

Fiscal Year 2026-27 Needs- Based Plan & Budget

Commonwealth of
Pennsylvania

Office of Children, Youth
and Families

**NEEDS-BASED PLAN AND BUDGET
NARRATIVE TEMPLATE**

Budget Narrative Template

The following pages provide a template for counties to use to complete the narrative portion of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan and Budget (NBPB). All narrative pieces should be included in this template; no additional narrative is necessary. Detailed instructions for completing each section are in the NBPB Bulletin, Instructions & Appendices. As a reminder, this is a public document; using the names of children, families, office staff, and Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) staff within the narrative is inappropriate.

Avoid duplication within the narrative by referencing other responses as needed.

All text must be in either 11-point Arial or 12-point Times New Roman font, and all margins (bottom, top, left, and right) must be 1 inch.

Note: On the following page, once the county inserts its name in the gray shaded text, headers throughout the document will automatically populate with the county name. Enter the county name by clicking on the gray shaded area and typing in the name.

Tioga

NBPB
FYs 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27

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Section 2: NBPB Development

1-1: Executive Summary

- Respond to the following questions.
- ❑ Identify the top three successes and challenges realized by the CCYA since its most recent NBPB submission.

This document will serve as Tioga County's submission of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Implementation Plan and the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan. The primary goals for Tioga County are a continuation of efforts initiated in the previous Needs-Based Plan. Building capacity in our leadership, enhancing our workplace environment, and providing child-centered case management are identified initiatives. We have seen success and challenges in each of these areas.

- ❑ Summarize additional information, including findings, related to the CCYAs annual inspection and Quality Services Review (QSR)/Child Family Service Review (CFSR) findings that will impact the county's planning and resource needs for FYs 2025-26 and 2026-27.

We are in the second year of building capacity in our leadership. This has been an intentionally layered effort. We established an annual calendar for these efforts where the different levels of our management meet separately and collectively in a regular rotating pattern. The upper management level consists of Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Director, and Managers. This group meets bi-monthly to have high-level discussions about the Department. These discussions involve analyzing systemic issues, reflecting on past and present processes, and visioning for the future. There is always a professional development component incorporated to build upon the successes of the group and move the collective thinking forward. The next layer of leadership is our supervisors. Supervisors join the upper management quarterly in Full Management Meetings. These meetings also include a training element that serves to gain deeper insights into the areas and ideas upper management is grappling with. The Full Management group will then engage in collaborative problem solving and brainstorming. Tioga County continues to take advantage of the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) support through the CWRC for some of these meetings. This cycle of leadership development and decision making has generated several definitive actions in combating the current significant challenges of employee recruitment and retention, becoming more preventative in services, and dealing with increased Kinship Placement numbers.

One way we have chosen to address these challenges is through enhancing the workplace environment. Staff turnover and rising Kinship Placements continue to generate above average workloads for our entire CCYA department. Through our leadership efforts, we determined that reinstating a designated Placement Unit would enhance the workplace environment. Placement cases are more complex due to Court involvement and multiple caregivers. The additional demands of placement cases need to be considered in the ways we distribute cases and balance workloads. Along with establishing a Placement Unit, we are encouraging Supervisors to incorporate reflective aspects in the ways they support Caseworkers. Prioritizing the reflective piece for staff will equip those same staff to work reflectively with families. The reorganization of our department, establishing the Placement Unit, and regular reflective practices will help define boundaries and build bridges in the workplace.

Keeping our case management child centered seems like an unnecessary initiative. There is a natural assumption that Child Welfare work is child centered. However, the reality that Tioga County struggles with is that the work can become outcomes centered, or documentation centered, or Court centered, etc. A truly child centered department is dependent on the guiding

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values of its leaders. Again, through our leadership development, we are learning that being intentional about how we operate as a team impacts our ability to provide quality services and case management. Striving to be both preventative and trauma informed, we are revisiting the teaming approach to case work. All families receiving Ongoing C&Y services will have a team of professionals available to them. Teams will include case management, service providers, and support staff in combinations that meet the individual needs of each family. The teaming approach will be doubly effective as the Specialized Services staff will be transitioning back to Tioga County from SAM Inc. and all under like-minded leadership. Leadership's oversight of teams will be driven by consistent examination of how the child(ren) are being affected.

- ❑ Identify the top three successes and challenges realized by JPO since its most recent NBPB submission.

The Tioga County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA) and Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) continue to work together to improve services for our local youth. During the past year, we've seen Residential Placement numbers decrease, while Kinship Placement numbers have increased. This has shifted our joint focus somewhat. CCYA and JPO revised the Memorandum of Understanding and have experienced strengthened communications.

- ❑ Summarize any additional areas, including efforts related to the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES) and the data and trends related to the Youth Level of Service (YLS) domains and risk levels impacting the county's planning and resource needs for FYs 2025-26 and 2026-27.

- **REMINDER:** This is intended to be a high-level description of county strengths, challenges, and forward direction. Specific details regarding practice and resource needs will be captured in other sections of the budget submission.

Tioga County Probation continues efforts to work effectively with Juveniles. During the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy planning process, Juvenile Probation recognized that another Master Trainer for the Youth Level of Service (YLS) Risk Assessment was a need. In the Fall of 2024, two officers attended the Master Training Course. This has benefited the Department in being able to complete more timely and efficient assessments.

Tioga County JPO has been successful through the year with case planning. The Case Plan Coordinator attended training in November 2024. The training was beneficial and included how to understand the fundamental elements of case planning and connecting the YLS to the planning process. The training also addressed, including all aspects of case planning and engaging youth, family, and providers collectively in the process.

The Department continues to work well with the schools, and the District Attorney's office concerning Juveniles. This year was somewhat challenging with more adjudications being sought by the DA's office for youth offenders. The desire for Juveniles to have the opportunity for expungement can limit their ability to participate in Rehabilitation Programs.

Tioga County JPO continues to face challenges with detention bed space and complex cases such as sexual offender services. The department is contracted with two Detention Facilities in Pennsylvania, and one out of State. JPO continues to utilize their in-county resources to accommodate the needs of Juveniles who are at risk of recommitting offenses but often experience waiting lists for service providers due to our rural area. Tioga County JPO still struggles with finding Outpatient Services for the Juveniles after discharge from sex offender placements.

In the past year, JPO totaled 41 referrals and closed 21 cases. Referrals have slightly decreased over this year, but Tioga County JPO continues to see an increase in placement of Juveniles. The 2024 average YLS scoring data reveals Juveniles are at a moderate risk level overall. There are

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times when there is a need for Inpatient Treatment Placement, but Tioga County JPO works with Outpatient Service Providers to lessen the risk of having an Inpatient Placement. The JPOs continue to implement evidence-based practices in an effort to lower the risk of recidivism among Juveniles.

1-2: Determination of Need through Collaboration Efforts

- Respond to the following questions.
- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of staff, consumers, communities, and stakeholders in determining how best to provide services that meet the identified needs of children, youth, and families in the county. Describe the county's use of data analysis with the stakeholders toward the identification of practice improvement areas. Counties must utilize a Data Analysis Team as described in the NBPB Bulletin Guidelines, Section 2-4: Program Improvement Strategies. The Data Analysis Team membership should be reflective of the entities identified. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improvement. Counties do NOT need to identify activities with EACH entity highlighted in the instruction guidelines but provide an overview of activities and process by which input has been gathered and utilized in the planning process. Address engagement of the courts, service providers, and County Juvenile Probation Offices separately (see next three questions).
- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of contracted service providers in identifying service level trends, strengths and gaps in service arrays and corresponding resource needs. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improvement in the engagement of service providers in the NBPB process.

The Tioga County Commissioners have delegated responsibility for Human Service planning to the Tioga County Department of Human Services (TCDHS). Planning for Human Services is an ongoing process within the Department. The Human Service Administrator bears responsibility for service development decisions regarding the Plan and acts on behalf of the Tioga County Board of Commissioners. The Department of Human Services is responsible for collaborating with all systems to benefit the client populations. The Department is responsible for writing the C&Y Needs-Based Plan, the Human Services Block Grant and any other annual plans required by the State. The Tioga County Department of Human Services Administrator believes in the team approach and seeks collaboration by using several teams that review cases regularly.

These teams include:

- Placement Alternatives: Meet weekly to review active or prospective placement cases, as well as discuss permanency options.
- SPT (Service Planning Team): Meet weekly to review all cases open for service.
- MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team): Meet quarterly to review cases that have multiple reports of abuse or neglect.
- MDIT (Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Team): Meet monthly to review CPS cases, plan for case handling, encourages collaborative efforts.
- CPS (Child Protective Service) Review Team: Meet weekly to review CPS investigations.
- Children's Roundtable: Meet quarterly and has active participation with stakeholders from the community.
- DEC (Drug Endangered Children): Meet monthly to discuss drug issues in the County with stakeholders from the community
- Monthly meetings are held between the C&Y Case Management Staff and SAM Inc. to discuss service provision, waiting lists, case reviews and other topics.
- Meetings between SAM, Inc. and the C&Y Administrator as needed.

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- Quarterly meetings with MH / D&A Providers.
- FEI (Family Engagement Initiative) Leadership Meetings: Meet quarterly to review progress.
- OE (Organizational Effectiveness) / CI (Continuous Improvement) Team as needed.

Tioga County participates in several meetings throughout the year that assist in gathering data for the Needs Based Planning process. The Drug Endangered Children's (DEC) served as the annual community stakeholder meeting this year. DEC holds monthly meetings throughout the year; participants invited to this meeting include local schools, Drug and Alcohol SCA, Nurse Family Partnership, Mental Health Providers, Head Start, Parenting Providers, After School Programs, Probation, and Law Enforcement. Often during these monthly meetings presentations are given to the group to provide information and feedback regarding available services or resources within Tioga County. These conversations often lead to discussions regarding identified trends and service gaps within Tioga County.

Tioga County continues to participate in the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) and Continuous Improvement (CI) process with the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC). Tioga County's largest in-home provider, SAM Inc., also participates in both OE and CI. This process continues to be beneficial as it allows for discussion regarding trends, services gaps and needs to both the case management and provider side. Tioga County's local Children's Roundtable meets quarterly throughout the year. This is another great opportunity to discuss the needs of children and families we serve with community stakeholders.

This July marks one full year since Tioga County ended the contract with SAM Inc. and transitioned all In-Home case management and Support Staff back to Tioga County. As of July 2026, Tioga County will end the provider contract with SAM Inc. and all Children and Youth provider staff will transition back to Tioga County. This will unite the child and youth workforce under one umbrella with the desired goal of functioning as one department. Leadership meetings are ongoing regarding the transition with the purpose of identifying the needs of the children and families we serve and the staff who will be impacted by this transition. The goal is to make this transition as seamless as possible.

Throughout the year, data is gathered from the above-mentioned meetings. As barriers or service gaps are identified, Tioga County works within the existing budget, and with providers, on resolving any issues. If additional funding is needed, it is noted and reviewed during the writing of the plan.

- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of the courts in the NBPB process, specifically identification of strengths and gaps in service arrays and corresponding resource needs. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improved engagement with the courts.

TCDHS works closely with the Court throughout the year. TCDHS and the Judge facilitate FEI and Judge's Roundtable meeting together. During both of those meetings, time is given to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and service needs. Feedback given at those meetings help guide topics and information provided in the Needs-Based Plan. Our FEI core team attended the FEI conference in April. The team was encouraged to talk about ways to improve our practice, and things needed to make that happen. One approach has been to re-establish specialized Placement Units within the Department. Caseworkers with more experience and comfortableness with Placement Cases were chosen to meet this need. Weekly Attorney meetings continue to occur to discuss cases and help build relationships between Attorneys and Casework Staff.

- ❑ Summarize activities related to active engagement of the County's Juvenile Probation Office in the NBPB process, specifically the identification of in-home, prevention or rehabilitative services needed to assist with discharge of delinquent youth from out-of-home care or

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decreasing recidivism. Identify any challenges to collaboration and efforts toward improved engagement in the NBPB process.

Tioga County JPO continues to enhance sustainable engagement with stakeholders to provide a balanced and restorative Justice System. The JJSES initiative is critical to identify the efforts in implementing Evidence-Based and Fundamental Fair Juvenile Justice Systems. Through regular meetings, training, involvement in committees, and the sharing of data and information. Tioga County JPO provides opportunities to guide, educate, and learn from our key partners to collectively work together to enhance Juvenile Justice Services to youth, victims, and communities.

Tioga County Probation continues efforts to work with Juveniles. JPO's require the Juvenile to complete "Forward Thinking" booklets as a goal in their case plans. Each booklet identifies specific needs for the Juvenile. There are 10 different "Forward Thinking" booklets with activities for the Juvenile to reflect on. Juvenile Probation bases the responses of the booklet on giving incentives and / or sanctions in graduate responses activities. Juvenile Probation continues to see good success with them.

- ☐ Identify any strengths and challenges engaging and coordinating with law enforcement on Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Teams (MDIT) and in joint investigations of child abuse.

Strengths: MDIT continues to meet monthly to discuss new reports and get updates on pending cases. Law Enforcement, including State Police and Local Police, continue to participate in meetings. Senior Staff with CYS have built relationships with Law Enforcement to make communication easier. CY 104 notifications allow staff to know if a case is being sent to Law Enforcement, and if a delay perpetrator's notification needs to happen.

Challenges: Recent turnover with State Police that were doing joint child abuse investigations. Coordinating appointments for a CAC interview due to different work schedules and timeframes. Since timeframes are different, getting outcomes on cases may take several months.

1-3 Program and Resource Implications

- **Do not address the initiatives in Section 1-3 unless requested below;** address any resource needs related to all initiatives by identifying and addressing within the ADJUSTMENT TO EXPENDITURE request.

1-3b. Workforce

Please respond to the following questions regarding the county's current workforce recruitment and retention efforts:

- ☐ Identify successes the county has experienced implementing recruitment and retention strategies since its most recent NBPB submission.
- ☐ Identify major challenges impacting the county's workforce recruitment and retention experience since its most recent NBPB submission.
- ☐ Describe the county's efforts and strategies to address employee recruitment and retention challenges and needs since its most recent NBPB submission. Identify whether the county has obtained any data or collected feedback on effort/strategies implemented to assess effectiveness.
- ☐ Identify key areas where technical assistance may be needed in this area.

Tioga County continues to struggle with workforce development. However, we did experience a slight uptick in the number of staff we hired this year. There were fifteen new employees. This can be attributed, in part, to increased attention to ongoing advertising of casework positions and considering all potential resources for candidates. We have begun to leave our basic caseworker job position posting up consistently rather than taking it up and down for specific openings. This

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has allowed a continuous flow of potential applicants. We've also begun following up on all applications that come in from our county website and from INDEED. In several situations, this has provided opportunity to discuss a variety of job possibilities with a candidate rather than simply disqualifying them for a specific position. Unfortunately, Tioga CCYA also experienced seven resignations and two terminations. Four of the resignations were staff taking the next steps in their professional careers, and we contributed three to the difficulties of the Child Welfare field. Throughout the ebb and flow of staffing, Tioga has maintained an approximate 70% employment rate.

Tioga County did implement some of the guidance from the 2024 OCYF Recruitment and Retention Study. We increased hourly rates and starting rates for case workers, supervisors, and managers. Accomplishing this was a major challenge for Tioga County due to the transitioning of staff back to the county from SAM Inc. Pay rates and ranges were very misaligned from SAM to County. County Commissioners worked diligently with administration to enact intentional adjustments to individual compensation to eliminate the pay discrepancies and establish equality for all employees. County Commissioners have also been very involved in this NBPB cycle and the proposed increases that will make Tioga County social work salaries more comparable to our neighboring counties.

