

OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ADMINISTERING THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT



The Children's Services Act (CSA, §2.2-2648 et seq.) was enacted in 1993 to create a collaborative system of services and funding for at-risk youth and families.

The CSA establishes local multidisciplinary teams responsible to work with families to plan services according to each child's unique strengths and needs and to administer the community's CSA activities.

The Office of Children's Services (OCS) is the administrative entity responsible for ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the CSA across the Commonwealth.

Guiding principles for OCS include:

- Child and family directed care,
- Equitable access to quality services,
- Responsible and effective use of public funds,
- Support for effective, evidence-based practices, and
- Collaborative partnerships across state, local, public, and private stakeholders.



Office of Children's Services
Empowering communities to serve youth

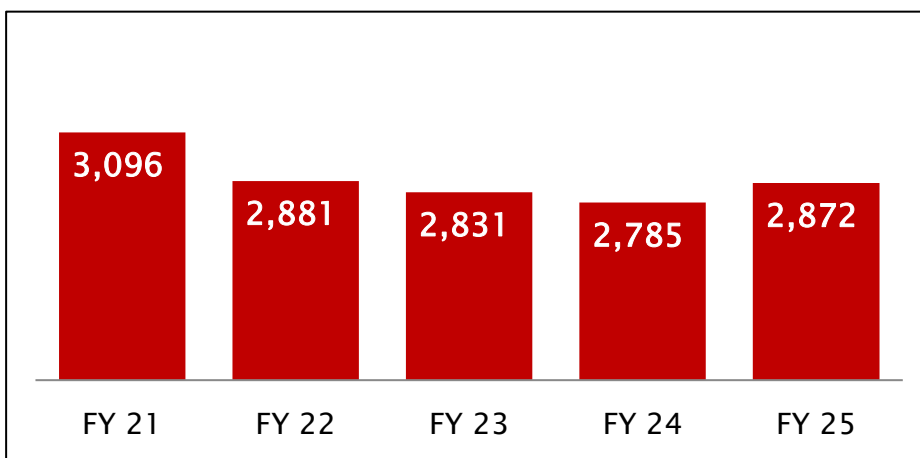
THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE SERVICES UNDER THE CSA

*Annual Report to the General Assembly, December 1, 2025
In accordance with the Appropriation Act, Chapter 725, Item 268 (K)(1)*

Item 268. K.1. The Office of Children's Services (OCS) shall report on funding for therapeutic foster care services including but not limited to the number of children served annually, average cost of care, type of service provided, length of stay, referral source, and ultimate disposition.

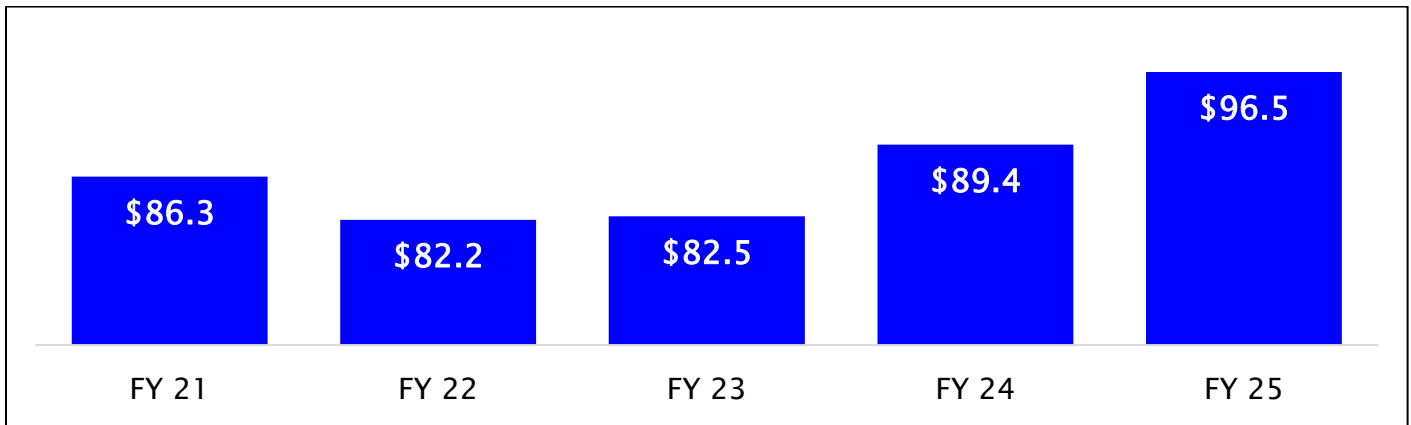
Therapeutic foster care (TFC)¹ is an intervention that addresses the placement and service needs of children in the custody of a local department of social services (LDSS). Foster parents trained, supervised, and supported by a private agency (licensed child-placing agency, or LCPA) provide TFC. TFC is family-based, goal-directed, and results-oriented, emphasizing permanency planning for children in care. An LDSS makes all referrals for TFC. The CSA reimburses localities for the (daily) cost of "support, supervision, and administration" of the TFC placement by the LCPA and for maintenance payments to the foster family. Maintenance, which the Virginia Department of Social Services defines as: "payments made on behalf of a child in foster care to cover the cost of (and the cost of providing) food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, a child's personal incidentals, liability insurance with respect to a child, and reasonable travel for the child to visit with family or other caretakers and to remain in his or her previous school placement," may be partially offset by federal/state Title IV-E reimbursements for eligible children. Title IV-E funds are handled through the LDSS and the state Department of Social Services.

