

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38



Fiscal Year FY 2025-2026

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B1)</i>	For FY 2025-2026, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

NON-RECURRING REQUESTS <i>(FORM B2)</i>	For FY 2025-2026, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

CAPITAL REQUESTS <i>(FORM C)</i>	For FY 2025-2026, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

PROVISOS <i>(FORM D)</i>	For FY 2025-2026, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Betsy Cline	(803) 898-2641	betsy.cline@dss.sc.gov
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Susan Roben	(803) 898-7427	susan.roben@dss.sc.gov

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2025-2026 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

SIGN/DATE: TYPE/PRINT NAME:	<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
	 Digitally signed by Michael Leach Date: 2024.10.08 15:09:16 -04'00' <small>DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES</small>	
	Mike Leach, Agency Director	

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services
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BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Enhancing the Future of South Carolina's Children and Families	31,381,801	8,777,527	689,830	0	40,849,158	64.64	26.41	4.95	0.00	96.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Domestic Violence Response, Adult Placement Stabilization & Employment Services	2,070,000	0	0	0	2,070,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	B1 - Recurring	Early Care and Education	32,000,000	0	0	0	32,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	B1 - Recurring	Information Technology & Infrastructure	2,660,428	1,446,591	139,267	0	4,246,286	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	B2 - Non-Recurring	Economic Services System Application Modernization (ESSAM) – DDI Phase	18,590,812	16,810,550	0	0	35,401,362	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			86,703,041	27,034,668	829,097	0	114,566,806	64.64	26.41	4.95	0.00	96.00

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Enhancing the Future of South Carolina's Children and Families
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$31,381,801 Federal: \$8,777,527 Other: \$689,830 Total: \$40,849,158
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	96.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	Goal 1; Strategy 1.2; Measure 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 Goal 2; Strategy 2.2; Measure 2.2.1 Goal 2; Strategy 2.2; Measure 2.2.2
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	Foster Parents, Kinship Caregivers, Child Placing Agencies. Allocation of funds is
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

based on the level of care, age of the child, and support needed for foster children and youth, and related initiatives.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

Foster Family Board Rate Increase - \$2,251,439 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$1,723,197

Federal Authorization - \$ 528,242

Other Funds - \$ 0

The agency reviews foster family board rates on an annual basis and adjusts as necessary to ensure the monthly rates for regular foster care, difficulty of care (DCBR) and kinship care continue to meet the USDA cost of raising a child. This request is directly related to a Proviso change request for 38.14 (DSS: Family Foster Care Payments).

Kinship Foster Family Home Payments - \$4,410,097 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$3,884,984

Federal Authorization - \$ 525,113

Other Funds - \$ 0

In late 2023, the Administration of Children and Families issued a final rule to allow agencies to claim Title IV-E federal financial participation for the cost of foster care maintenance payments on behalf of an otherwise eligible child who is placed in a licensed or approved kinship foster family home using licensing standards for kinship foster family homes that differ from the standards used for non-relative foster family homes. The agency proposed to add Regulation 114-551 to establish discrete, less burdensome standards for the licensure of kinship foster family and kinship adoptive homes. These funds would allow current kinship caregivers to receive a monthly maintenance payment for the approximately 460 children in foster care for whom they are already caring for.

Child Welfare Salary Plan Administration Maintenance of Effort - \$15,792,670 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$12,015,063

Federal Authorization - \$3,777,607

Other Funds - \$ 0

The Workload Implementation Plan, as one provision of the Michelle H. Final Settlement Agreement (FSA), was approved and ordered by the U.S. District Court on February 27, 2019. This plan outlines the three primary drivers that make the most significant impact on child welfare reform in South Carolina. They are a well-qualified, stable workforce; a strong and well-defined framework of family-centered practice; and a network of resources and supports for families and children that includes prevention as well as child maltreatment intervention and placement services.