Tioga County continues focused efforts on improving the organizational culture in ways that will support staff retention. Data from our 2024 PAWS report reinforced our goals of building capacity, professional development, and staff appreciation. Our tiered leadership meetings continue to drive organizational changes. The most significant change being a reorganizing of our case management staff to apply a more specialized approach to casework. We have also established a supervisor focus group consisting of a high performing supervisor from each area in the department. This purpose of this focus group is to identify needs, develop solutions, and implement strategies within the supervisor layer of management to create unity and consistency throughout the department. Our departmental professional development days this year have included full-day training events on the topics of *Domestic Violence* and *Self Defense*. We provide lunch for staff and an appreciation gift.

Tioga County created a Staff Relations position that will be filled by Sept. 1, 2025. The position was developed with staff recruitment and retention in mind. Primary tasks for the role include working with community and academic entities to establish partnerships for active ongoing recruitment. Additionally, the role will provide another layer of support for our newly hired and struggling staff to help them through those challenging periods. We are very excited to add this position to our agency and for our staff to experience the benefits.

1-3c. Service Array

Please respond to the following questions regarding the county's current service array and identification of gap areas that will be addressed through the plan:

- ☐ Through the data analysis and stakeholder discussions in the development of the plan, identify any strengths in existent resources and service array available to address the needs of the children, youth and families served.

Tioga County continues to hold monthly DEC meetings with community stakeholders. Our typical attendees continue to be Local Schools, SCA, Nurse Family Partnership, Mental Health Providers, Head Start, Parenting Providers, After School Program, and Local IU. During the year, presentations have been given to the group to provide information and feedback. The presentations have provided information on available services for both children and adults that can aid in healthy family development, such as Nurse Family Partnership, Brain breaks, Truancy Program, Youth Development Services, Drug and Alcohol assessment and services, and Genoa

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Healthcare. DEC task force meetings are held as needed within the specific area where a family lives. At these meetings, specific family concerns and needs are discussed. Time is taken during each meeting to address ongoing strengths, concerns, and plans to address identified concerns. Relationships built through DEC are invaluable in working together to meet the needs of Children and Families. DEC alliance members often use time after the meetings to hold smaller group meetings to tackle more specific needs, such as setting up school based Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol services.

- ☐ Identify information on any specific populations determined to be under served or disproportionately served through the analysis.

There are several common themes shared at DEC meetings regarding missing services or populations needing additional services. All local schools report an increasing trend of children being unable to emotionally regulate themselves. This is occurring at all ages and getting younger. Schools are spending a lot of time handling emotions and behaviors and not being able to focus on Education. Truancy also continues to be a problem on the rise. Several reports were made this year about Truancy, and again this is trending to younger children. Vaping amongst children continues to happen in schools and at home with parents. Mental Health continues to be a large need for all ages. Schools report making Crisis Calls weekly and for children as young as kindergarten. Tioga County's suicide rate doubled in the past year. Our homeless population is on the rise and also homes with horrific physical standards.

- ☐ Identify service array challenges for the populations identified and describe the county's efforts to collaboratively address any service gaps.

One of Tioga County's greatest service gaps is the need for more Mental Health Services, particularly IBHS and In-Home Services. We continue with the same number of agencies but continue to have long waitlists. In the last few years, new licensing requirements have caused a large lack of Clinicians able to meet the needs of Autistic Children. This also affects Clinicians able to provide IBHS services. This is discussed at FEI meetings, Judge's Roundtable and DEC meetings. A meeting has been scheduled amongst a local treatment provider, TCHDS, and Commissioners to discuss ways to provide other funding streams besides insurance to provide services where insurance will not approve. In this past year, a new and larger Homeless Shelter was opened and able to help more people. We utilize our housing money, BHARP, and PHARE grant money to help families find housing and improve household conditions. Local schools have brought in programs to address vaping. Our Partnership for Community Health has expanded a free after-school program to now cover two districts for elementary age children.

- ☐ Identify key areas in which technical assistance may be needed.

None

1.3g Substance Affected Infants (SAI) and Plans of Safe Care (POSC)

- Respond to the following questions:

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA collects data related to POSC in which the CCYA acts as the lead agency.

CCYA Tioga County receives a referral for POSC through Childline calls from Health Care Providers, concerned family or community members, or Children and Youth Staff, who are aware of an infant (or child up to one year old) affected by substance exposure. As part of the CCYA screening process, POSC referrals are documented and tracked in the same manner as all Childline calls. POSC referrals are forwarded to the Specialized Services Director, and the assigned Plans of Safe Care staff member, sometimes an Intake Worker from CYS is also assigned. In most cases, the POSC provider and C&Y Intake Worker respond to the referral together within 24 hours. The POSC provider works to engage the Caregiver in services that

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support the well-being of the substance affected infant / child. The POSC provider explains the program and the services available. The client is made aware that we are responding to a referral based on a “Substance Affected Infant” but that the purpose of our visit is to partner with them for the well-being of their baby – not to judge them for using. If a client agrees to services, then we work with them to provide any / all of the services identified in the plan. For every client who accepts, there is an MDT (Multi-disciplinary Team) meeting that includes representatives from a variety of support systems to discuss what supports may benefit the infant / family the most. The POSC Supervisor collects data pertaining to the delivery of POSC services. The data is used for reporting, education, and quality improvement. In this service year we have successfully engaged more than half of the referrals responded to.

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA collects data related to POSC in which the CCYA does NOT as the lead agency.

As Childline referral calls are processed through CCYA Tioga centralized screening, if a determination is made that there is not a need to assign a CCYA case worker, the referral is immediately directed to the Specialized Services Director and the POSC provider. The Specialized Services Director maintains records and data regarding program compliances, delivery timeframes, and content.

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA works with other county offices and community-based agencies to disseminate information related to SAIs and POSC to physical health care and drug and alcohol treatment providers.

The POSC program Director works with Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP). Collaboration between the programs serves as an additional avenue for communicating the virtues of both programs to a broader spectrum of medical providers. The POSC program director attends Drug Endangered Children (DEC) meetings monthly as well as Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) meetings. Participation in both of these meetings helps to collaborate services as well as educating those in attendance on POSC. POSC attends other community events to educate and provide awareness of the program and resources.

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA engages other county offices and community-based agencies to support the on-going implementation of POSC.

Tioga County experiences a higher than 50% success rating in engaging POSC referrals in services. Using an approach with the expectant and new moms that celebrates the child rather than highlighting the substance use of the parent is the foundation of CCYA Tioga POSC Family Engagement. The POSC staff focuses on the needs of the baby which helps our engagement. The staff then talk with the mother and / or caregiver about goals to obtain / maintain sobriety as well as any other goals to support the safe development of the fetus / infant. Tioga County continues to share strategies with other counties, particularly with the Nurse-Family Partnership Program. The POSC program Director also engages in opportunities to share POSC successes in County Collaborative Meetings.

- ☐ Describe how the CCYA works with other county offices and community-based agencies to disseminate information related to the effect of prenatal exposure to substances and POSC to pregnant and parenting people and other caregivers.

CCYA Tioga County participates in regular POSC Support Sessions and staff also communicate about POSC when appropriate in any County Collaborative Meetings. These meetings include Drug Affected Children (DEC) meetings, Advisory Board, and D&A Planning Committee. Regular reports are made to the County Commissioners and the State.

- ☐ Describe any other anticipated practice and/or fiscal impact of this provision.

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POSC provider hours are tracked as well as On-Call hours / Staff hours. On-call hours are from 4 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Monday each week to meet the requirement of the 24-hour response time for referrals. In an effort to improve engagement efforts, we are offering a diaper bag with essential infant needs during each responding visit. The set includes a swaddling blanket, a board book, pacifier and clip, diapers, wipes and bottles. Items are packaged in a backpack style diaper bag. The gifts are intentional and provide useful items for the mother / infant and also serve as talking points for the POSC provider for educational purposes. POSC assists families with employment and housing and provides items such as pack-n-plays, swings, and monitors as requested. The need for the program in Tioga County is firmly established and the CCYA anticipates increased referrals in the future.

☐ Identify areas of technical assistance needed by the CCYA related to POSC.

N/A

1-3j. Family First Prevention Services Act

☛ Respond to the following questions:

Title IV-E Prevention Services Program

- ☐ Describe the CCYAs engagement with community-based service providers regarding the selection and implementation of EBPs, regardless of their allowability under the Title IV-E Prevention Program.
- ☐ Describe any barriers/challenges experienced by the CCYA in claiming Title IV-E reimbursement for prevention services. How is the CCYA working to address those barriers/challenges?

Tioga County engages with various providers throughout the planning process. Based upon an analysis of trends through data review, local stakeholder meetings, and the Organizational Effectiveness process, Tioga County reaches out to various providers to determine if there is any interest in developing a program to meet the identified needs. Ideas are then submitted to the Human Services Administrator who will review and discuss the various options with Tioga County Children and Youth Services. Factors that are considered during the review process are funding for services (CYS, CCBH); whether it can be sustained with costs and potential impact on the outcome.

Tioga County continues to engage Community-Based Service Providers regarding implementation of new programs. In September of 2024 Northern Tier Counseling Services started Multisystemic Therapy (MST) in Tioga County. This adds an additional Evidence-Based service to be offered within Tioga County. There have been a total of 20 referrals for this program. MST serves neighboring Bradford and Sullivan Counties. Tioga County makes up 15% of the referrals for this program. Currently, there are two therapists that cover Tioga County for MST. If the referrals continue to grow, Northern Tier Counseling will look at adding an additional therapist to cover Tioga County.

In December of 2024 Concern Services started the Positive Parenting Program (PPP) in Tioga County. This is also an Evidence-Based Program. Tioga County worked closely with Concern Services to help fund the implementation of PPP. There have been eight referrals completed for this program and to date six families have received the service. Tioga County anticipates the referrals for both above mentioned programs to increase this year.

- ☐ Community Pathways support the delivery and planning for evidence-based prevention services for a child who does not have an open case with the child welfare agency and does not require immediate child welfare intervention but meets Pennsylvania's definition of Candidate for Foster Care. County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs) must determine candidacy and eligibility for the selected prevention service. The CCYA may contract with approved community-based providers to develop or approve a child-specific prevention

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plan, provide prevention plan case management, conduct ongoing safety and risk monitoring and assessments, and/or deliver approved evidence-based prevention services as agreed upon in their contract. Processes set up by CCYAs must be reviewed and approved by OCYF. Share whether this is an option the CCYA is considering.

Tioga County is interested in Community Pathways.

☐ Identify any areas of technical assistance that the county may need in this area.

None

1-3p. Assessing Complex Cases and Youth Waiting for Appropriate Placement

➡ Please respond to the following questions regarding your county's local processes related to assessing service level needs for complex case children and youth:

☐ What is the cross-agency process developed in your county to support children and youth when the needs identified require the expertise of multiple systems? Please include information related identification of partner agencies who are a part of the county's integrated children's service planning team, the referral process and identification of team leads. Does your county have a dedicated employee who coordinates and/or facilitates planning efforts across all systems? If yes, how is that position funded and where is the position housed?

Tioga County continues to have several systems in place for children and youth involved in cross systems. Tioga County continues to hold weekly Placement Alternative meetings where caseworkers present Court involved cases and complex cases for recommendations. This team consists of representatives from: Children and Youth, CASSP, ~~CORE~~, County Solicitor, Provider Staff, and Psychologist. Tioga County, CCBH, and CASSP continue to hold bi-weekly phone conference calls to discuss children involved with Mental Health services and Children and Youth. During the meetings treatment barriers are discussed and planning for future needs are worked on together to ensure appropriate services are provided. Tioga County Drug Endangered Children's Alliance still meets monthly. This group has the largest number of partners involved. Members consist of representatives from over 10 different organizations. Monthly meetings cover topics to strengthen working relationships, learn about new and existing programs, and to understand each discipline's capabilities. Tioga County does not have one designated person to coordinate all of these meetings but does have a person designated for each group. However, those designated leads work closely together to not duplicate meetings and services, and one member sits on all three teams.

☐ Identify how the county has engaged systems outside of the county human services system, including for example the education and physical health systems, in this cross-agency planning process. How is child specific information shared across systems?

Tioga County is fortunate to be a smaller County which aids in forming cross system relationships. Through our DEC alliance many systems are engaged through monthly meetings, including representatives from the three school districts in Tioga County. This past year we have seen a decline in participation from Local Law Enforcement. However, steps are being taken through coordinated outreach efforts to reengage those departments. Many have had a turnover in leadership and are not familiar with DEC and our mission. ESSA also helped form relationships between the CCYA for Tioga County and our Local School Districts in Tioga County and other Counties where children have been in placements. Our local Mental Health providers have been engaged by a manager who has worked on building strong relationships to aid in accessing the services needed. This helps when emergent needs are identified to help move people up the wait list. This has helped shorten placement times. Child specific information is shared across systems in a few different ways. We provide Handle with Care to a select email group when a child has encountered a traumatic event. No details of the event are given. This

Tioga

goes to schools and daycares to let them know to be extra sensitive to the child for at least seven days. DEC Task Force meetings are held when a particular child or family needs to be discussed. Only the specific agencies that have involvement with the family are invited. Statements of confidentiality are signed by all parties at the meeting and the information shared does not leave the meeting. Information with the schools is shared through the State provided ESSA School Notification Form. The form is shared with the home district of origin and the district of residence representatives in order to schedule the Best Interest Determination meeting. During the BID meeting open conversations are held to help make the best decision for the child. TCDHS also holds FEI meetings, and a small group attended the FEI conference in April. In the course of those meetings, team members can discuss Court System issues and needs with the Judge. That time is also used to problem solve and plan for better use of Court time, Court expectation, and system limitations.

- ☐ In FY 2024-25, how many children were served through your county complex case planning process?

Zero

- ☐ What creative processes or services has your county developed to meet the needs of the complex children in your care?

Tioga County has developed our bi-weekly meetings with CASSP and CCBH as well as DEC Task Force meetings to help meet the complex needs of the children in Tioga County. Through these meetings we discuss strengths and barriers for the family. We are able to work together to get services started. We have formed relationships with each other that help cut through red tape and pull people out of their individual silos. Tioga County continues to utilize a special contract with a local Mental Health organization to get children evaluated by a child Psychiatrist within a few weeks for very serious cases. This practice continued to increase this past year. We regularly cover travel costs for parents to visit with their children. Tioga County has assisted with gas cards, Ubers, Taxis, bus tickets, supplies, and food to ensure children are seeing their parents. Tioga County will continue to hold bi-weekly meetings with CCBH and refer for complex case reviews as needed. The CCBH meetings do not provide much help to TCDHS. However, they do allow for time to highlight needs and concerns that does help with later approvals for needed Mental Health services. TCDHS has held more school meetings this year to try and engage parents in working with schools to aid in Truancy and accessing Mental Health services within the schools. Our school partnerships continue to be strong and help to provide help to students and families.

- ☐ Identify any areas of technical assistance the county may need in development, or improvement, of its cross-system integrated children's team.

None

1-3r. Family Reunification Services

➡ Respond to the following questions:

- ☐ What are the current services and activities provided to support family reunification efforts? CCYA Tioga makes a variety of efforts to support Family Reunification. In Tioga County, the CCYA (Family Services) and Specialized Services Providers are working together to form a single Family Centered, Family Focused team-based approach to delivering services. This approach folds most Community-Based services right into CYS Case Management. Currently, providers working with families toward reunification are implementing Nurturing Parents Program and Promoting Responsible Fatherhood curriculum. The North Carolina and AAPI Parenting Assessments are administered to determine what programs will be most effective for individual consumers and to gauge progress in those programs. CCYA Tioga and Specialized

Tioga

Services also work together to facilitate maximum visitation opportunities and needed transportation.

