

Family Urgent Response System Implementation



Background

Children and youth who have spent time in foster care have already experienced maltreatment, loss, and disrupted relationships. To heal from this trauma, they need stable homes and living situations where they can develop and maintain supportive, consistent, and loving relationships with at least one adult committed to them unconditionally. Efforts by caregivers and youth to build strong relationships can quickly derail when they face barriers accessing crucial community-based, trauma-informed supports during critical moments. Without immediate supports and services, even minor miscommunications and frustrations can intensify and have detrimental results, leaving youth feeling further traumatized and possibly facing another relationship disruption, a change in living situation, hospitalization, institutionalization, or even re-entry into foster care for young people who have exited care to adoption, reunification, or guardianship. Even worse, in many circumstances, police are called during situations of instability, leading to the inappropriate criminalization of children who have experienced trauma.

Enacted in 2019, the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) is designed to provide children and youth currently or formerly in foster care and their caregivers with the immediate trauma-informed support they need when issues big and small arise through a 24/7 statewide hotline and county mobile response systems. This coordinated state and community-based solution is needed now more than ever to help preserve relationships, link youth and families to longer-term supports and services, promote healing, and prevent calls to law enforcement and criminalization of traumatized youth in the face of the added isolation, uncertainty, anxiety, and instability brought on by the pandemic. FURS is also a critical resource to promote stability for older youth (up to age 21) currently or formerly in foster care who are living on their own. The [Cal-FURS statewide hotline](#) launched in March 2021 and all 58 counties launched their full mobile response systems as of July 2021.

Next Steps

Moving forward, it will be important to ensure:

1. Youth currently or formerly in foster care, caregivers, and other stakeholders are informed about FURS and encouraged to use this valuable resource;
2. Youth and caregiver feedback is gathered and used to inform FURS quality improvement efforts; and
3. FURS is effectively implemented to provide 24/7 trauma-informed support to preserve relationships, prevent law enforcement contacts, promote healing, and stabilize living situations.

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