



# JOHNSON COUNTY Decategorization Project

*Laurie Nash – Youth and Family Services Manager*

## FY25 ANNUAL SERVICES PLAN

**Decategorization Project Name:** Johnson County Decategorization  
**Participating Counties:** Johnson  
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### Overview

The Johnson County Decategorization Board consisted of ten members at the writing of this plan. Members represent the Department of Health & Human Services, Juvenile Court Services, the Board of Supervisors, public health, domestic violence prevention, school districts, community members, and youth serving organizations. At this time, the Decat Board is accepting applications to the board and is specifically recruiting for a community representative. The Board meets on a monthly basis, with the Contract Oversight/Review Committee convening on an as needed basis to review grant proposals, monitor projects, and put forth funding recommendations.

### Funding

Available Funding for FY25	
\$ <b>283,916.02</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
\$ 123,989.02	FY24 funds unencumbered and carried forward
\$ 71,027.00	FY25 Legislative Allocation held for FY26
\$ 26,000.00	PSSF FY25 transfer
\$ 20,000.00	CPPC allocation
\$ 3,000.00	Juvenile Court Services transfer – Shoplifters
\$ 39,900.00	Juvenile Court Services transfer – PCD
\$ 0.00	FY24 DECAT carry-forward (not yet certified)

Executed contracts include:

Priority Service Area: Address the needs of children and families currently involved in the child welfare system and/or juvenile court system paying particular attention to the needs of minority children and families		
Funding Allocated	CONTRACTOR	Brief Description
\$2,500 JCS Designated	United Action for Youth-Shoplifters Diversion (DCAT4-25-022)	A diversion program for youth charged with first offense shoplifting and their parents. The program aims to prevent future involvement in the juvenile court system.
\$26,000 PSSF (designated)	Families Inc.- PSSF-Supervised Visitation and Parent Education (DCAT4-25-023)	Support parent/child bonding and attachment by providing supplemental supervised visits for families with young children placed in family foster care or relative placement.
\$38,000	TBD Juvenile Pre-Charge Diversion Coordination and Expansion (DCAT4-25-024)	Interpretation and translation services for youth involved in Juvenile Court Services and their families.
\$66,500 33%	Category total and percent of funding	

Priority Service Area: Address isolation and mental health and trauma needs of youth and families that are at risk of involvement on the child welfare and/or juvenile court system paying particular attention to the needs of minority children and families.		
Funding Allocated	CONTRACTOR	Brief Description
\$35,000	UAY Pride Mental Health Supports (DCAT4-24-002)	Mental health supports for youth and families. Includes bi-weekly therapeutic mental health focused youth groups, individual counseling sessions, community-based presentations and consultations regarding mental health needs of LGBTQ+ youth.
\$5,500	Families, Inc. Nurturing Parent (DCAT4-24-009)	To provide in-home parenting program using the Nurturing Parent curriculum. Program primarily works with moms strengthening parent-child relationships and parent supports.
\$9,500	United Action for Youth Pride Parenting Groups (DCAT4-24-004)	Parenting supports for families with LGBTQ+ youth in Johnson County. Includes Parent Groups and Support Sessions.
\$50,000 25%	Category total and percent of funding	

Priority Service Area: Promote positive youth development for youth ages 6 to 16 during out of school time, paying particular attention to youth most at risk for involvement in the child welfare or juvenile court system		
Funding Allocated	CONTRACTOR	Brief Description

<b>\$45,000</b>	<b>United Action for Youth Positive Youth Development for LGBTQ+ Youth (DCAT4-24-003)</b>	Positive youth development services for LGBTQ+ youth ages 6-16 in Johnson County. Includes Pride Groups in 3 school districts, Pride Hangouts, Pride Camp, Pride Rock, and Peer Leadership.
<b>\$45,000</b> <b>32%</b>	Category total and percent of funding	

<b>Other Contracts:</b>		
<b>Funding Allocated</b>	<b>CONTRACTOR</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>Johnson County Administration (DCAT4-23-001)</b>	Decat Coordination and Johnson County Social Services staff time.
<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (DCAT4-24-001)</b>	CPPC programming, Neighborhood and Community Networking, mini-grants, and SDMT coordination.
<b>\$38,000</b> <b>19%</b>	Category total and percent of funding	
<b>\$199,500</b> <b>70%</b>	Total currently allocated for FY25	

## **Community Planning:**

The Decat Board's process for community planning is ongoing. The Board identifies programming needs throughout the year through discussion of community partner needs assessments and updated data trends, review of program progress reports, contractor site visits and presentations. Additional needs are identified through networking and coordination with other community planning bodies. Organizations and individuals that contributed to the development of the FY25 plan included Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County, Center for Families Services Global Network, Iowa Health & Human Services, Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), Dream City, Families Inc., Four Oaks, Iowa City Community School District, ISU Extension, Juvenile Court Services, Johnson County Board of Supervisors, Johnson County Public Health, Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County, United Action for Youth, and community members. The Decat Coordinator is also the coordinator for Johnson County's Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee, and Juvenile Justice & Youth Development Policy Board. The Decat Coordinator is actively involved with multiple planning initiatives and committees that address child and family wellbeing including Early Childhood Iowa/Empowerment Executive Committee, Prevent Child Abuse-Johnson County, Iowa City Area Business Partnership, and the Johnson County Child Care Solutions Team.