To achieve a well-qualified, stable workforce, one of the strategies was to seek funding to raise the salaries of all child welfare case managers and team leaders (supervisors), to include a salary premium for those possessing a BSW or MSW degree. These staff also receive an annual increase with each class year of service and have the ability to receive an additional increase by growing their work-related knowledge and skills via a leveling system. Initial funding was appropriated by the General Assembly, and the SC DSS 'child welfare services salary plan' (CWS Salary Plan) was originally implemented in July 2021. The Department of State Human Resources (DSHR) reviewed and approved DSS's request to administer pay actions to implement and maintain operation of the plan in July 2021. The funding requested represents amounts required to continue to operate the Court-approved plan under the FSA, and request additional costs associated with improved retention/lower vacancy rates and turnover for positions covered by the plan, unfunded portions of statewide General Increases (GI's) absorbed since implementation, as well as anticipated unfunded GI amounts and the accelerated movement of staff to higher levels based on additional training and competencies beginning next fiscal year, which the Court has deemed necessary.

Child Placing Agency Admin Fee Rate Increase - \$3,188,726 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$2,007,303

Federal Authorization - \$1,181,423

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Other Funds - \$ 0

Increase Child Placing Agency administrative rates. CPA's provide regular foster care services and supports, and while the CPA's have not received an increase to this rate in the past several years, these costs continue to rise each year. It has been challenging for these providers to build capacity, support recruitment and retention of foster parents, address the increasing complex mental health needs of children and youth in care, and pay for required staffing that is needed to support the work of foster care.

Prevention Services/Evidence-Based Program Expansion - \$5,565,568 Total Funds; 4.00 Total FTE's

State General Funds - \$5,282,784

Federal Authorization - \$ 282,784

Other Funds - \$0

The agency requests funding to expand evidence-based programs focusing on those with the greatest impact on child maltreatment rates and other important outcomes. This expansion would focus on programs that have the strongest evidence of important effects, delivered to families at greatest risk. If funded, these dollars will be matched with philanthropic funding.

The agency is also requesting staff to assist with the implementation and coordination of upstream prevention efforts. These roles will be responsible for building community partnerships to enhance the continuum of prevention services across the state for families who are not involved with child welfare. A part of this role will be to train and educate community partners and professionals on alternative resources and strategies to strengthen families and address needs before crises arise. They will also assist with coordination of resources and responding to families screened out at intake for not rising to the level of CWS involvement but who have specific needs, and other families who are at risk of future DSS involvement if their needs are not met. These efforts will play a critical role in preventing child maltreatment and reducing the number of unnecessary reports to DSS.

Child Welfare Caseload Staffing - \$3,531,766 Total Funds; 35.00 Total FTE's

State General Funds - \$2,770,114

Federal Authorization - \$ 726,899

Other Funds - \$ 34,753

The agency is requesting additional Case Manager Assistant positions to assist with improving required documentation, as well as assist staff with transportation needs related to visitation, appointments, etc. This will relieve the burden from our frontline case management staff. The agency also requests additional Team Leader and Team Coordinator positions to achieve established ratios and caseloads as the agency has seen notable success in county offices where the 1:8 ratio is met in reducing caseloads and the quality of casework, practice and metrics have also improved.

Child and Family Team (CFTM) Staffing - \$1,916,806 Total Funds; 18.00 Total FTE's

State General Funds - \$1,118,073

Federal Authorization - \$ 798,733

Other Funds - \$0

The agency is requesting additional staff to assist with the expansion of mandatory pre-removal CFTMs and initial 24-hour CFTMs and will include on call and after hours work for these positions. This work will directly impact foster care entries and the short stayer population in addition to preventing the trauma of entry into foster care for children and young people when it can be avoided. 8 out of 10 youth that have had a CFTM pre-removal have been kept out of foster care.