CCYA Tioga has implemented Crisis and Rapid Response (CRR) meetings, Family Meetings, and enhanced Family Finding to assist the agency with being successful with these efforts. These efforts have proven to be successful as we have been able to keep children out of care, identify support networks for the families we serve, and close cases because families have Supports outside of Children and Youth to utilize when needed.

- What were the total costs of services and activities to provide family reunification services in SFY 2024-25?

\$116,329.05

1-3s. Realignment of Family Services and Specialized Services Units

Effective July 1, 2026, Tioga County Children and Youth Services will complete a strategic transition that brings the Specialized Services unit back under direct County oversight and unifies it with the existing Family Services unit. This change is designed to improve service delivery, team collaboration, and outcomes for children and families.

The newly integrated department will operate under a single umbrella with a clear mission: to provide Child-Centered, Family-Focused services grounded in teamwork, responsiveness, and continuity.

Key goals of this realignment include:

- Creating a Multi-disciplinary Team around each family that includes a Caseworker, Provider Services Worker, Case Aide, Family Finding Worker and Placement Cases will have a Visitation Staff. Each team member brings a unique perspective and function, collectively ensuring a holistic approach to case planning and service provision.
- Streamlining communication and internal processes to enhance both efficiency and effectiveness. Co-location of staff, reflective supervision, and shared protocols will help reduce duplication, close communication gaps, and support timely decision-making.
- Ensuring continuity of support for families, regardless of which team member is initially contacted. Every family will be connected to a consistent, responsive team that is familiar with their case and equipped to respond promptly to evolving needs.
- Delivering high-quality, intentional case management, supported by a collaborative team culture and aligned around clear expectations for engagement, documentation, and service coordination.
- Focusing on active Family Engagement and Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) strategies, including Family Finding efforts, Crisis Rapid Response meetings, Family Group Decision making and Family Team meetings, to improve relational permanency and reduce the length of time cases remain open.
- Improving overall customer service to the families we serve.

This model supports OCYF's emphasis on Child and Family well-being, case continuity, timely permanency, and high-quality, integrated service delivery. It also reflects Tioga County's commitment to right sizing its workforce, aligning roles with programmatic needs, and advancing practice improvements that respond to both data trends and community feedback.

Tioga County has long embraced an integrated model of human services delivery, recognizing the value of collaboration, communication, and continuity across programs that serve vulnerable populations. Approximately ten years ago, Tioga County Children and Youth Services operated fully as a County-run program, including all Human Services functions. At that time, the County contracted with Service Access & Management, Inc. (SAM Inc.) to provide Children and Youth Specialized Services as well as other services. While this arrangement has served a purpose over

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the past decade, the County is now positioned to reintegrate these specialized functions into the County workforce.

The plan to end the contract with SAM Inc. and return Children and Youth Specialized Services staff to direct County employment is rooted in a strategic effort to improve service delivery, enhance collaboration, and ensure more effective outcomes for families. Merging of the two departments will strengthen teaming between Specialized Service Staff and County Caseworkers, which is critical to ensure timely communication, aligned case planning, and consistent support for families involved with Children and Youth.

The newly integrated department will operate under a single umbrella with a clear mission: to provide child-centered, family-focused services grounded in teamwork, responsiveness, and continuity.

The merging of the two departments will allow attention to be focused on child and family well-being, case continuity, timely permanency, and high-quality, integrated service delivery. It also reflects Tioga County's commitment to right-sizing its workforce, aligning roles with programmatic needs.

Below is a breakdown of the services that will be transitioning back to Tioga County:

Family Support Provider Services

The primary focus of the Family Support Provider is to support families in developing and achieving individualized SMART goals that are specifically designed to reduce or eliminate agency involvement and enhance protective capacities. Family Support Provider serves as a critical bridge between families and the child welfare system. This collaborative approach ensures that families receive the practical guidance and emotional encouragement they need to make lasting changes that promote child safety, well-being, and family stability. This program has 10 staff and two supervisors.

Family Support Providers utilize a range of targeted, evidence-informed curriculums to meet the unique needs of each family. These include:

- Intensive Case Management (ICM): Focus areas of the ICM program include improving home conditions, strengthening family relationships, addressing child behavior concerns, and enhancing household budgeting and financial management skills.
- Effective Safe Parenting (ESP): ESP emphasizes accountability through recovery planning, connecting to outside D&A services, routine urine screenings, and sweat patch drug testing, while supporting parents in creating a safe and stable environment for their children.
- Support Teach Educate Parents (STEPS): Based on the Nurturing Parenting curriculum, STEPs focuses on teaching foundational parenting skills such as discipline strategies, child development, and emotional nurturing to promote healthy parent-child relationships.
- Promoting Responsible Fatherhood (PRF): A curriculum tailored to support fathers by addressing both general parenting skills and the unique and essential role fathers play within the family structure.
- Time-Limited Family Reunification (TLFR): TLFR supports timely reunification by addressing all case-specific goals in partnership with CYS and equipping caregivers with the tools and support necessary for successful reintegration.

Visitation Program

The Tioga County Children and Youth Visitation Program is a structured service designed to support safe, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate contact between children and their

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families while they are involved with the child welfare system. The program includes two key components: Visitation Coaching and Visitation Aide Services, both of which work in close coordination with Caseworkers to promote family connection and support case goals. The visitation program has five visitation coaches, two visitation aides, and one supervisor.

Family Finding Program

The Family Finding Program is a Specialized Service that begins at the onset of a family's involvement with Tioga County Children and Youth Services (CYS). Its primary goal is to identify, engage, and strengthen the network of supportive individuals - both formal and informal - who can contribute to the safety, well-being, and permanency of children involved in the Child Welfare System. This program includes four Family Finding Caseworkers, and one Supervisor. This Supervisor also oversees the Family Group Decision Making staff member.

Tioga County is a designated Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) County, which emphasizes the importance of involving families and natural supports in all aspects of Child Welfare planning. As part of this commitment, the Family Finding Program plays a critical role in identifying and engaging relatives and supportive individuals early in a family's involvement with CYF. In addition to supporting long-term permanency planning, Family Finding is instrumental in helping CYF locate and contact family members to participate in Crisis and Rapid Response meetings. By ensuring that families are actively involved in decision-making during critical moments, Family Finding reinforces Tioga County's focus on timely, family-driven solutions that prioritize child well-being.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)

The Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) program is a collaborative, strength-based approach that empowers families to make informed decisions regarding the care and well-being of their children. FGDM brings together family members, friends, community supports, and professionals in a structured meeting to develop a plan that addresses the safety, permanency, and overall needs of the child and family. This program currently has one part-time staff who is supervised by the Family Finding Supervisor.

Independent Living Program

The Independent Living (IL) Program supports youth ages 14 to 23 who are currently or formerly involved in the Foster Care System, as well as a small population of outreach youth within Tioga County who, although not in Foster Care, demonstrate a clear need for these services. The program is designed to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to transition successfully into adulthood. This program currently has four IL Caseworkers, one Case Aide and one Supervisor.

Adventure Challenge Experience (ACE) Program

The Adventure Challenge Experience (ACE) Program is an experiential learning initiative designed to engage at-risk youth ages 10 to 17 through hands-on, outdoor activities that promote personal growth, positive peer interaction, and essential life skills. The program focuses on building communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and self-confidence - key protective factors that support youth in navigating challenges both at home and in their communities. This program includes two Program Coordinators, one Program Caseworker, and one Supervisor. During the summer months the program employs five Summer Staff to help with the larger group of up to 30 youth.

ACE delivers these lessons through a variety of structured and engaging activities, including dirt biking, kayaking, canoeing, ropes courses, and team-building games. These activities are not only recreational but are intentionally designed to create teachable moments that emphasize trust,

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leadership, responsibility, and cooperation. This program is four days a week during the Summer Program which includes lunch. During the school year the after-school program is two days a week in two locations which includes homework time and a snack. The program includes transportation year around, both to and from program.

Youth Diversion Services (YDS)

Youth Diversion Services (YDS) is a school-based intervention and prevention program designed to support at-risk students in grades Kindergarten through 12th. The program provides structured, evidence-based services focused on behavior modification, social-emotional learning, and student engagement. YDS operates in close collaboration with schools and integrates the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework with the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) curriculum to promote lasting positive behavior change. The YDS staff includes: one Supervisor, one Coordinator, and four Instructors.

YDS offers a tiered approach to service delivery, including:

- **Mentor, Monitor, and Motivate (3M):** Targeted toward students in grades K–6, this program provides individual and group support with an emphasis on emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and responsibility. 3M weaves the school’s PBIS expectations into ART-based lessons and discussions.
- **Character Reflection and Skills (CRS):** Designed for students in grades 7–12, CRS focuses on decision-making, accountability, peer relationships, and goal setting. Like 3M, CRS aligns with each school’s PBIS language and principles to reinforce consistent behavioral expectations. This includes meeting with parents and youth in the home to transfer the learned skills to home life.
- **Student Transition and Recovery (STAR):** A behavior correction model inspired by military structure, STAR serves as a short-term intensive intervention. Students may participate in a one-day intake session or a 30-day follow-up model, which includes weekly in-school check-ins. STAR is designed to interrupt problematic behavior patterns and assist students in resetting expectations.
- **After-School Program:** YDS also offers an after-school component two days per week, with transportation provided. The program includes structured time for homework, curriculum-based activities, and enrichment opportunities. Healthy snacks are offered each session.

Plans of Safe Care Program

The Plans of Safe Care (POSC) Program is a proactive, family-centered initiative designed to support parents and guardians of infants who were prenatally exposed to substances. POSC works in close partnership with expectant and new mothers, engaging them in the creation of an individualized plan that identifies and connects them to critical supports and resources, including medical care, substance use treatment, mental health services, parenting education, and basic needs assistance. Each plan is developed collaboratively and guided by a Multi-disciplinary Team, ensuring a comprehensive approach tailored to the unique needs of the family.

Specialized Services Nurse

The Specialized Services Nurse serves as a vital resource in navigating the complex medical needs of families involved with CYS and the Plans of Safe Care (POSC) program. This nursing position provides essential support to both Caseworkers and Families, ensuring a better understanding of medical issues and improving outcomes for children and caregivers. We have one nurse position.

Truancy Program

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The Truancy Program is a proactive, family-centered service designed to address school attendance concerns for students who have missed any number of school days, regardless of how many absences have occurred. The program works directly in both school settings and the home to identify the underlying causes of Truancy and develop personalized solutions that support student success. There are two Truancy Caseworkers who are currently supervised by the Family Support Provider Supervisors.

Vehicle Lease Increase

In addition to the transition request, we are requesting additional funding to support the increased costs associated with leasing vehicles. As part of the transition of services and associated funding from SAM Inc. to Tioga County, new vehicle leases are required to meet the ongoing transportation needs of the Agency. However, the cost of vehicle leases has risen significantly due to current market conditions.

Given the rural nature of Tioga County, many of our clients lack access to public or private transportation options. As a result, Specialized Services frequently provides transportation for children and families to and from the agency for Court-Ordered Visitation, as well as to medical, mental health, and other recommended services and evaluations. Reliable transportation is critical to ensuring families can access these supports and services in a timely and consistent manner (Reference Needs Based Adjustment 26/27).

1-3t. Increase Stand-by Rate

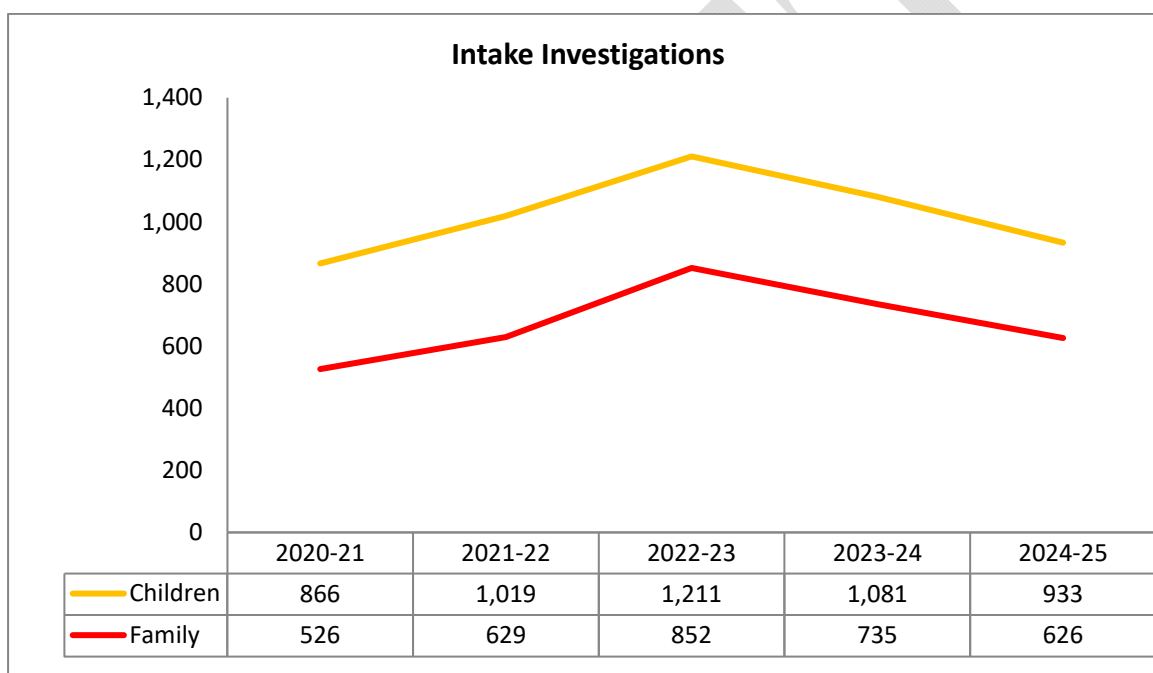
Tioga County is requesting an increase to the standby rate for the backup supervisor role during On-Call periods. Currently, both Caseworkers and Supervisors receive the same standby rate; however, Supervisors were recently reclassified as exempt employees and are no longer eligible to receive their hourly rate for On-Call duties. Despite this change, Supervisors continue to carry significant after-hours responsibilities, including decision-making for new investigations, assessing potential safety threats, and being the decision maker on after hours emergency situations. To address this, Tioga County is proposing a \$50.00 per night increase in the standby rate, and \$75.00 per night on paid Holidays. This figure was derived by analyzing the average out-time paid to Supervisors during the first two quarters of FY 2024-25, which came to 1.98 hours per On-Call event. Using an average hourly rate of \$25.89 (rounded to \$25.00), the \$50 increase reflects a fair estimate of compensation for their time. This proposal also helps address ongoing salary compression issues, as recent efforts to improve recruitment and retention have focused on increasing Caseworker wages without proportionate adjustments at the Supervisory level. Raising the standby rate would recognize the added responsibilities Supervisors hold and help reestablish an appropriate pay differential within the organizational structure (Reference Needs based adjustment increase to standby rate).

