# WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §49-2-111C

**§49-2-111c. Priorities for use of funds.**

(a) Subject to appropriations by the Legislature, the department shall:

(1) Enhance and increase efforts to provide services to prevent the removal of children from their homes;

(2) Identify relatives and fictive kin of children in need of placement outside of the home;

(3) Train kinship parents to become certified foster parents;

(4) Expand a tiered foster care system that provides higher payments for foster parents providing care to, and child placing agencies providing services to, foster children who have severe emotional, behavioral, or intellectual problems or disabilities, with particular emphasis upon removing children in congregate care and placing them with suitable foster parents; and

(b) (1) The department shall develop and implement a web-based communication system which shall either be incorporated into the existing child welfare information technology system or be developed and implemented through the purchase of additional products that can be used in conjunction with the existing child welfare technology system. The web-based communication system shall communicate with and pull information from the existing child welfare information technology system. The components of the system may be implemented incrementally, except that §49-2-111c(b)(2)(B) of this code, shall be implemented on or before July 1, 2025, with the project completed on or before July 1, 2026.

(2) The system shall:

(A) Ensure that permission access to utilize the system about a foster child is granted to only those parties with legal responsibilities to care for and support the foster child;

(B) Facilitate communications between those individuals involved in the child welfare system, including, but not limited to, foster parent or kinship parent requests and responses to requests to staff of the Bureau for Social Services and their contractual designees;

(C) Provide information regarding visitation, appointments, travel, and other services available to the foster child;

(D) Provide information regarding court hearings, meetings with guardian ad litem, multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, and provide other communications that may improve care for the foster child amongst designated parties with legal responsibilities to care for the foster child;

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(E) Provide health records for the foster child to the foster parent or kinship parent by connecting with existing health care systems;

(F) Have the capacity to archive communications for the purpose of running reports on responsiveness by parties in the child welfare system; and

(G) Be created to prevent the input of the redundant information.

(3) On or before July 1, 2026, and quarterly thereafter, the department shall analyze and evaluate the average time it takes a child protective service worker to update the web-based communication system with the information required in this section. The department shall also evaluate the child protective service worker's response time to requests made in the web-based communications system from foster parents and kinship parents. This analysis shall be shared with the Foster Care Ombudsman and presented to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Health and Human Resources Accountability on or before July 1, 2026, and annually thereafter.

(4) On or before December 31, 2024, the Department of Human Services shall submit a report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Health and Human Resources setting forth an overview of the status of implementation of the web-based communication system set forth in this section. The report shall contain, at a minimum, timelines for completion of the web-based communication system and projected expenditures.

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