

**NEWS RELEASE | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**      APRIL 28, 2020

## **Human Services seeks public comments on draft plan to provide Title IV-E prevention services to reduce the need for foster care**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services is accepting public comments on its draft 2020-2024 Title IV-E Prevention Services and Programs Plan. The goal is to protect children, provide children and families with supportive services and reduce the need for foster care. Comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. CT on May 12, 2020.

The draft plan allows North Dakota to access federal Title IV-E funding for prevention services for children and youth at risk of foster care placement and their families, including evidence-based mental health and substance abuse treatment and recovery support services and in-home parent skill-based programs such as parenting skills training, parent education and individual and family counseling.

“The 2018 federal Family First Prevention Services Act was an important turning point for child welfare services. For the first time, we will be able to use Title IV-E funding to help children and families before they get into deep-end services rather than afterward,” said Cory Pedersen, Children and Family Services director. “This state plan will help prevent children from entering foster care. Instead, children will be able to remain safely in their homes as families are strengthened through prevention services.”

In October 2019, North Dakota became one of the first 11 states to implement the new law. Children at risk of out-of-home placement and who have an active case plan to keep them safely in their homes, their parents or caregivers, and a foster child who is pregnant or parenting children are eligible for the prevention programs, he said.

“A tremendous amount of collaboration has occurred to create the draft plan,” Pedersen said. “This will result in profound and long-lasting positive change for the individuals we serve.”

The draft 2020-2024 Title IV-E Prevention Services and Programs Plan is online for review at [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily).

Individuals can submit comments by email to [dhscfs@nd.gov](mailto:dhscfs@nd.gov) or by fax to 701-328-3538. Interested individuals can also submit comments by mail to the North Dakota Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division, Attn: Title IV-E Prevention Plan, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 325, Bismarck, N.D., 58505-0250.

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After review of the public comments, the draft plan will be submitted to the federal Children’s Bureau for review and approval.

On April 1, 2020, there were 1,623 children in foster care in North Dakota. Pedersen said the new focus on prevention services will help reduce that number, and the state should begin seeing results once the plan is approved and fully implemented.

For more information on the implementation of the 2018 Family First Prevention Services Act in North Dakota, visit [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/family-first.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/family-first.html).

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