

The Biden–Harris Administration Awards \$20 Million to Launch First National Center to Support Mental Health Services in the Child Welfare System

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September 25, 2023

Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) awarded \$20 million to launch the first-ever National Center for Child Welfare Competent Mental Health Services (the Center). As part of [HHS' Roadmap for Behavioral Health Integration](#), this investment is one of many ways that ACF is working to answer the Biden Harris Administration's call to transform the delivery of mental health care in the U.S.

The recipient of the award is the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.). They will work with national leaders as well as parents and young adults with lived experience to deliver new and enhanced support and training to states, tribes, territories, professionals, and peer support professionals to meet the needs of children and families. The Center will be funded at \$4 million for each of the five-year award.

“The adoption journey is full of joy and love, but also challenges,” said Acting Assistant Secretary Jeff Hild. “ACF is proud to support the Center and the child welfare workforce to ensure that children, young adults, and families who consider and experience adoption have access to mental health professionals who are trained to provide culturally and linguistically relevant mental health services to address separation, grief, trauma, and other challenges that can arise.”

The Center will provide technical assistance and evidence-informed training to strengthen coordination and capacity among child welfare and mental health professionals and systems to improve the quality of mental health services they provide to children, young adults, and their families who are involved in the child welfare system and who have experienced adoption. They will develop strategies for making trauma-based culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate mental health services consistently and comprehensively available throughout each state, tribe, and territory. In FY2021, over [113,000 children were in foster care waiting to be adopted, and over 53,500 children](#) (PDF) exited foster care to an adoptive family.

This grant will build on the success of the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative, which began in 2014 and has been supported through grants from ACF.

“Every day young people and families tell us they need more mental health support that is relevant to their experience, culture, and language,” said Rebecca Jones Gaston, Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families. “The new Center will provide a much-needed role in building bridges across the child welfare and mental health workforces to ensure they are better equipped to support young people and families and promote healing and well-being.”

For more information on ACF’s behavioral health initiatives and resources, please visit:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/behavioral-health>

Quotes

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— *Acting Assistant Secretary Jeff Hild*

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— *Rebecca Jones Gaston, Commissioner, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families*

Additional Links

- [ACF Behavioral Health](#)

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