Therapeutic Foster Care Number of Youth Served

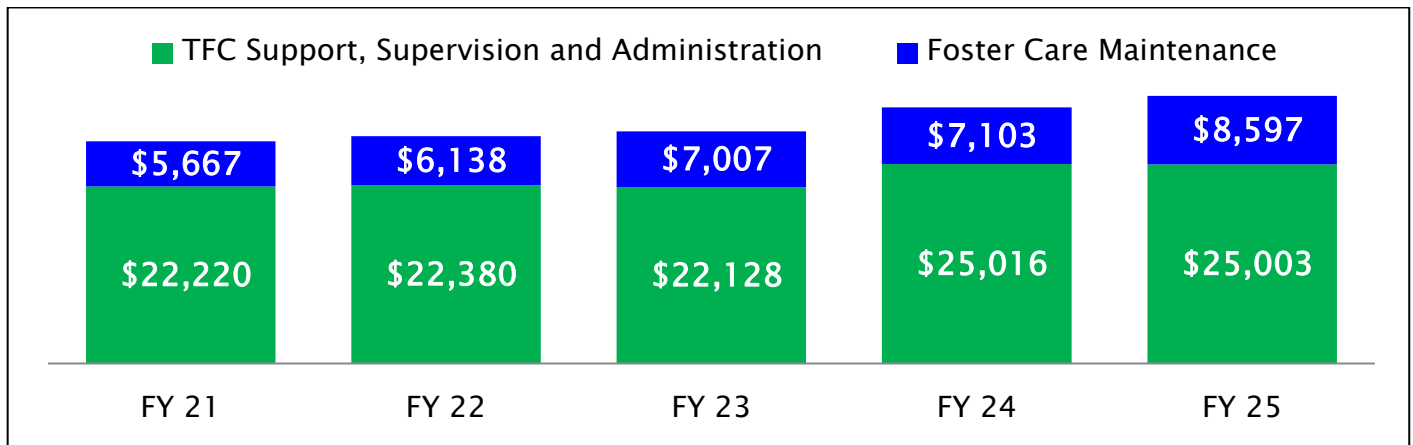


¹ The term "therapeutic" foster care is often used interchangeably with "treatment" foster care.

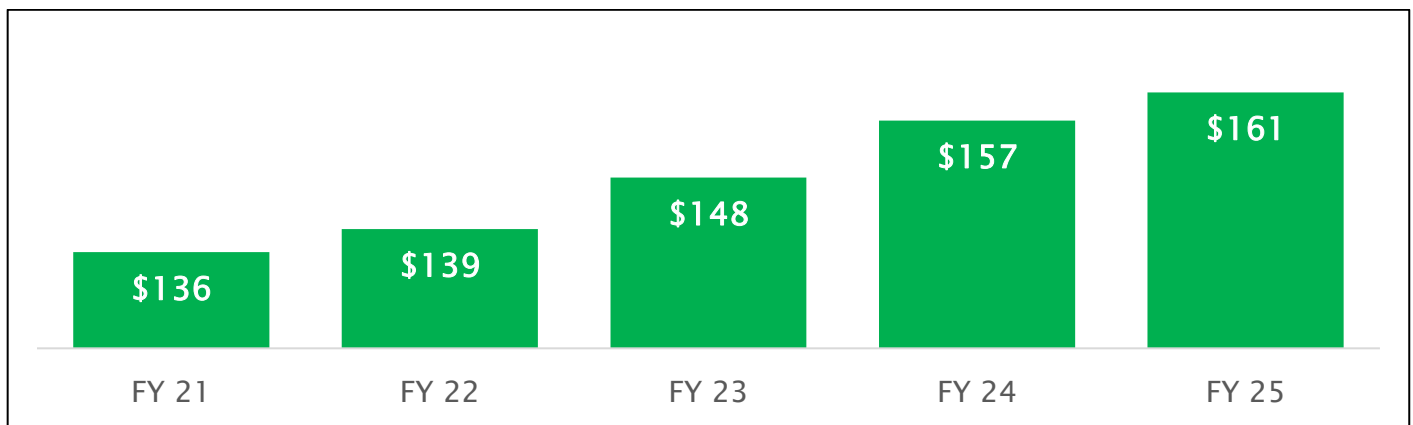
**Therapeutic Foster Care
Total CSA Expenditures (Millions)**