Section 2: General Indicators

2-1: County Fiscal Background

- ☐ Indicate whether the county was over or underspent in the Actual Year and reasons why.
- ☐ Is over or underspending anticipated in the Implementation Year? Explain why.
- ☐ Address any changes or important trends that will be highlighted as a resource need through an ADJUSTMENT TO EXPENDITURE submission.
 - **PLEASE NOTE: Capture any highlights here that are not addressed in the Program Improvement Strategies narrative (Section 2-4)**

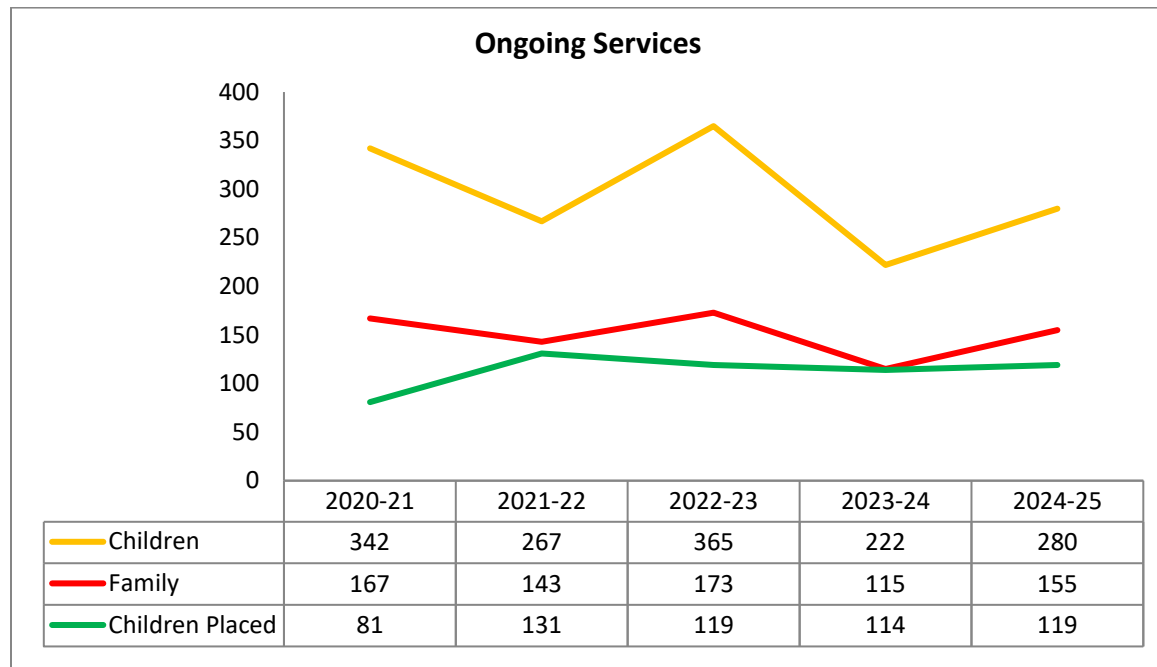
2-2a. Intake Investigations



Tioga County continues to see similar numbers to previous fiscal years in the Intake Unit. Regarding trends during this fiscal year, Tioga County is dealing with substance use/abuse by caregivers, domestic violence, behavioral and mental health concerns for both children and parents, parenting concerns, such as lack of supervision, providing for basic, medical, and dental needs, and truancy. Poor home conditions factored in numerous reports, in which the county helped pay rent, bills, provided dumpsters, and the cost to eliminate an infestation. The intake unit also continues to work with repeated families with many of whom do not want to cooperate with services, such as refusing drug screens or not allowing staff in their home. Cases that led to safety plans or custody involved drug use, domestic violence, supervision, and abuse. Regarding child abuse investigations, the county investigates more cases of bodily injury compared to all other forms of abuse. There have been no significant trends or patterns to note this year.

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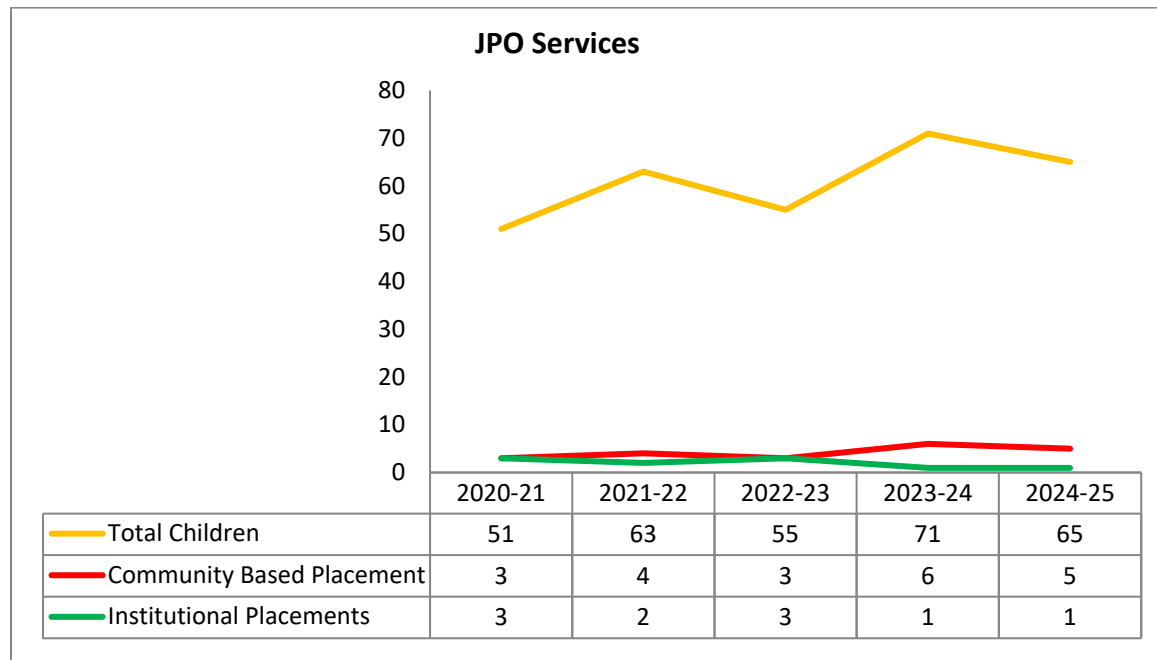
2-2a. Ongoing Services



A review of the Ongoing Services chart shows a slight increase in the overall number of children and families served in FY 2024–25 compared to FY 2023–24. Tioga County continues to see a steady volume of reports involving drug-addicted parents or caregivers, incidents of domestic violence, and concerns related to inadequate physical living standards. In fact, inadequate physical standards emerged as one of the top three reasons for child removals this fiscal year, signaling an ongoing need for housing-related support (Reference increase in Housing funds Needs Based 26/27). Truancy remains a persistent concern, further underscoring the need for school collaboration and preventative outreach. In response to the evolving complexity of cases, the department restructured its service delivery by creating specialized units for In-Home and Placement cases. This separation aims to improve case management, allow for focused expertise, and improve outcomes for children and families.

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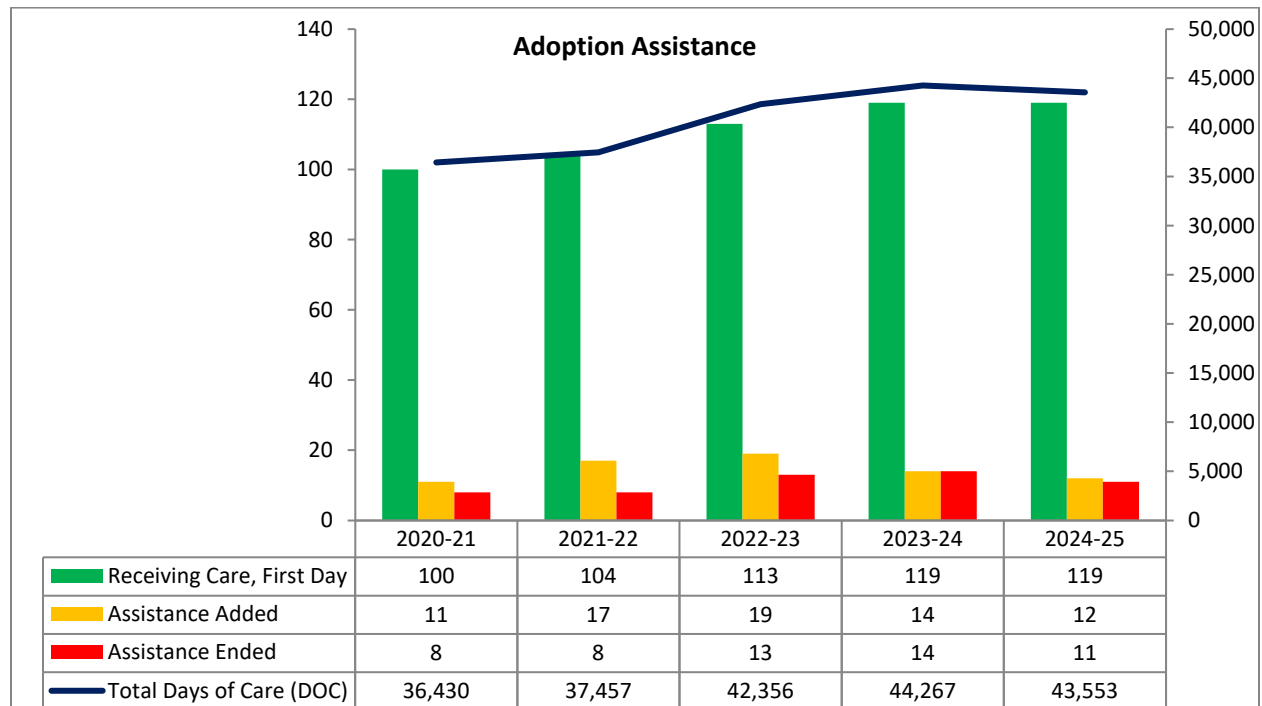
2-2a. JPO Services



During the current fiscal year, the Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) experienced a slight decrease in the overall number of children served, with 65 youth compared to 71 in the previous fiscal year. Community-Based Placements decreased by one, while Institutional Placements remained consistent with FY 2024-25 levels. Trends continue to reflect Juvenile involvement with drug-related offenses, particularly the possession and use of drug paraphernalia, vaping devices, and small amounts of marijuana. These patterns suggest a continued reliance on marijuana among youth, which is believed to be a form of self-medication in place of prescribed treatments for underlying Mental Health or Behavioral Issues.

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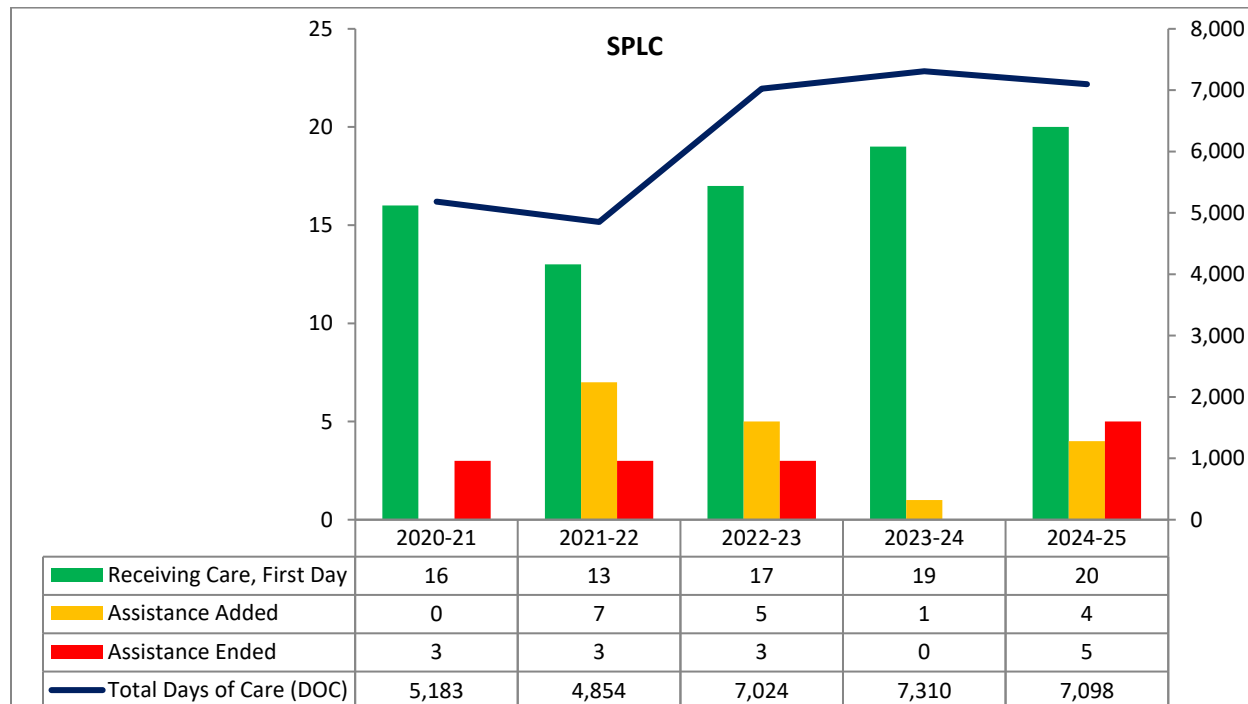
2-2b. Adoption Assistance



Tioga County maintained a consistent number of children receiving Adoption Assistance at the start of FY 2024-25, with 119 youth continuing to benefit from the program. Several notable permanency successes were achieved during the year, including finalization of adoptions for seven children who had been in care for more than two years, and one adoption finalized for a child who had remained in care for over five years. Already in FY 2025-26, one adoption has been finalized. Looking ahead, Tioga County anticipates 12 terminations of parental rights and is projecting 12 adoptions to be completed by the end of the fiscal year. Additionally, seven youth are expected to age out of the system during FY 2025-26, stressing the continued need for focused permanency planning and transitional support services.

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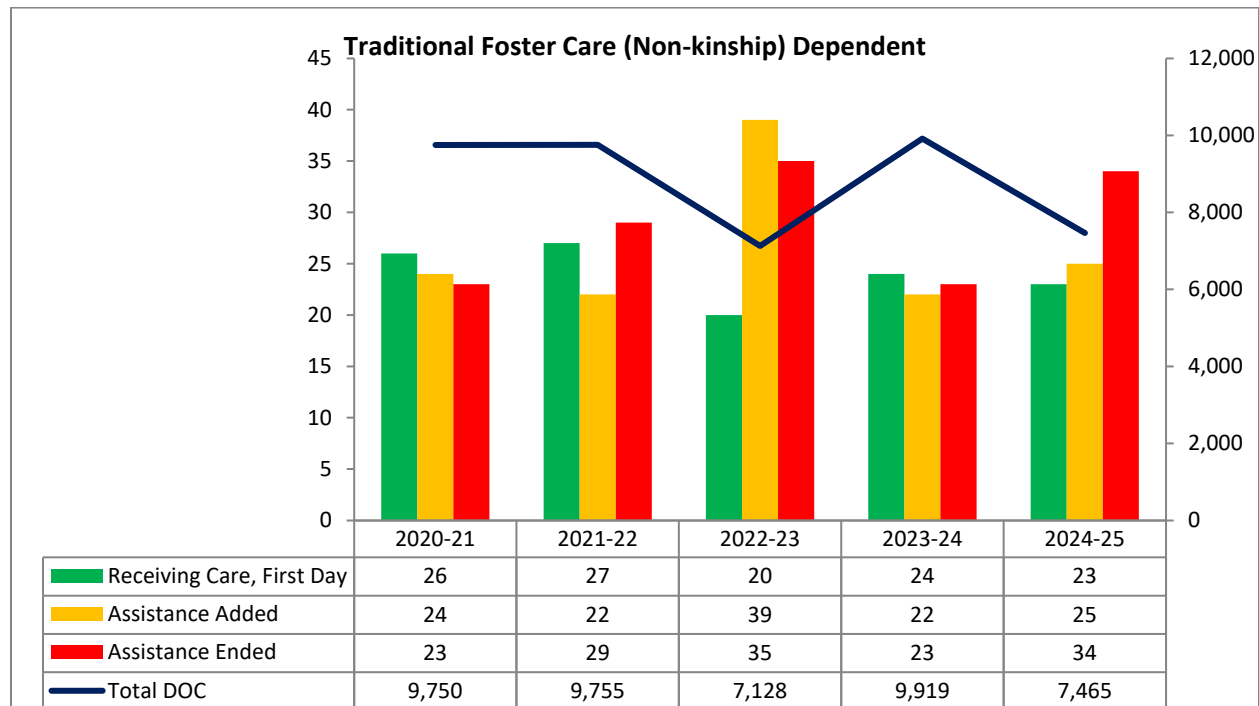
2-2c. Subsidized Permanent Legal Custody (SPLC)



Tioga County began FY 2024-25 with a slight increase in the number of youths receiving Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship (SPLC) services, rising from 19 to 20. Despite this increase, the total days of care decreased by 212 days. As of the start of FY 2025-26, Tioga County has already finalized four SPLC agreements, demonstrating ongoing efforts to provide stable, long-term placements for youth who are unable to return home or be adopted. These outcomes highlight the county's continued commitment to achieving permanency.