Foster Family Licensing and Placement Staffing - \$2,068,243 Total Funds; 20.00 Total FTE's

State General Funds - \$1,492,540

Federal Authorization - \$ 460,696

Other Funds - \$ 115,007

As a result of the data indicating we continue to have a need for additional family-like foster homes and the continued struggle with placement resources, we are requesting additional positions to increase capacity for DSS to accept all non-kin, non-therapeutic foster family applicants who desire to have their license managed by the agency. Our recent review into timeliness of licensure showed that our Regional Foster Family Licensing and Support Teams across the state on average are getting all kin and non-kin foster families through the licensure process in less than 90 days, but we're anticipating a higher workload to meet additional needs. We are also

requesting additional Placement Services positions due to the volume, but more importantly, the complex needs of our youth and young adults.

Child Health and Well-Being Staffing - \$1,234,382 Total Funds; 8.00 Total FTE's

State General Funds - \$ 572,884

Federal Authorization - \$ 149,027

Other Funds - \$ 512,471

DSS remains committed to continuing its comprehensive health care plan that provides foster children access to needed physical, dental and mental health treatment. To do this, the agency is requesting additional Healthcare Quality Improvement Coordinators, along with additional Registered Nurse positions to increase compliance with Well Child and Dental visits to ensure we meet the timeliness metrics in the Michelle H Final Settlement Agreement, and to ensure every child in foster care has improved health outcomes.

Child Welfare Services Support Staffing - \$889,461 Total Funds; 11.00 Total FTE's

State General Funds - \$ 514,859

Federal Authorization - \$ 347,003

Other Funds - \$ 27,599

Providing support services to our Child Welfare team is critical to ensure the work continues to move forward. The Child Welfare staffing included in this request will require additional support positions in various DSS offices. This request will provide additional staff to conduct increased training for case management staff, Fair Hearings and Quality Control reviews, provide access to services for non-English speaking families, and investigation capacity.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Domestic Violence Response, Adult Placement Stabilization & Employment Services
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$2,070,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$2,070,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	Goal 1; Strategy 1.1; Measure 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 Goal 2; Strategy 2.1; Measure 2.1.2
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	Domestic Violence Shelters, SNAP recipients needing Employment and Training
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

assistance, Assisted Living Facilities, Nursing Homes

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Domestic Violence Program - \$1,200,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$1,200,000
Federal Authorization - \$ 0
Other Funds - \$ 0

Thirteen (13) domestic violence shelters receive funding each year through the Federal Family Violence Prevention and Services Act grant, Marriage License Fees, TANF Funds, and State General Funds, in accordance with SC Code Section 43-1-205. The funding levels to these 13 shelters has remained consistent for the past several years, however, these programs have experienced cuts in the VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Federal funding, which has severely impacted the operations of the local shelters/programs.

Emergency Stabilization Beds - \$470,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$470,000
Federal Authorization - \$ 0
Other Funds - \$ 0

To meet the safety, health, and well-being needs of vulnerable adults in DSS custody, the agency is requesting funding to secure ten (10) temporary emergency stabilization beds that are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to establish short-term emergency placement until long-term appropriate placement and/or services can be secured, and Medicaid approval is received. These ten beds will serve younger adults between the ages of 18 and 30 who either have a disability or a mental illness, or both.

SNAP Employment & Training Funding - \$400,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$400,000
Federal Authorization - \$0
Other Funds - \$ 0

The amount of federal funds allocated to operate SNAP E&T has decreased annually by approximately \$100,000 over the last three federal fiscal years. The federally allocated funds are expected to continue to decrease over time. 90% of the SNAP E&T Federal grant is based on the number of state work registrant relative to nationwide statistics. The remaining 10% is based on the number of able-bodied adults without dependent children (ABAWD). Funding is not based on the number of participants in the E&T program. Participation in the SNAP E&T program increased by 185 during FY24 – an increase of 6.23%, to a total as of 10/1/24 of 3,153 participants.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Early Care and Education
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$32,000,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$32,000,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	Goal 2; Strategy 2.2; Measure 2.2.1 Goal 2; Strategy 2.2; Measure 2.2.2
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	Child Care teachers and workers; child care providers licensed or regulated by the
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

agency on behalf of working families.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) MOE State Match - \$3,100,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$3,100,000
Federal Authorization - \$ 0
Other Funds - \$ 0

In order to expend the full federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) allocation, the agency is required to match a portion of the federal funding using state general funds. As the federal award amount has increased, the need for additional recurring state appropriations has also increased. If these funds are not received, it will result in fewer child care scholarships for eligible children.

