was instituted to allow counselors to give full attention to their caseloads
- The wait list was caught up early during the Spring 2021
- Due to staff changes the wait list is again growing

Revenue 2021

- FCS revenues have improved compared to last year January-August
 - 2020 January-August: \$111,000
- In fact we are over the 2019 (pre-Pandemic) total by \$26,000
 - 2019 January-August: \$124,600
 - 2021 January-August: 150,500
- Over \$16,000 in fees have been waived so far in 2021
- PP&J is assessing FCS fee procedures

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- No increases have been requested for 2022

PANDEMIC CHANGES TO SERVICES

- For the safety of all involved, FCS continues to minimize face to face contact with Dane County families
- Other FCS offices around the state have resumed/or continued normal face to face operations
- Other Family Court professionals around the country are mixed on what services will look like in the future
- My expectation is to use a hybrid model with some video conferencing ability but also a return to face to face meetings with families when it is safe
 - There will be a budget impact with the cost of electronic platforms

EQUITY PROGRESS

- New database will be in place
 - demographic information
- Working with OEI to hire a Spanish speaking counselor and a Spanish speaking front office professional
- Researching options to provide Parent Education in different languages

THANK YOU

- FCS has been in the process of an electronic upgrade for several years
 - In spite of the pandemic, IM has made significant strides and has been highly responsive to our needs
- The Dane County Judiciary and the Dane County Family Law Section of the State Bar continue to appreciate and support the hard work FCS does on a daily basis for Dane County families
- Thank you Board members for your continued support--please call and schedule a time to tour the office and learn more about FCS
- Congratulations to Vicki Alexander, retiring after 25 years of exceptional service to Dane County families—thank you Vicki