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2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator

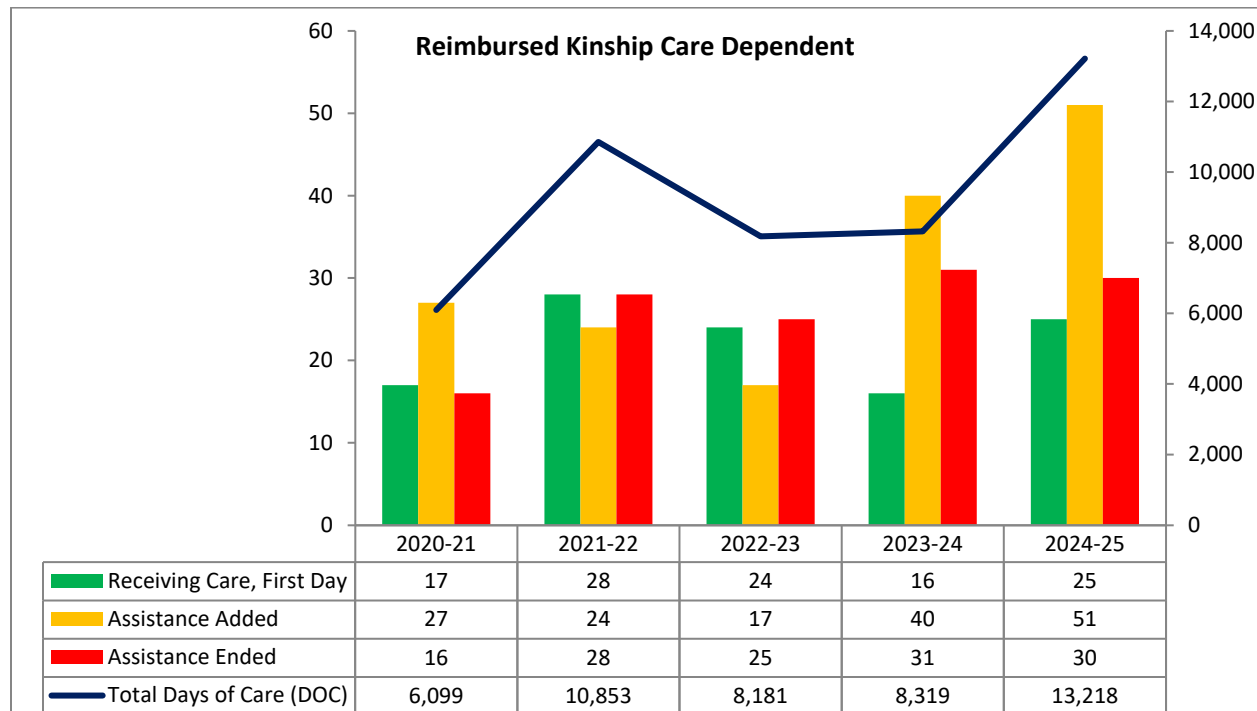


Tioga County experienced a significant decrease in the use of Traditional Foster Care (Non-kinship) during the past fiscal year, with a reduction of 2,454 days of care. As a Phase 2 Family Engagement County, Tioga County continues to prioritize Kinship Placements whenever possible, contributing to the decreased reliance on traditional Foster Care settings. The County's top three reasons for removal remain consistent, with drug-addicted parent or caregiver as the leading cause, followed by domestic violence, and a tie for third between inadequate shelter and child behavior problems. While Traditional Foster Care usage has declined, Tioga County recognizes the ongoing need for high-quality Foster Homes and will be placing strong emphasis on recruitment and retention of Foster Parents throughout FY 2025-26 to ensure placement stability and support for children when Kinship options are not available.

Tioga County has had a vision for improving and enhancing the Visitation Program for many years. In addition to implementing Visit Coaches and a strong Evidence-Based Program, we are seeking funds for renovations that will allow us to establish a Visitation Center. The proposed renovations include minor structural changes to expand our current four rooms to a total of seven rooms. Each room will be updated with new flooring and furniture that is able to be sanitized, making the spaces safer and healthier for families and staff. Safety will also be elevated as part of the renovations. All will enter the Visitation Center at a security monitored doorway and only staff with a county issued badge will have access to the workspace beyond the visit rooms. We are excited about these improvements our Visitation Program and the positive impact they will ensure for our services.

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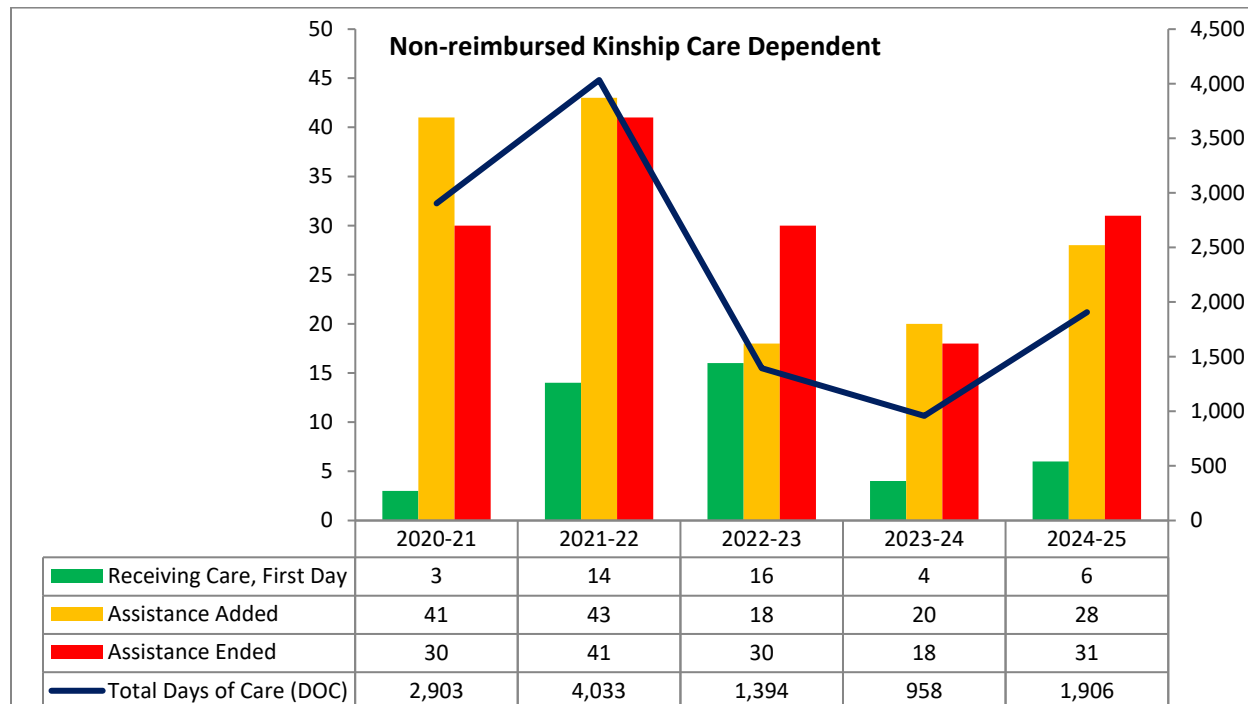
2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator



Tioga County continues to prioritize Kinship care as a core strategy in achieving stable and family-connected placements for dependent youth. As a Phase 2 Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) County, this commitment is reflected in a substantial increase of 4,899 days of care in reimbursed Kinship settings during the current fiscal year. Tioga County placed 51 youth in Kinship Care, more than double the 25-youth placed in Traditional Foster Care, underscoring Tioga County's strong emphasis on maintaining family and community connections. However, Tioga County also recognizes that Kinship Caregivers often require higher levels of support to sustain these placements successfully. In response, Tioga County is requesting the addition of a Foster Care Worker through this Needs-Based Plan, with the goal of enhancing support and training for Kinship homes (Reference Needs Based Adjustment 26/27). This added capacity will allow for more individualized attention, helping to preserve placements and improve outcomes for children in care. In requesting the addition to the Foster Care Worker, Tioga County also requests the addition of Foster Care On-Call System (Reference Needs Based Adjustment 26/27). With the addition of a Foster Care Worker to the C&Y On-Call schedule, this will provide Foster and Kinship parents with a direct path to communication during non-working hours. This will maintain continuity for the resource family and provide them with support at any time or event needed. Tioga's Foster Care Caseworkers strive to maintain a positive rapport with the families and children we serve.

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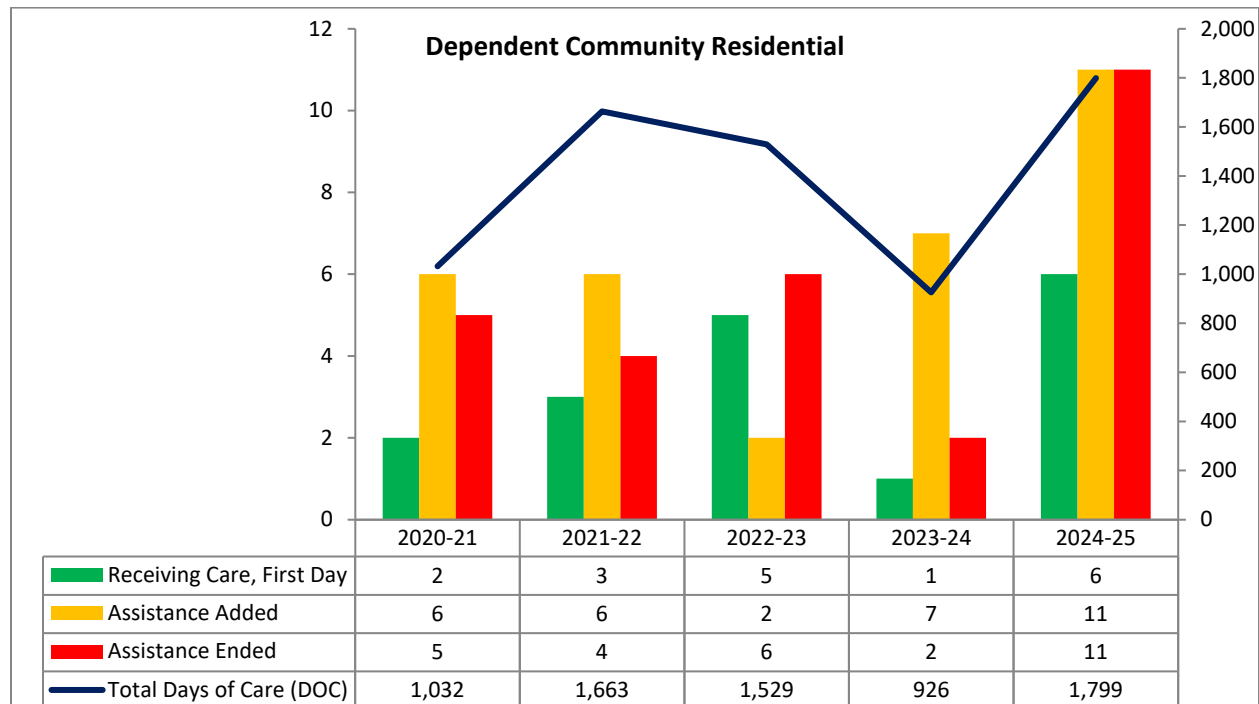
2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator



Tioga County has experienced an increase in the total days of care for Non-reimbursed Kinship Placements, reflecting both the growing use of Kinship Care and the challenges associated with meeting the formal licensing requirements within the mandated timeframes. Many Kinship providers struggle to complete the home study process within the required 60-day period, often due to delays in obtaining necessary documentation, scheduling constraints, or other barriers. To address these challenges, Tioga County has taken a proactive approach by assisting Kinship Families with scheduling appointments, gathering documents, and offering individualized support throughout the process. Tioga county also continues to utilize contracted employees to help expedite the completion of home studies. Despite these efforts, there has been an increase in court-approved placements, which correlates with the difficulties some Kinship Providers face in sustaining the placement long term. Tioga County remains committed to supporting Kinship Caregivers and identifying solutions to improve timeliness.

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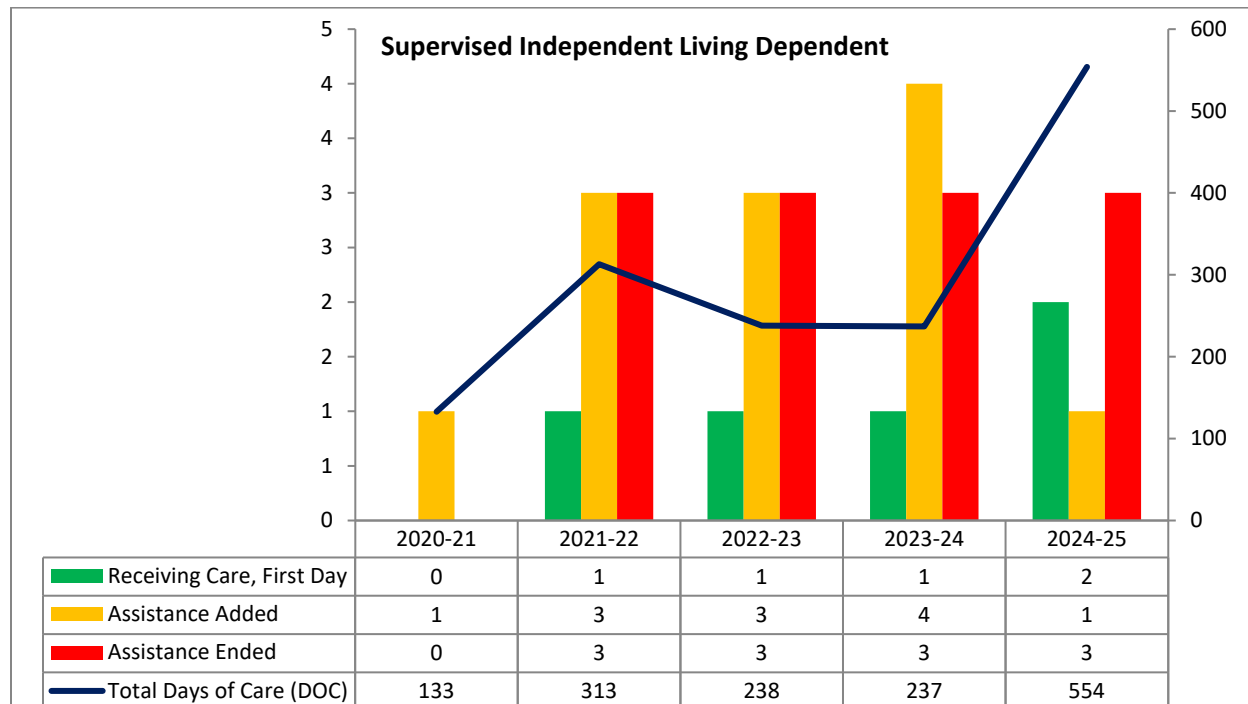
2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator



Tioga County has almost doubled in number of days for this area. This year has seen an increase in cases with ungovernable teenagers and youth deemed unsafe for home settings. We have an increase in sexual offending behaviors and physical aggression in the last year, particularly with adolescent males. Several started in diagnostic placements to get a more accurate picture of their needs. This has led to a corresponding increase in RTF placements. We anticipate this number to continue to stay steady and have completed adjustments to account for additional days of care for several of these youth.