Child Care Scholarships for SC Working Families and Tri-Share Pilot Program - \$2,900,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$2,900,000
Federal Authorization - \$ 0
Other Funds - \$ 0

The agency is requesting an additional \$1.9 million in funding to increase the number of child care scholarships for an estimated 250 children per year. These scholarships would be for families whose income falls between 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) and 300% Federal Poverty Level (FPL). For example, a family of three whose income is between \$70,095 and \$77,460 per year would qualify under this continued expansion. Scholarships would be made on available on a first come, first served basis. Providers must participate in the state’s voluntary ABC Quality program to accept these scholarships.

The agency is also seeking \$1 million in state funding for a pilot program to test a Tri-Share child care funding model developed in the State of Michigan. A South Carolina pilot for a Tri-Share Child Care Program would assist qualifying employees, who work with participating employers, with child care costs. Through this innovative new approach, child care expenses are shared by the employer, the employee, and the State of South Carolina with each contributing one-third of the cost. The initial phase of the pilot program, at the cost of \$1 million, would be developed and deployed with equal funding in Oconee, Cherokee, Greenville, Sumter and Beaufort Counties.

Wage Supplement for Child Care Workers - \$26,000,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$26,000,000
Federal Authorization - \$0
Other Funds - \$ 0

The agency is requesting \$26,000,000 in recurring funds to continue the SC BOOST program, initially created as a pilot program using ARPA Federal funding, to increase job retention among individuals working in direct care positions in the early care and education field. In February 2024, DSS provided a one-time wage supplement to direct care staff who were employed with the same program for six months or more, had a current career ladder level assigned within the SC Endeavors workforce registry, and had a current salary of \$24 per hour or less for teachers, or \$30 per hour or less for directors, owners, and family home/group home providers. 92.3% of those that received the first wage supplement remained in the job and qualified for the second wage supplement in the August/September 2024 timeframe. This represents a 7.7% turnover rate, when the national average for child care center workers is between 15% and 20%.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	4
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Information Technology & Infrastructure
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$2,660,428 Federal: \$1,446,591 Other: \$139,267 Total: \$4,246,286
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	Goal 3; Strategy 3.1; Measure 3.1.1 Goal 3; Strategy 3.2; Measure 3.2.1 Goal 4; Strategy 4.1; Measure 4.1.1
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

	Information Technology and professional service providers and contractors
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RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Microsoft 365 Enterprise and Unified Support - \$3,778,679 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$2,233,955
Federal Authorization - \$1,409,070
Other Funds - \$ 135,654

DSS upgraded its Office 365 Tenant to G5 in late 2021 utilizing available one-time funding. The agency must now request recurring funding for licenses for all Microsoft Office 365 G5 products for approximately 5,000 end users. Since upgrading to the Microsoft G5 tenant, the agency has seen a broad spectrum of security enhancements, especially with the volume of PII data DSS handles, improved productivity due to the array of tools available, and greater mobility. Most large State agencies, including DHHS, SOR, DEW, and DHEC, also rely on this software version.

Funding is also needed for Microsoft Unified support and Cybersecurity Incident Response. This provides the needed technical support and warranty for all Microsoft services for the entire agency, includes training materials at no additional cost, and an advanced suite of on-demand reports that improve our ability to secure and monitor our network.