Information from a variety of sources is reviewed on a regular basis including Child Care Resource & Referral data, Early Childhood Iowa Area/Empowerment Community Plan, Juvenile Justice Youth Development agency reporting, CJPJ Johnson County Select Juvenile Justice Planning Data Report, Iowa Department of Education data, and local child abuse data. The Decat Board includes supervisors from Iowa Health & Human Services and Juvenile Court Services. Both provide regular updates and reports to the board.

Community resources, gaps, and needs are identified and assessed throughout the year. The Board utilizes information from board members, contracting partners, formal needs assessments, and site visits to establish priority service areas and develop the annual plan. The Decat Coordinator and Decat Board Members participate in discussions on community needs with other planning entities including Community Partnerships for Protecting Children, Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee, Early Childhood Iowa/Empowerment, Iowa City Area Business Partnership, Juvenile Justice Youth Development, individual service providers and key stakeholders.

### **Data for Planning Consideration:**

Some basic HHS information that is tracked and trends updated annually includes Total Reports, Total Children, Unique Children, Type of Abuse, and Age of Child **as reported in DHS “Child Welfare data reports”**. Data for the last 4+ years is unique due to factors created by the pandemic including more children at home instead of physically in school, increased parental stress, and other factors. Overall, most data sets are higher in 2023 compared to 2018, but lower than 2022. With that said, compared to 2018 Total Reports in Johnson County increased by 12.4% (down 3% from 2022) and Total Children reported increased by 6.7% (down 6.8% from 2022). Children Confirmed and Founded increased by 25% from 2018 (down by 6.7% from 2022). This overall increase is attributed, in large part, to an increase in the incidence of Presence of Illegal Drugs (+63%), Physical Abuse (+29%), and Denial of Critical Care cases (+24%). Presence of Illegal Drugs and Denial of Critical Care both decreased slightly from 2022 to 2023, while Physical Abuse saw a slight increase. Since 2016, there has been a significant increase in Dangerous Substance (previously “exposure to manufacturing meth”), but those numbers have been relatively stable since 2018. The type of abuse that has decreased since 2018 is Sexual Abuse, though the overall numbers are relatively low (see chart below).

<b>Child Maltreatment</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total Reports	821	949	923
Total Children	975	1116	1040
Children confirmed/founded	240	320	300
Children in Family Assessment	281	266	189
Presence of Illegal Drugs	27	46	44
Denial of Critical Care	211	286	262
Physical Abuse	31	37	40
Sexual Abuse	11	6	10
Younger than 6 years	120	156	149
6-10 years	70	85	84
Older than 11 years	50	79	67

Johnson County continues to address disproportionality in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Data **from the DHS Child Welfare Dashboard shows** that from FY2019 to FY2024, total placements decreased by over 40% (see chart below). While almost all placement types decreased, the largest placement decrease was in Trial Home Visit by 76.6%. The only placement type to increase was Relative/Fictive Kin, which increased by just over 17%.

When analyzed by race, the percentage of youth increased for Hispanic/Latino and White/Caucasian youth while percentage for Black/African American and Two Or More Races decreased. Although Black of African American children had one of the greatest numerical decreases during that time, they continue to be disproportionately represented in Johnson County’s child welfare system. Black/African American youth make up approximately 13% of the total 0-18 population in Johnson County but represent 43% of the youth in child welfare placements. Caucasian/White youth comprise almost 76% of the total 0-18 Johnson County population but represent just over 55% of the youth in child welfare placements.

There has also been a major shift in the age of youth placed out of home in the child welfare system. Placement of children age 0-5 has increased dramatically while placement for children ages 6-12 and 13+ has decreased significantly. While the number of children in the child welfare system who are younger than 6

years has increased 24% from 2018 to 2023, the number of children that age in placement has increased by over 1,800%. During that same time period, the number of children ages 6-12 and 13+ years in the child welfare system increased by 20% and 34%, respectively, while the number in placement decreased by 60% and 71% respectively. The cause of these changes may be due to changes in data collection, placement definitions, agency policies and procedures, or other factors. Additional information is necessary to understand this change.