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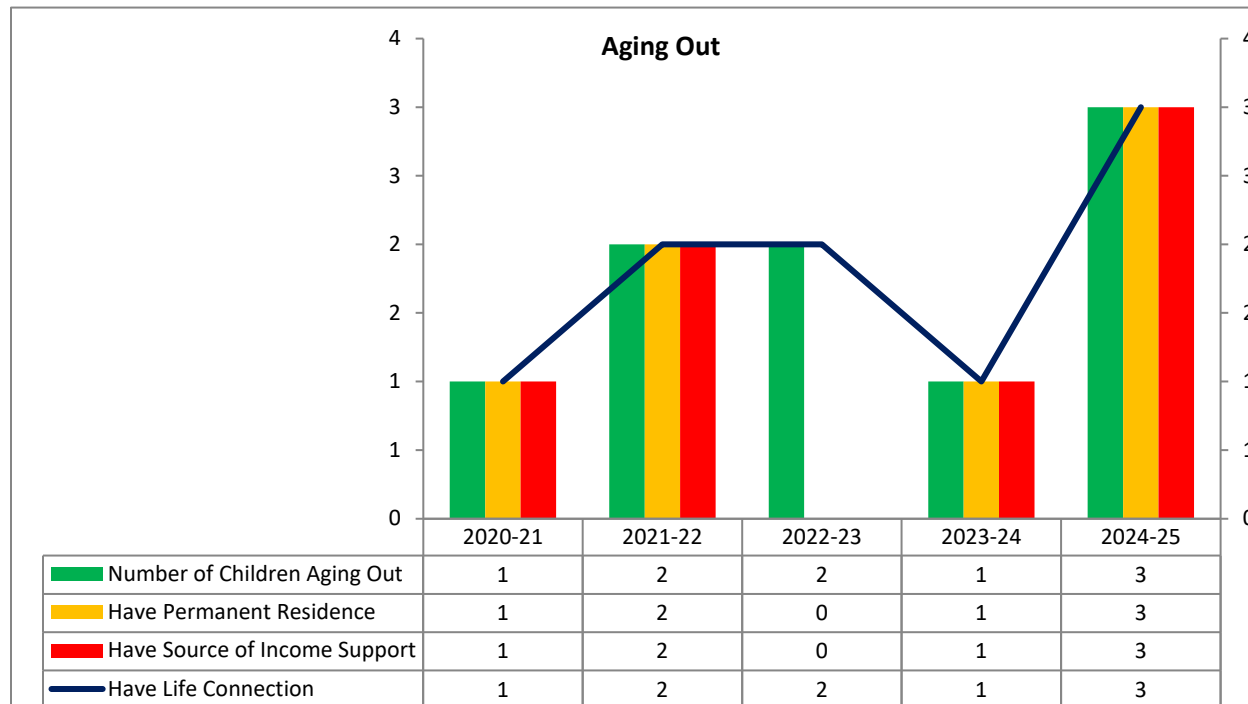
2-2d. Out-of-Home Placements: County Selected Indicator



Supervised Independent Living days of care have more than doubled in days in the last year. Tioga County had three teenage girls that lived independently for a portion of the year. All were unsuccessful in traditional Foster Homes. They utilized Tioga County's IL apartment where they could live on their own but have regular support from the IL Staff located in the same building. This allowed them to attend local school and participate in the community.

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2-2e. Aging Out



Tioga County had three females age out of care this year. The two had remained in care beyond their 18th birthday for added support but then wanted freedom. All three have traumatic backgrounds and were offered a myriad of services for several years. Mental Health was a focus of treatment for all three including Outpatient Treatment, Trauma Counseling, and Medication Management. The plans in place when aging out were not very strong, but all felt they had support and people in their lives to continue to help them. Tioga County anticipates three youth aging out in the next year.

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2-2f. General Indicators

Insert the complete table from the *General Indicators* tab. **No narrative** is required in this section.

2-2: General Indicators

"Type in BLUE boxes only"

County Number: **59**

Class: **6**

Note: % Change and CAGR are calculated using the oldest reported figure (not 0) and the most recent fiscal year.

Tioga County

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2-2a. Service Trends

Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Intake Investigations							
Children	866	1,019	1,211	1,081	933	7.7%	1.9%
Family	526	629	852	735	626	19.0%	4.4%
Ongoing Services							
Children	342	267	365	222	280	-18.1%	-4.9%
Family	167	143	173	115	155	-7.2%	-1.8%
Children Placed	81	131	119	114	119	46.9%	10.1%
JPO Services							
Total Children	51	63	55	71	65	27.5%	6.3%
Community Based Placement	3	4	3	6	5	66.7%	13.6%
Institutional Placements	3	2	3	1	1	-66.7%	-24.0%

2-2b. Adoption Assistance

Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Adoption Assistance							
Receiving Care, First Day	100	104	113	119	119	19.0%	4.4%
Assistance Added	11	17	19	14	12	9.1%	2.2%
Assistance Ended	8	8	13	14	11	37.5%	8.3%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	36,430	37,457	42,356	44,267	43,553	19.6%	4.6%

2-2c. SPLC

Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship							
Receiving Care, First Day	16	13	17	19	20	25.0%	5.7%
Assistance Added	0	7	5	1	4	-42.9%	-17.0%
Assistance Ended	3	3	3	0	5	66.7%	13.6%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	5,183	4,854	7,024	7,310	7,098	36.9%	8.2%

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2-2d. Placement Data							
Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR
Traditional Foster Care (non-kinship) - Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	26	27	20	24	23	-11.5%	-3.0%
Assistance Added	24	22	39	22	25	4.2%	1.0%
Assistance Ended	23	29	35	23	34	47.8%	10.3%
Total DOC	9,750	9,755	7,128	9,919	7,465	-23.4%	-6.5%
Traditional Foster Care (non-kinship) - Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	1	0	-100.0%	-100.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	1	0	-100.0%	-100.0%
Total DOC	0	0	0	5	0	-100.0%	-100.0%
Reimbursed Kinship Care - Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	17	28	24	16	25	47.1%	10.1%
Assistance Added	27	24	17	40	51	88.9%	17.2%
Assistance Ended	16	28	25	31	30	87.5%	17.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	6,099	10,853	8,181	8,319	13,218	116.7%	21.3%
Reimbursed Kinship Care - Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0	1	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	1	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0	97	0.0%	0.0%
Foster Family Care - Dependent (Total of 2 above)							
Receiving Care, First Day	43	55	44	40	48	11.6%	2.8%
Assistance Added	51	46	56	62	76	49.0%	10.5%
Assistance Ended	39	57	60	54	64	64.1%	13.2%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	15,849	20,608	15,309	18,238	20,683	30.5%	6.9%
Foster Family Care - Delinquent (Total of 2 above)							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	5	97	1840.0%	1840.0%
Non-reimbursed Kinship Care - Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	3	14	16	4	6	100.0%	18.9%
Assistance Added	41	43	18	20	28	-31.7%	-9.1%
Assistance Ended	30	41	30	18	31	3.3%	0.8%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	2,903	4,033	1,394	958	1,906	-34.3%	-10.0%
Non-reimbursed Kinship Care - Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Alternative Treatment Dependent							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Alternative Treatment Delinquent							
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%

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Dependent Community Residential								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	2	3	5	1	6	200.0%	31.6%	
Assistance Added	6	6	2	7	11	83.3%	16.4%	
Assistance Ended	5	4	6	2	11	120.0%	21.8%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	1,032	1,663	1,529	926	1,799	74.3%	14.9%	
Delinquent Community Residential								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	2	0	3	1	6	200.0%	31.6%	
Assistance Added	1	4	2	6	5	400.0%	49.5%	
Assistance Ended	3	1	4	1	9	200.0%	31.6%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	607	498	292	1,098	1,278	110.5%	20.5%	
Supervised Independent Living Dependent								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	0	1	1	1	2	100.0%	26.0%	
Assistance Added	1	3	3	4	1	0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Ended	0	3	3	3	3	0.0%	0.0%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	133	313	238	237	554	316.5%	42.9%	
Supervised Independent Living Delinquent								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0		0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0		0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0		0.0%	0.0%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0		0.0%	0.0%	
Juvenile Detention								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	1	0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Added	2	0	0	1	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Assistance Ended	2	0	0	0	1	-50.0%	-15.9%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	3	0	0	133	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Dependent Residential Services								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	7	4	1	2	2	-71.4%	-26.9%	
Assistance Added	1	0	5	3	5	400.0%	49.5%	
Assistance Ended	4	3	4	3	4	0.0%	0.0%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	2,160	733	381	791	704	-67.4%	-24.4%	
Delinquent Residential Services								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	2	2	1	0	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Assistance Added	1	0	1	0	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Assistance Ended	0	1	2	0	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	2,411	607	58	0	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Secure Residential (Except YDC)								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Added	0	0	0	0	1	0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	0	49	0.0%	0.0%	
Youth Detention Center / Youth Forestry Camps								View Chart
Receiving Care, First Day	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Assistance Added	0	0	0	1	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
Assistance Ended	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	
Total Days of Care (DOC)	0	0	0	210	0	-100.0%	-100.0%	
2-2e. Aging Out Data								
Indicator	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	% Change	CAGR	
Aging Out								
Number of Children Aging Out	1	2	2	1	3	200.0%	31.6%	
Have Permanent Residence	1	2	0	1	3	200.0%	31.6%	
Have Source of Income Support	1	2	0	1	3	200.0%	31.6%	
Have Life Connection	1	2	2	1	3	200.0%	31.6%	

2-2g. through 2-2i. Charts

- NOTE: The section is optional and applies to CCYAs and/or JPOs.
- NOTE: If inserting charts, identify the data source and parameters and include only one chart per page.
 - ❑ Insert up to three additional charts that capture the drivers of county services and supports the county's resource request. For example, these charts may be related to prevention or diversion activities or may be specific to areas or demographics that are driving influences on county resources and practices.
 - ❑ Counties may use data charts as provided by PCG or any other county data available. County specific charts outside of PCG data charts must clearly identify the source of the data.

Click to Paste Chart

Click to Paste Chart

Click to Paste Chart

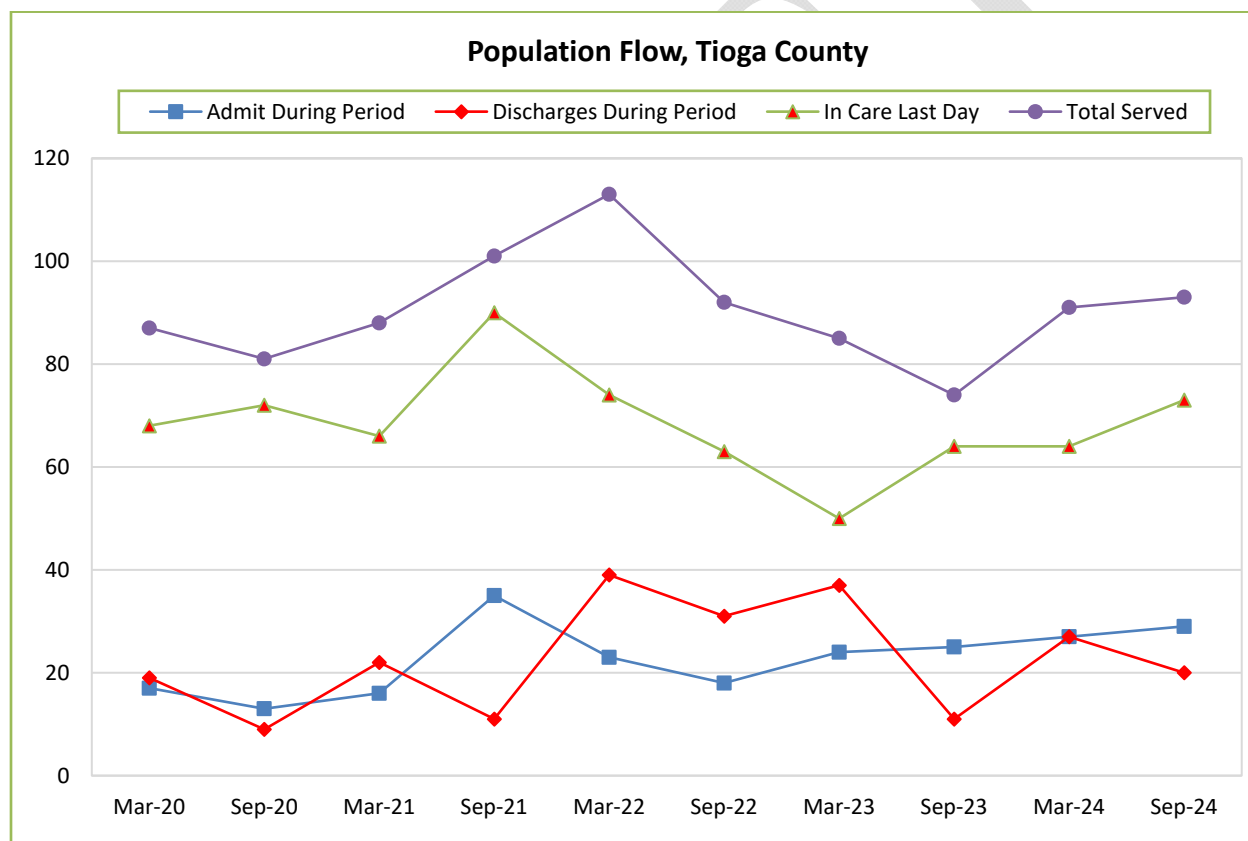
Chart Analysis for 2-2a. through 2-2i.