Katana Safety Devices - \$ 366,982 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$366,982
Federal Authorization - \$ 0
Other Funds - \$ 0

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Healthcare and Social Service workers are nearly five times as likely to suffer a serious workplace violence injury than workers in other sectors. KATANA Safety is the only device that attaches directly to any smartphone and in case of emergency, bypasses the phone's lock screen via the patented quick trigger device activation to provide employees with instant help. The KATANA technology establishes a vital connection between our frontline case management employees and the 24/7 emergency response center providing round-the-clock protection, no matter where an employee is located, or what situation they are in. The 24/7 response center can be accessed anytime employees feel uncomfortable or unsafe, enabling KATANA to dispatch appropriate emergency services directly to their exact GPS location. Employee feedback continues to indicate that physical safety for frontline staff is a significant retention factor.

Agency Policy Software - \$ 65,000 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$38,429
Federal Authorization - \$ 24,237
Other Funds - \$ 2,334

This request is for a software to assist with managing the policy development and lifecycle process for all agency policies. This will create one central location for all policies, promote policy collaboration, and improve policy communication. A policy software will also allow the agency to have document control and security, version controls, and compliance tracking.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) - \$ 35,625 Total Funds

State General Funds - \$21,062
Federal Authorization - \$ 13,284
Other Funds - \$ 1,279

AEDs are critical lifesaving devices that significantly increase the chances of survival for cardiac arrest victims, with OSHA reporting that they can boost survival rates by up to 60%. Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of death in the United States and can occur at any time, to people of all ages. Over 95% of these deaths happen before the victim reaches the hospital, but early intervention with an AED can dramatically improve outcomes. Deploying 75 AEDs across the state will ensure that buildings with multiple floors are adequately equipped with these lifesaving devices.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	5
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Economic Services System Application Modernization (ESSAM) – DDI Phase
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$35,401,362
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	This decision package focuses on the agency's technology infrastructure, which supports the entire agency, and relates to the four defined goals, as listed in the Agency Accountability Report.
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	Professional Service Providers and Contractors
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What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon

**JUSTIFICATION
OF REQUEST**

Economic Services System Application Modernization - \$35,401,362 Total Funds

\$18,590,812 State General Funds
\$16,810,550 Federal Authorization

The Department is requesting nonrecurring state funds to cover a portion of the design, development, and implementation phase for the Economic Services System Application Modernization (ESSAM) project, which will replace agency's 36-year-old legacy Mainframe SNAP and TANF Eligibility Systems. These systems are responsible for determining eligibility and issuing benefit payments to over 300,000 households and over 630,000 individuals, receiving nearly \$2 billion in annual benefit payments.

The outdated technology required to maintain the current legacy system no longer meets modern business/operational needs. The programming language used in the legacy system is no longer used in modern enterprise systems, and the programmer skillsets required to maintain the system are costly, and often no longer available. Due to the age of the system, DSS no longer has the ability make system changes and provide appropriate enhancements to improve client experience, benefit timeliness, or program integrity and operational efficiency/effectiveness, posing major risks to the State.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) was released late last year, and the agency is currently engaged in evaluation and negotiations based on responses received to the DDI RFP. System design and development will begin during FY2024-2025, with an estimated FY25 total cost of \$24.2 million, and an overall total estimated design, development, and implementation project cost of \$93.9 million, approximately 50% of which will be funded with federal dollars.

Current estimates show the design, development, testing, and implementation phases of the project spanning until FY26-27. As communicated previously, in addition to the FY25-26 request, along with the FY23-24 and FY24-25 non-recurring appropriations received, DSS intends to request additional non-recurring state appropriations for the approximately 50% in required state matching funds for the duration of the project, followed by associated ongoing maintenance and support matching funds, following system deployment.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	38.14
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE	Family Foster Care Payments
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	II. Foster Family Care Payments
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	Priority #1 – Enhancing the Future of South Carolina's Children and Families
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2025-2026? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Amend
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	None
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>This proviso was first adopted in FY2002-2003. The rates in this proviso are amended annually as needed based on inflation, to provide funding for the basic needs of foster children, including kinship care assistance.</p> <p>Ages – Old Rate 0-5 \$670 Per Month 6-12 \$783 Per Month 13+ \$827 Per Month</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

This amendment would result in an increase in the amount foster parents receive for the needs of foster children in their care, and it would meet the US Department of Agriculture cost of raising a child study.