<b>Child Welfare Placements</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2024</b>
Total Placements	217	130
Trial Home Visit	94	22
Relative/Fictive Kin	52	61
% of Hispanic/Latino	5.99%	7.69%
% of White/Caucasian	46.54%	55.38%
% of Black/African American	47.00%	43.08%
% of 2 or more races	11.06%	4.62%
0-5 years	3	59
6-12 years	85	34
13+ years	129	37

	<b>% change in child welfare 2018-2023</b>	<b>% change in placement 2018-2023</b>
0-5 years	+24.4%	+1,866.7%
6-12 years	+20.0%	-60.0%
13+ years	+34.0%	-71.3%

As mentioned in previous plans, long and short-term planning for Decat programming remains a challenge given the uncertain nature of funding. Recent decrease in funding has heightened this discomfort. Recent Informal Solicitations have received fewer applicants and some previously funded programs have not applied for continued funding. Efforts to reach out to new and varied service providers have been challenging, as the HHS contracting, invoicing, and reporting systems and requirements can be daunting especially for small organizations or those who haven't typically worked with government entities.

In FY25 the Decat Board reaffirmed the following Priority Service Areas. Discretionary funds will generally be used for the first two Priority Service Areas, with designated funding addressing the third.

- Address isolation, mental health and trauma needs and build circles of support for children and families that are at risk of involvement in the child welfare and/or juvenile court system paying particular attention to the needs of minority children and families.
- Promote positive youth development for youth ages 6 to 16 during out-of-school time, focusing on youth at risk for involvement with the child welfare and/or juvenile court system
- Address the needs of children and families currently involved in the child welfare and/or juvenile court system paying particular attention to the needs of minority children and families.

## **Contracts:**

Johnson County Decat will administer 9 contracts in FY25. Six contracts with a total value of \$133,000 were renewed. Renewed contracts support services such as in-home parenting supports as well as services and supports for LGBTQ+ youth and families including parent education and support, mental health programming and consultation, and afterschool positive youth development. Renewal contracts include administrative and program oversight duties for Decat and Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC). Three new contracts will be issued in FY25 totaling \$66,500 to support supplemental supervised visits and parent education for families in the child welfare system, Shoplifters Diversion programming, and Juvenile Pre-Charge Diversion Coordination and Expansion services.

## **Short Term Plan/Desired Results**

The Johnson County Decat Board anticipates the following outcomes:

- A reduction in social isolation as a result of increased outreach contacts and service offerings,
- An increase in out-of-school offerings for at-risk and isolated children,
- An increase in access to mental health services and increased opportunities for building positive social supports.

Additionally, we anticipate that children and families will have an increase in protective factors and in return reduce involvement with juvenile court and child welfare services. By providing a continuum of comprehensive services in collaboration with community partners, including HHS and JCS, a safety net of services will be in place to assist families and therefore reduce the number of children in out-of-home placement.

## **Tracking of Results and Outcomes:**

Each contractor is required to submit monthly invoices and quarterly progress reports that are reviewed by the Decat Coordinator for contract compliance. The report template aligns with the scope of services and performance measures indicated in the contract. Johnson County Decategorization Board meets monthly and the Board receives updates on progress reports and programming. Contract and Monitoring forms are completed on a quarterly basis. The Contract Oversight/Review Committee receives all of the quarterly reports and reviews contractors' progress and performance prior to recommending contract renewals. Annually, each contractor receives a site visit and/or provides a presentation to the Decat Board.

The Decat Board tracks data on the number of children involved in the child welfare and juvenile court systems. Data is reviewed in order to make effective decisions to increase supports and skills and provide a supportive community to prevent initial and on-going involvement in these formal systems.

### **Monitoring and Maintaining Fiscal Accountability:**

Each Contractor is provided a GAX form and instructions for completion. Contractors send monthly invoices to the Coordinator, who reviews the invoices and compares to the Contract. Once approved, documentation is reviewed by the Social Services Department Accountant. After an invoice passes this two-step process, the GAX form is sent to the SAM for review and approval. Reconciliation occurs at the conclusion of the year when the Carry Forward Report is distributed.

A review of the Decat budget and contract monitoring occurs monthly at Decat Board meetings.

### **Carryover:**

Carryover funds are necessary to sustain existing programs that have a contract renewal option and demonstrated success. Should carry over funds exceed obligations, remaining funds are dedicated to projects that have the ability to expand capacity and/or enrich existing services and fill a demand where a gap or unmet need exists, particularly in underserved areas.

Expansion of mental health services for children at-risk is an identified priority should additional funding become available, as well as supports for minority families at risk of involvement with the child welfare system.