- **NOTE:** These questions apply to both the CCYA and JPO.
- ❑ Discuss any child welfare and juvenile justice service trends and describe factors contributing to the trends noted in the previous charts.
- ❑ Describe what changes in agency priorities or programs, if any, have contributed to changes in the number of children and youth served or in care and/or the rate at which children are discharged from care.
- ❑ Provide a description of children/youth placed in congregate care settings.
- Consider the children and youth who have the following characteristics, by race, age, and gender:
 - *Intellectual disability or autism;*
 - *A behavioral health impairment;*
 - *A physical disability;*
 - *Involvement with JPO; and*
 - *Identify as LGBTQ.*
- ❑ Identify the service and treatment needs of the youth counted above with as much specificity as possible.
- The below questions may assist in development of a response:
 - *What are the service and treatment needs?*
 - *Why can those services and treatment needs not be met in the community?*
 - *What barriers exist to accessing service and treatment needs in the community?*

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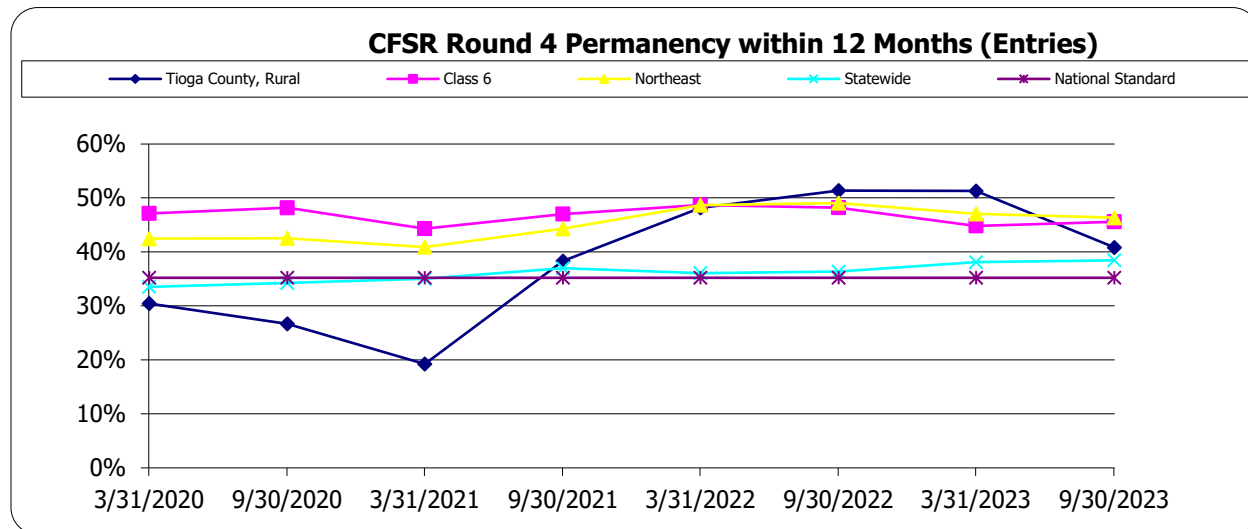
- ☐ Please describe the county's process related to congregate care placement decisions.
- ☒ The below questions may assist in development of a response:
- *What policies are in place to guide decision making?*
 - *Who oversees and is part of the decision?*
 - *Are youth involved in the decision-making? If so, how?*
 - *How is the decision reviewed?*
- ☐ How has the county adjusted staff ratios and/or resource allocations (both financial and staffing, including vacancies, hiring, turnover, etc.) in response to a change in the population of children and youth needing out-of-home care? Is the county's current resource allocation appropriate to address projected needs?

2-3a Population Flow



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2-3b Permanency in 12 Months (Entry)



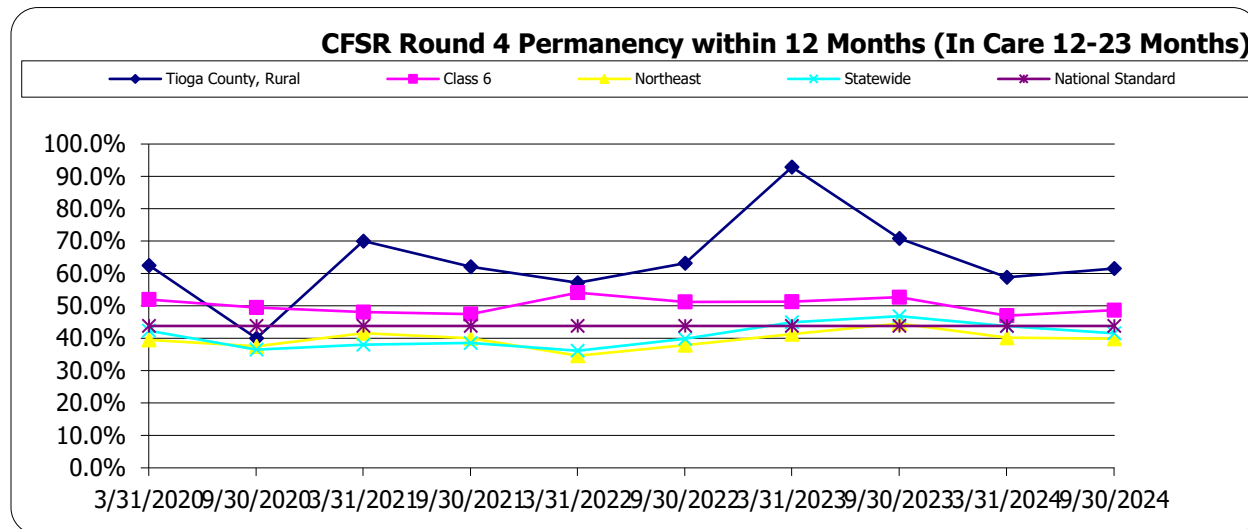
This indicator reports on the percentage of children and youth who enter care in a 12-month period and discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care. The national performance standard is 40.5%. A higher performance of the measure is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

Tioga County met the national standard with 47% of children who entered care being discharged to permanency within that same 12 months of entering care.

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2-3c. Permanency in 12 Months (in care 12-23 months)



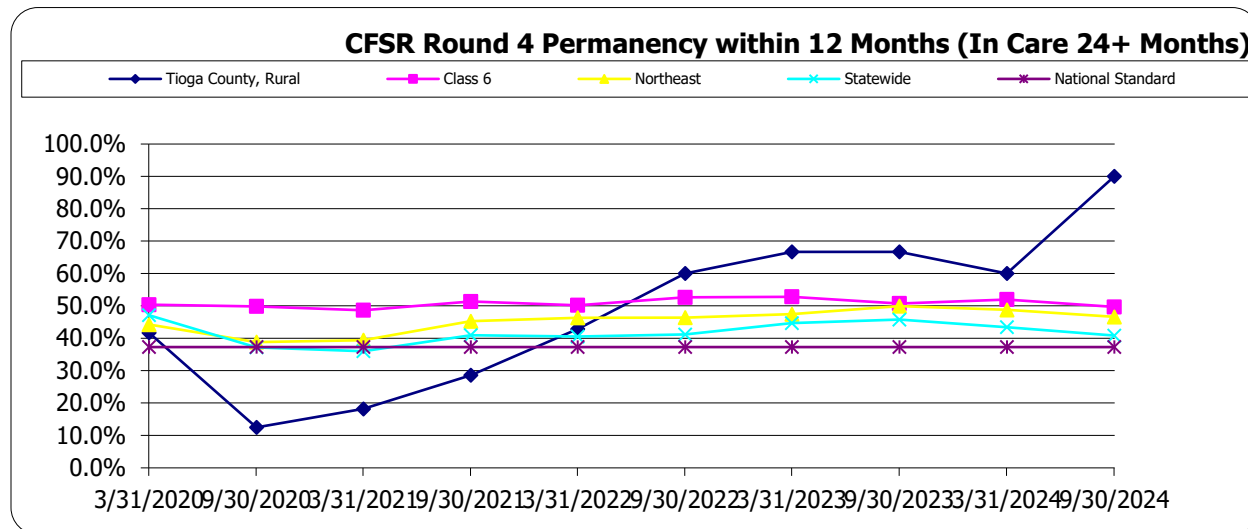
This indicator measures the percent of children and youth in care continuously between 12 and 23 months that discharged within 12 months of the first day in care. The national performance standard is 43.6%. A higher percentage is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

Tioga County meets the national performance standard at 60.2% of children discharged within 12 months of the first day of care for those children that were in care between 12 and 23 months.

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2-3d Permanency in 12 Months (in care 24 Months)



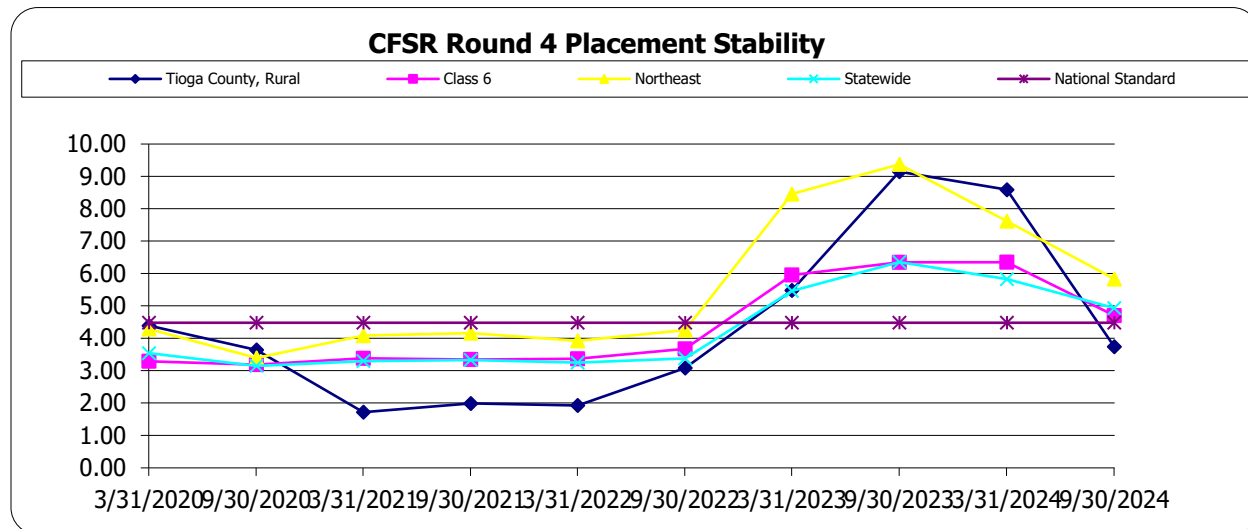
This indicator measures the percent of children who had been in care continuously for 24 months or more discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day in care. The national performance standard is 30.3%. A higher percentage is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county meet or exceed the national performance standard?

Tioga County met the national performance standard with 75% of children being discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering care.

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2-3e Placement Stability (Moves/1000 days in care)



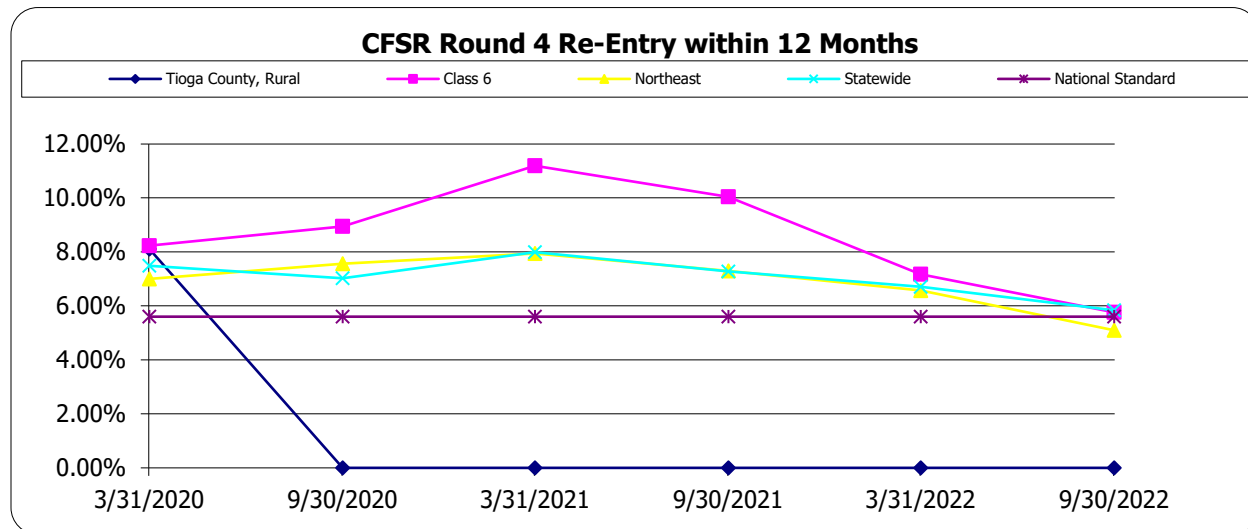
This indicator measures the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care for children and youth who enter care. The national performance standard is 4.12 moves. A lower number of moves is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Does the county have less placement moves than the national performance standard?

Tioga County's average moves were 6.17 moves. That is approximately 50% higher than the national performance standard. Tioga County experienced more moves.

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2-3f Re-entry (in 12 Months)



This indicator measures the percent of children and youth who re-enter care within 12 months of discharge to reunification, live with a relative, or guardianship. The national performance standard is 8.3%. A lower percentage is desirable in this indicator.

☐ Is the county's re-entry rate less than the national performance standard?

Tioga County's percentage of children re-entering care within 12 months of discharge to reunification is 3.8%. Therefore, Tioga County was considerable lower than the national performance standard. Tioga County had two children re-enter care. One child was due to a failed adoption post 6 months from the adoption, and one child re-entered after 4.5 months of exiting care.

2-4 Program Improvement Strategies

For FY 2026-27, counties will fully evaluate their performance in achieving permanency and stability for children and youth who enter placement. The analysis of current practices and services toward meeting the national performance standard for timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability in placement will identify areas in which targeted program improvement is warranted. This analysis will also help to identify areas of technical assistance needed at the county level to address challenges identified. In addition, the areas of technical assistance identified on the county level across all counties in the commonwealth will help to identify areas that need addressed through a statewide focus. As part of the analysis, counties should take a holistic view of the data available to them, including information in the data packages provided, county-specific data, general indicators, etc.

As part of the data packages, counties were also provided data regarding:

- re-entry and reunification for dependent children and youth only (no SCR);
- children whose placement stay was 30 days or less;
- the number of children entering foster care for the first time who were in previous adoptions; and
- removal reasons for children and youth in placement.

Counties that do not meet or exceed national performance standard must identify program improvement strategies based on their analysis. Based on the county analysis of the data presented in 2-2a through 2-2i and 2-3a through 2-3f, as well as other county data reviewed, counties may also choose to consider other areas in which program improvement strategies have been identified. The following questions and steps outlined below will assist counties in identifying priority outcomes and identification of practice improvement strategies.

1. ANALYSIS

The analysis phase consists of two iterative steps: data analysis and root cause analysis. Initial data analysis can begin the root cause analysis process and the root cause analysis process often requires additional data analysis as one continues to seek more information about why a problem exists.

In addition to utilizing the analysis of the national performance standard for timeliness to permanence, re-entry and stability in placement, the county should consider conducting additional analysis to define problems to be addressed. The county may consider conducting analysis to determine if children and youth who do not achieve permanency in 12 months, do not have placement stability (less than four moves), and do not re-enter care differ from those who DO. The following questions should be considered in this analysis.

- a. Are there any distinctions in age, gender, race, disabilities, etc.?

When reviewing data on children who have been in care for 12+ months, Tioga County had maintained custody of 60 children who had been in care for over 12 months. Out of those 60 children, thirty-six (60%) were males and twenty-four (40%) were females. Looking at age ranges at the time of placement for those in care 12+ months, there were twenty-three children that were aged 0-5 (38%), eighteen that were 6-11 (30%), and nineteen that were aged 12-18 (32%). Eight (13%) of the 60 children were bi-racial and fifty-two (87%) were Caucasian. Of the 52 Children that were removed in FY 2024/25, there were twenty-six (50%) females and twenty-six (50%) males. The average age of those children removed during FY 2024/25 is eight years old. This remains consistent. Out of the 30 children currently in care 12+ months, the average age is ten years old. Parental rights are terminated for 13 (43%) of those 30 children.

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b. Are there differences in family structure, family constellation or other family system variables (for example, level of family conflict, parental mental health & substance use)?
Of the 52 children that were removed in FY 2024/25, thirty (58%) of those children were part of thirteen sibling groups.

c. Are there differences in the services and supports provided to the child/youth, family, foster family or placement facility?