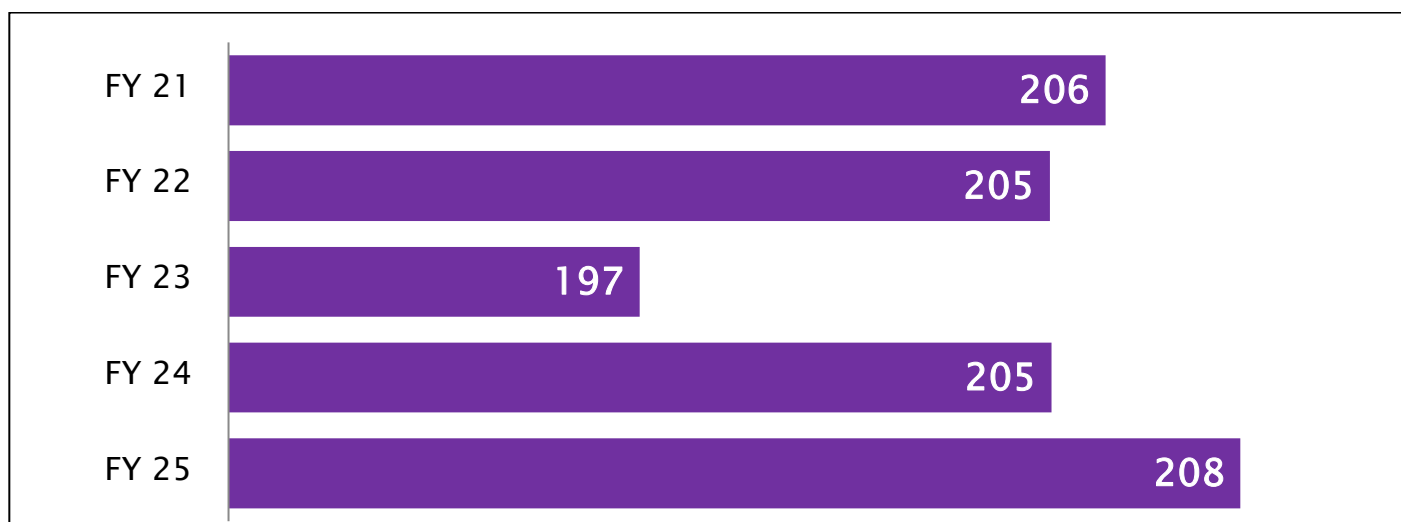
**Therapeutic Foster Care
Average Annual CSA Expenditure per Child**



**Therapeutic Foster Care
Average Per Diem Expenditure per Child (Including Maintenance)**



Therapeutic Foster Care Average Length of Stay (Number of Days/Year)



Discussion

TFC, provided through Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA), is a primary resource to local departments of social services (LDSS) for foster care placements in Virginia. LCPAs are private agencies that, among other services, provide foster home placements. Approximately 29% of the children in foster care on June 30, 2025 (5,695, 8% higher than in FY2024) were in a TFC program. The number of children in a TFC placement increased by 3.1% from the previous year. This utilization rate reflects ongoing challenges in LDSS's ability to establish "agency foster homes" (foster families recruited and supported by the local department) and the needs of children in foster care and their foster families for higher support than typically provided in agency foster homes. In the long term, the number of youth placed in TFC has decreased over the past five years (-7.2% since 2021). In FY2025, a TFC placement (excluding monthly maintenance and enhanced maintenance payments) averaged \$125 per day or approximately \$25,000 per child over the year. Children remained in a TFC setting for an average of 200 days during FY2025, with an overall length of stay crossing multiple fiscal years (from entry to discharge) of 455 days. The increasing overall cost for TFC placements is due to two main factors: increased maintenance costs (tied to statutorily required maintenance rate increases) and the increased number of children placed.