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

PROPOSED PROVISO TEXT

The Department of Social Services shall furnish as Family Foster Care payments for individual foster children under their sponsorship and under kinship care:

Ages 0-5 ~~\$670~~ **\$700** per month

Ages 6-12 ~~\$783~~ **\$818** per month

Ages 13+ ~~\$827~~ **\$863** per month

These specified amounts are for the basic needs of the foster children to include kinship care assistance. Basic needs within this proviso are identified as food (at home and away), clothing, housing, transportation, education, and other costs as defined in the U.S. Department of Agriculture study of the Annual Cost of Raising a Child to Age Eighteen.

Further, each agency shall identify and justify, as another line item, all material and/or services, in excess of those basic needs listed above, which were a direct result of a professional agency evaluation of clientele need. Legitimate medical care in excess of Medicaid reimbursement or such care not recognized by Medicaid may be considered as special needs if approved by the sponsoring/responsible agency and shall be reimbursed by the sponsoring agency in the same manner of reimbursing other special needs of foster children.

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM D – PROVISIO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	38.2
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE	Recovered State Funds
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	NA
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	NA
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2025-2026? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Amend
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	None
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>The agency is requesting updates to Federal program names, office names, and other wording changes.</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

NA

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

**PROPOSED
PROVISO TEXT**

38.2 DSS: Recovered State Funds) The department shall withhold a portion of the State Funds recovered, under the Title IV-D Program, for credit to the general fund in order to allow full participation in the ~~federal "set-off"~~ **Federal Tax Refund Offset** program offered through the ~~Internal Revenue Service~~ **Bureau of the Fiscal Service**, the withholding of unemployment insurance benefits through the Department of Employment and Workforce and reimbursement for expenditures related to ~~blood testing~~ **genetic testing**. Such funds may not be expended for any other purpose. The Department of Social Services shall be allowed to utilize the State share of Federally required fees, collected from non-TANF clients, in the administration of the ~~Child Support Enforcement Program~~ **Child Support Services Division**. Such funds may not be expended for any other purpose. However, this shall not include ~~Child Support Enforcement Program~~ **Child Support Services Division** incentives paid to the program from federal funds to encourage and reward cost effective performance. Such incentives are to be reinvested in the program to increase collections of support at the state and county levels in a manner consistent with federal laws and regulations governing such incentive payments. The department shall not use clerk of court incentive funds to replace agency operating funds. Such funds shall be remitted to the appropriate state governmental entity to further child support collection efforts.

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	38.23
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE	Internal Child Fatality Review Committee
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	NA
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	NA
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2025-2026? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Amend
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	None
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>The agency is requesting to amend this proviso to remove the fiscal year reference to eliminate the need for amendment every year to simply update the fiscal year. No other changes are being proposed.</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

NA

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

**PROPOSED
PROVISO TEXT**

~~For Fiscal Year 2024-25,~~ The Department of Social Services shall continue the work of the Internal Child Fatality Review Committees (internal committees) pursuant to the authority granted in Sections 43-1-60(3), 43-1-80, and 63-7-910(E) of the 1976 Code to allow for the rapid and expeditious review of reported child fatalities that are reported to the Department of Social Services on suspicion of abandonment, child abuse, neglect or harm as defined in Section 63-7-20. This review process will enable the department to respond to the safety needs of any surviving siblings and will lead to improvement in the department's efforts to prevent child fatalities caused by abandonment, child abuse, neglect or harm. Each internal committee shall be composed of a board-certified child abuse pediatrician, an agent from the State Law Enforcement Division, a local law enforcement officer, a representative from the local coroner's office, and representatives from the Department of Social Services. The internal committee may invite other service provider organizations as deemed necessary. The department is authorized to provide reasonable compensation for board-certified child abuse pediatricians serving on an internal committee. Internal committees shall have access to information and records maintained by a provider of medical care regarding a child whose death is being reviewed by the internal committee, including information on prenatal care; all information and records maintained by any state, county, or local government agency, including, but not limited to, birth certificates, law enforcement investigation data, county coroner or medical examiner investigation data, parole and probation information and records, and information and records of health agencies that provided services to the child or family. The meetings, information obtained by reports prepared by, and statements made before the internal committees are confidential and protected from disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, criminal and civil proceedings, and subpoenas as set forth in Sections 63-7-940 and 63-7-1990.