There are no differences in services available to families.

d. Are there differences in the removal reasons for entry into placement?
Twenty-three (44%) children were removed due to substance use with one (4%) of those being child substance use. Five (10%) of children removed were due to Domestic Violence within the home. Tioga County experienced one relinquishment and one abandonment.

e. Are there differences in the initial placement type?
Tioga County, being a Phase II Family Engagement Initiative (FEI) County, has seen a large increase in initial Kinship Placements. Out of 52 children removed during FY 2024/25, 35 (67%) children were placed into directly into Kinship Care. Therefore, there was a decrease in Foster Care placements, 11 (21%) of children were placed in Foster Care.
The results of the data analysis will lead the county in further root cause analysis in which root causes are identified.

a. What are the resulting root causes identified by the county analysis.
Tioga County reviewed data information at a stakeholder meeting on 7/10/25 via data information and charts that had been provided. The discussion took place on the basis for removals, the increase in Kinship Placements, as well as other concerns that are occurring within the different school districts. The group discussed concerns with the moves children are facing and what the reasons may be. This included instability within Kinship Placements due to the requirements facing certification to be a Foster Home, as well as the lack of change in dynamics of Kinship Homes compared to the home of origin of the children removed. There continues to be concerns with the lack of Mental Health services available in the community. There continues to be turnover between supervisors and staff.

2. PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED:

Copy and complete the table below as needed to describe the strategies the county will implement to achieve each desired outcome related to the root causes identified above. Provide rationale for how each strategy will contribute to the achievement of each outcome. Several strategies may be identified for each outcome. Communication with staff and partners should be considered critical action steps, as should the analysis of county and provider capacities in implementing change.

Outcome #: 1

Related performance measures, if applicable:

Strategy:	Tioga County will increase the communication and support between Foster Parents, Biological Parents, Caseworkers, and any Provider that may have contact with the family and increase the timeliness of referrals to lessen the frequency of moves.
Identify if this is an existing strategy identified in prior year NBPB or a new strategy:	Existing strategy with additions.

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Action Steps with Timeframes (may be several):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tioga County will send the referrals for any Child and Parent assessments, counseling, D&A services etc. within a 10-day period of removal. This will provide speed up the process of being aware of the history of the child. 2. Foster care staff utilizing Foster Care mentors to provide additional supports for current Foster Parents. 3. Foster Care to formulate a Foster Parent Support Group, more in person meetings, and in-person trainings to support Foster Parents with acknowledging the areas of concern they may have with behaviors, MH concerns, and being more trauma informed. 4. Paralegals will monitor Court activity and services that are ordered to ensure follow up to referrals needing to be made are completed.
Indicators/Benchmarks (how progress will be measured):	Less moves for children and better communication which will provide permanency in a shorter period of time.
Evidence of Completion:	Foster Parent rates increased FY 2024/25.
Resources Needed (financial, staff, community supports, etc.):	<p>Approval of an additional Foster Care Caseworker.</p> <p>Approval of a Foster Care Caseworker addition to the On-Call System.</p> <p>Stabilize the Foster Care Unit.</p>
Current Status:	In process
Monitoring Plan:	Complete a follow up to the Foster Care Survey.
Identify areas of Technical Assistance Needed:	

For Program Improvement Areas that were identified in the FY 2025-26 NBPB Submissions, please review them and incorporate the ones that fit with one or more of the outcomes identified above. This approach encourages development of a single plan which encompasses all your improvement efforts.

Section 3: Administration

3-1a. Employee Benefit Detail

- ☐ Submit a detailed description of the county's employee benefit package for FY 2024-25. Include a description of each benefit included in the package and the methodology for calculating benefit costs.

Health Insurance – Tioga County provides all full-time employees an opportunity to enroll with AETNA Health Insurance. Employees already insured by another entity may decline coverage and therefore receive a rebate of \$1,200.00 annually. For the individuals that do wish to be covered by the County plan, there is one option: PPO High-Deductible High Option Plan. This plan is amended by the insurance carrier from time to time; please refer to the plan document further specification of current benefit. The amount each employee contributes toward their own, as well as their dependent coverage varies depending on the employee's date of hire. Employees hired prior to January 1, 1991, are entitled to have the County pay the full premium for

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individual and dependent coverage. Individuals hired January 1, 1991, through December 31, 1994, are entitled to have the County pay the full premium for individual coverage, however, dependent coverage must be purchased by the employee. Employees hired January 1, 1995, or thereafter, are responsible for paying a co-pay amount of the premium for themselves and any dependents. In addition, eligible employees may opt to exchange five days of vacation for a reduced employee contribution for the dependent coverage portion.

Life Insurance – At no cost to the employee, the County, through the purchase of a group term life insurance policy, provides accidental death and dismemberment to each eligible full-time employee on the active County payroll in the amount of \$25,000.00 (life)/\$50,000 (ADD).

Vision Plan – Upon completion of six months of continuous employment, each full-time employee is entitled to reimbursement in regard to eye care. Reimbursement is available to the employee, their spouse, and any dependents under the age of 18 residing within their household. Dependents that are unmarried and enrolled as full-time college students are eligible until the age of 23. The County will annually reimburse each eligible individual a lump sum up to \$300.00 for vision expenses.

Dental Plan – Tioga County provides dental care underwritten by Delta Dental of Pennsylvania for all full-time employees. The plan entitles employees to receive 100% payment for exams and cleanings, 80% payment for basic restoration, minor oral surgery, and 50% for major restorative when utilizing participating dentists. This benefit is provided at no cost to the employee; dependents can be added at a cost of \$27.92 per pay (24 pays).

Retirement Plan – Membership in the County retirement plan is mandatory for all full-time employees immediately upon employment. Part-time employees automatically become participants after completing 1,000 hours of service during a twelve-month period, two years in a row. Each employee in the retirement system must contribute at least 9% of their gross earnings but may opt to contribute up to 19% of their gross earnings.

Employees are eligible for a superannuation retirement pension once they are 60 years of age or older regardless of length of credited service or once they are 55 years of age and have twenty years of credited service. An employee may opt for early retirement at any age once they have twenty years of credited service under the auspice that they are separating from County employment on a voluntary basis. After completing five years of continuous service, employees are 100% vested. The vested pension is contingent upon reaching superannuation retirement age. Once the employee has made the decision to retire, the employee can choose from five options of payment. The first choice is “No Option” in which the employee will receive a full monthly pension as long as the employee lives, with the guarantee that if the total pension the employee receives to the date of their death is less than what the member’s accumulated deductions were at the time of retirement, the balance will be payable to their designated beneficiaries. “Option One” allows the employee to receive a lesser monthly amount than the full “No Option” pension for as long as they live, with the added guarantee that if the total pension they received to the date of their death is less than Present Value of their pension at the time of retirement, the balance will be payable to their designated beneficiaries, “Option Two” is a 100% joint-life pension, which is based upon their age and the age of their designated beneficiary and is payable as long as either lives. “Option Three” is a 50% joint-life pension, which is based upon their age and age of the designated beneficiary and is payable as long as either lives. “Option Four” allows the employee to withdraw, in one payment at retirement, the accumulated deductions credited to their individual member account. Pensions begin the first day of retirement and are payable at the end of each month.

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3-1b. Organizational Changes

- ☐ Note any changes to the county's organizational chart.

There have been no major changes to Tioga County's organizational chart for the current Needs-Based Plan submission. The structure remains consistent with the prior fiscal year, ensuring continuity in service delivery and program oversight. However, significant changes are anticipated in the next Needs-Based Plan, as Specialized Services are expected to transition back under direct County Management. This upcoming shift will be reflected in the future organizational structure to align with the evolving needs of the agency and enhance local oversight and service coordination.

3-1c. Complement

- ☐ Describe what steps the agency is taking to promote the hiring of staff regardless of whether staff are hired to fill vacancies or for newly created positions.

- ☐ Describe the agency's strategies to address recruitment and retention concerns.

Tioga County has taken several proactive steps to promote the hiring and retention of staff within the agency. Toward the end of this fiscal year, Tioga County was fortunate to fill several casework vacancies, helping to stabilize staffing levels. In alignment with long-term workforce goals, a Staff Relations Position that was approved in last year's Needs-Based Plan is currently in the interview phase. Once filled, this position will take the lead in recruitment and retention strategies for the department. In addition to traditional hiring efforts, Tioga County Caseworkers and Support Staff have actively participated in community outreach, including "First Friday" events in downtown Wellsboro, where they provide free activities for families and engage with local organizations and businesses to build community presence and awareness. Looking ahead, Tioga County plans to be intentional in building relationships with local colleges, with the goal of encouraging students to apply for internships and consider employment with the Agency following graduation. These efforts reflect Tioga County's ongoing commitment to strengthening its workforce and ensuring continuity of care for the families it serves.

Section 4: Required & Additional Language

➡ 4-1a. Assurances

The following pages include assurance forms to be completed by counties. These forms are:

- Assurance of Compliance/Participation
- Documentation of Participation by the Judiciary
- Assurance of Financial Commitment and Participation

**The following forms must be signed and submitted electronically via the
Send Secure Submissions folders on DocuShare.**

**ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE/PARTICIPATION FORM
DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUVENILE COURT**

The Assurance of Compliance/Review Form provided in this bulletin must be signed by the County Executive or a majority of the County Commissioners, the Juvenile Court Judge(s) or his/her designee, the County Human Services Director, the County Children and Youth Administrator, and the County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and submitted with the FY 2026-27 Needs-Based Plan and Budget submission.

The Assurance of Compliance/Review Form has two signatory pages. The first page is for the County Human Services Director, the County Children and Youth Administrator, the County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, and the Juvenile Court Judge(s) or his/her designee. This page must be submitted at the time of the county's implementation plan and needs based plan submissions. The second page is for the signatures of the County Executive or a majority of the County Commissioners. It must be submitted at the time of the county's financial budget submission and must contain the financial commitment of the county.

COUNTY: Tioga

These assurances are applicable as indicated below.

 X Fiscal Year 2026-27 Children and Youth Needs-Based Plan and Budget Estimate; and

 X Fiscal Year 2025-26 Children and Youth Implementation Plan

Note: A separate, signed Assurance of Compliance/Participation form must accompany the Children and Youth Implementation Plan and the Needs-Based Plan and Budget when they are submitted separately. This Assurance of Compliance/Participation form cannot be modified or altered in any manner, or the Children and Youth Implementation Plan and the Needs-Based Plan and Budget will not be accepted.

COMMON ASSURANCES

I/We hereby expressly, and as a condition precedent to the receipt of state and federal funds, assure that in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955 as amended, and 16 PA Code, Chapter 49 (Contract Compliance Regulations):

1. I/We do not and will not discriminate against any person because of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability:
 - a. In providing services or employment, or in our relationship with other providers;
 - b. In providing access to services and employment for handicapped individuals.
2. I/We will comply with all regulations promulgated to enforce the statutory provisions against discrimination.

I/We assure that these documents shall constitute the agreement required by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. § 672 (a)(2) for foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payments.

I/We assure:

- The County Children and Youth Agency and Juvenile Probation Office have the responsibility for placement and care of the children for whom Title IV-E foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payments are claimed;
- The County Children and Youth Agency/Juvenile Probation Office will provide each child all the statutory and regulatory protections required under the Title IV-E agency, including permanency hearings, case plans etc.;
- The agreement between the Office of Children, Youth and Families and the County Children and Youth Agency/Juvenile Probation Office shall be binding on both parties; and
- The state Title IV-E agency shall have access to case records, reports, or other informational materials that may be needed to monitor Title IV-E compliance.

I/We understand that any Administration for Children and Families disallowance incurred as a result of county noncompliance with Title IV-E prevention, foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, subsidized permanent legal custodianship, or Title IV-E administrative claim requirements will be the responsibility of the county.

I/We assure that all information herein is true to the best of my/our knowledge and belief based on my/our thorough review of the information submitted.

EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES

In addition to the Common Assurances,

I/We assure that I/we have participated in the development of the Plan, agree with the Plan as submitted and that all mandated services if funded by the Plan will be delivered.

I/We assure that these Plans comply with the "Planning and Financial Reimbursement Requirements for County Children and Youth Social Services Programs" as found in 55 PA Code Chapter 3140.

I/We assure that, when approved by the Department of Human Services, the attached Children and Youth Implementation Plan and Needs-Based Plan and Budget, including any new initiatives, additional staff and/or increased services and special grants that are approved, shall be the basis for administration of public child welfare services for all children in need under Article VII of the Public Welfare Code, 62 P.S. § 701 et seq., as amended.

I/We assure that, where possible, the county will cooperate with state efforts to maximize the use of federal funds for the services in this Plan.

I/We assure that all contracts for the provision of services addressed herein will require the providers to comply with Chapter 49 provisions (contract compliance regulations).

I/We assure that expenditure of funds shall be in accordance with these Plans and estimates, and Department of Human Service regulations.

I/We assure that services required by 55 PA Code 3130.34 through 3130.38 will be made available as required by 55 PA Code 3140.17 (b)(2).

I/We assure that the capacity of both the county and the providers has been assessed and it is my/our judgment that it will be adequate to implement the Plan as presented.

I/We assure all Title IV-E foster care maintenance, adoption assistance, and subsidized permanent legal custodianship payment eligibility requirements are met for the specified children, not merely addressed by the agreement.

I/We assure that the County Children and Youth Advisory Committee has participated in the development of this Plan and has reviewed the Plan as submitted.

I/We assure that representatives of the community, providers, and consumers have been given the opportunity to participate in the development of this Plan.

I/We assure that the county programs that affect children (e.g., Mental Health, Intellectual Disabilities, and Drug and Alcohol) have participated in the development and review of this Plan.

I/We understand that the accompanying budget projections are based on estimates and that the amounts may change when the state budget is adopted and final allocations are made.

I/We understand that substantial changes to the Plans subsequent to Departmental approval must be submitted to the Regional Office of Children, Youth and Families for approval.

I/We assures the Plan was made available for public comment prior to submission and that any comments were considered before the Plan was submitted. I/We assure that all new Guardians Ad Litem (GAL) have/will complete the pre-service training prior to being appointed to represent a child. If the GAL has not completed the pre-service training, costs incurred for representation of children by this GAL will not be claimed.

I/We assure that the County Children and Youth Agency is in compliance with all credit reporting agency requirements regarding the secure transmission and use of confidential credit information of children in foster care through electronic access for operation by counties where no agreement exists between the county and credit history agency. This also includes limiting online access to users approved by the Office of Children, Youth and Families for the explicit use of obtaining credit history reports for children in agency foster care.

**COUNTY ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE AND PARTICIPATION
DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUVENILE COURT**

**THE SIGNATURES OF THESE COUNTY OFFICIALS REPRESENTS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY
COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE COMMON AND EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN THE
PRECEEDING PARAGRAPHS**

County Human Services Director

Sara J Rice	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

County Children and Youth Administrator

Mary Wilson	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

County Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

Troy Freeman	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

DOCUMENTATION OF PARTICIPATION BY THE JUDICIARY

In addition to the Common Assurances:

I/We assure that I/we had the opportunity to review, comment, and/or participate to the level desired in the development of the Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

I/We assure that the plan accurately reflects the needs of children and youth served by the juvenile court.

I/We assure that the Juvenile Probation Office has actively participated in the development of the Children, Youth and Families' Needs-Based Plan and Budget.

Judicial Comments:

Juvenile Court Judge(s)/ Designee

Judge George W Wheeler	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

COUNTY ASSURANCE OF FINANCIAL COMMITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

THE SIGNATURES OF THESE COUNTY OFFICIALS REPRESENTS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTY COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE COMMON AND EXECUTIVE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN THE PRECEEDING PARAGRAPHS AS WELL AS COUNTY COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE THE LOCAL FUNDS SPECIFIED IN THE PLAN AS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN THE MATCHING STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS BASED ON THE COUNTY'S PROPOSAL. THE LOCAL FUND COMMITMENT AS PROVIDED IN THE COUNTY'S PROPOSAL TOTAL \$_____.

Signature(s)

County Executive/Mayor

_____	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

County Commissioners

<u>Marc Rice</u>	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

<u>Shane Nickerson</u>	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date

<u>Sam VanLoon II</u>	_____	_____
Name	Signature	Date