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	38.26
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE	Wilderness Therapeutic Camps
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	NA
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	NA
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2025-2026? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Delete
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	None
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>The agency is requesting the deletion of this proviso since this language is covered in the South Carolina Code of Regulations 114-600 (17).</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

NA

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

**PROPOSED
PROVISO TEXT**

~~(DSS: Wilderness Therapeutic Camps) The Department of Social Services shall make and promulgate such rules and regulations relating to licensing standards and other matters as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of Title 63, Chapter 11, Article 1 of the 1976 Code as applied to Wilderness Therapeutic Camps. For this purpose, a "Wilderness Therapeutic Camp" is a therapeutic camp organization or facility with an outdoor or wilderness focus that is engaged in receiving children for care and maintenance, either part or full time, but shall not include any summer camp, day camp, or after school program, and shall also not include any other outdoor education or youth development program or facility where participants usually attend for less than 15 days, and does not include any licensed residential group care organization, child caring institution or group home or facility that meets the facility requirements of S.C. Code of Regulations Section 114-590.~~

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER

38.27

Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").

TITLE

Group Home Transition

Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM

NA

Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST

NA

Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2025-2026? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION

Delete

Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED

None

Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION

The agency is requesting the deletion of this proviso. Supervised Independent Living regulations were repealed in 2021, and all group homes must follow South Carolina Code of Regulations Chapters 114-590 through 114-595, regardless of the age of the young adult.

Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

FISCAL IMPACT

NA

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

**PROPOSED
PROVISO TEXT**

~~(DSS: Group Home Transition) For the current fiscal year, the Department of Social Services shall provide financial and administrative support and flexibility to Group Homes in order to best enable any necessary transition of services or the development of new service models for children and young adults. Group Homes with young adults between the ages of 18 to 23 years residing in approved and supervised independent living programs shall not be required to provide 24 hours per day face to face supervision for the resident. Regulatory and contractual requirements must not be different for supervision and staff ratios when a young adult aged 18 to 23 is a resident in an approved and supervised independent living program.~~

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$9,483,285
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What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	NA
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How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	<p>To meet a three percent reduction in general funds expenditures, DSS would reduce active contracts, excluding those under which services are delivered directly to clients. The reduction of these contracts would hinder the agency's ability to continue to perform certain services necessary for the proper administration of DSS. The agency would also execute a two-week furlough of all staff whose compensation is \$50,000 or more, putting a strain on staff and their families. Lastly, DSS would eliminate its current forecasted vacant positions, excluding frontline case managers, putting a heavier burden on current staff who are already absorbing an increased workload.</p>
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	<p>3% Reduction State General Funds Reduction \$9,483,285 Total Funds (100% State Funds)</p> <p>Description of Reduction Amount: Contract Reductions \$2,566,434 Furlough staff making \$50,000 and over for 10 days \$1,868,675 Eliminate forecasted vacant positions, except frontline case managers \$5,048,176</p>
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

NA

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

Agency Name:	Department Of Social Services		
Agency Code:	L040	Section:	38

FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

TITLE	DSS – Reducing Cost and Burden to Businesses and Citizens
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS	See narratives with amounts below
----------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------

What is the expected savings to South Carolina’s businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark “X” for all that apply: <table border="1"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Repeal or revision of regulations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Other</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal or revision of regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal or revision of regulations.								
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.								
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other								

METHOD OF CALCULATION	NA
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Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.

REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES	Elimination of background check fees for childcare providers.
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Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?

REDUCTION OF REGULATION	NA
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Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?

	<p>The agency continued to utilize stimulus funding to provide numerous supports to child care providers throughout the pandemic and beyond. The agency received \$955M in child care federal stimulus funding, and as of 9/30/24, all of those funds have been either expended or obligated.</p> <p>In February 2024, the agency launched a pilot one-time wage supplement program for child care teachers to help increase retention. Eligible direct care staff employed in a child care facility regulated by DSS received a supplement meeting certain criteria. DSS approved SC BOOST payments for over 9,000 child care teachers.</p> <p>The agency stopped charging child care centers for background check fees, effective with the 2021-2022 fiscal year, and this practice continues. This has reduced the burden on these centers by between \$175,000 and \$200,000 per year.</p> <p>The agency issued a final round of Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits in August 2023 for 536,918 K-12 students, putting approximately \$65M in additional federal benefits into the hands of South Carolina families and the state’s economy.</p> <p>South Carolina used the Pandemic Emergency Assistance Funds to issue over \$1M to active child-only TANF recipients in October 2023. 3,293 active TANF households (over 5,500 children) received a one-time payment of \$200 per child.</p> <p>The Healthy Bucks program provides coupons allowing SNAP recipients to obtain additional fresh fruits and vegetables when purchasing fresh produce at grocery stores or farmers markets with SNAP benefits through their EBT cards. Each coupon allows the recipient to double the amount of produce purchased. DSS expanded the types of vendors authorized to participate in the Healthy Bucks program to include small grocery stores and convenience stores, allowing greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables for</p>
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SUMMARY

SNAP recipients. The agency increased from 47 active Healthy Bucks vendors in 2022 to 53 in 2023, and 57 in 2024.

Employment Services staff collaborated with Economic Services County Operations staff to improve the referral process between SNAP eligibility and SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) programs, and increased SNAP E&T enrollments, which assisted 935 South Carolina TANF and SNAP E&T program participants obtain employment.

The agency has spent approximately \$460,000 as of 9/30/24 in Federal stimulus funding for home remediation and stabilization items to help adults remain in their home and to prevent adults from coming into DSS custody or being placed in an institution.

The agency has built and developed many online portals to allow easier access for the public to utilize DSS services. These portals include a Report Abuse and Neglect (RAN) Web portal for the public to submit Child Welfare and APS referrals via our dss.sc.gov site 24x7, a Child and Adult Information Portal for Foster parents to access and update information on DSS Children placed in their care, a Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) web portal, a New South Carolina Client Eligibility System web portal for SNAP/TANF Online Applications, a GEER Grant portal for qualified Group Home Providers to apply for operations reimbursement, a Child Support Client Portal for CP and NCPs to access their Child Support case information on-line, a SNAP to Work Portal for Providers to input Employment and Training hours and invoices on DSS referrals, an Office of General Counsel Contract Attorneys portal for contract attorneys to submit employment applications with DSS, a Child Care Emergency Operations Grant portal, a Child Care License Payments Portal to process payments for Central Registry and Licensing fees, a Child Care Temporary Operations Application Portal to allow temporary childcare applicants to submit on-line applications to operate childcare facilities, a P-EBT Address Verification Portal for qualified parents and students to verify their addresses before benefit issuance and card delivery, a P-EBT Case and Benefit Inquiry portal for qualified parents and students to retrieve information on their Case status and Benefits issuance, a Child Care Scholarships Portal, a PATHWAYS Scholarship Portal, a DSS Internship Application Portal, a Child and Adult Information Portal (Foster Parent Portal), a new re-designed State Directory of New Hires Portal (newhire.sc.gov), a new re-designed Child Support portal for case and payments inquiries, and CP online applications submittals, an Individual and Provider Rights Interpreter Billing portal, and a SNAP and TANF Benefits Inquiry Portal.

Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?