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Family Urgent Response System (FURS)



Presenters

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Overview



FURS Background



Statewide Hotline & County Mobile Response



Communicating & Outreach



Success Stories



Resources



Q & A

“Young people and caregivers need someone they can call at any time when they’re struggling and have someone answer.”

FURS Background

- ▶ FURS was first enacted in 2019 (Senate Bill 80) and minor amendments followed in 2020 (Assembly Bill 79).
- ▶ FURS launched on March 1, 2021, and counties were fully implementing by July 1, 2021.

What is FURS?

FURS is a coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level system intended to provide swift, collaborative, state-level responses and county-level, in-home, in-person mobile response to children and youth currently or formerly in foster care and their caregivers during situations of instability.

State and Local Components

FURS is a **coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level system** intended to provide swift, collaborative, state-level responses and county-level, in-home, in-person mobile response to children and youth currently or formerly in foster care and their caregivers during situations of instability.

FURS Purpose

To build upon the Continuum of Care Reform and provide current and former foster youth and their caregivers with **immediate, trauma-informed support** when they need it. FURS is intended to:

- ▶ Prevent placement disruptions and **preserve the relationship** between the child or youth and their caregiver
- ▶ **Reduce** the need for a 911 call or **law enforcement involvement** and the needless criminalization of traumatized youth
- ▶ **Reduce hospitalization** and placement into **congregate care**
- ▶ **Promote healing** as a family

Who is served by FURS?

- ▶ **“Caregiver”** is defined as a person responsible for meeting the daily care needs of a current or former foster child or youth, and who is entrusted to provide a loving and supportive environment for the child or youth to promote their healing from trauma.
- ▶ **“Current or former foster youth” includes:**
 - A child or youth adjudicated a dependent or ward of the court (under WIC 300, 601 or 602) and who is served by a county child welfare agency or probation dept.
 - A child or youth who has exited foster care to reunification, guardianship, or adoption.
 - A current or former foster child or youth is eligible for services until they attain 21 years of age.

FURS is NOT intended to:

- ❑ Receive or respond to allegations of child abuse or neglect.
- ❑ Provide assistance in locating new placements.
- ❑ Be deployed to just provide transportation.
- ❑ Receive or respond to formal complaints about resource families or county social workers.
- ❑ Provide long term therapy or other long-term supportive services.

When calls are received requesting these services:

- ❑ The Cal-FURS hotline staff are aware of statewide community resources and will assist in connecting callers with 911 for situations that require emergency services or county child abuse hotlines and the Foster Care Ombudsperson's office when appropriate.
- ❑ County mobile response teams will provide immediate in-person support and connect youth and families with their county child welfare and probation partners if they have an open case or other community-based resources for on-going services.

24/7/365 Statewide Hotline



- ▶ CDSS contracted with Sacramento Children's Home for the operation of the statewide hotline, **Cal-FURS**.
- ▶ Cal-FURS is staffed by **professionals and paraprofessionals** including mental health clinicians and youth and parent peer partners.
- ▶ All hotline workers are **trained in conflict resolution and de-escalation** for children and youth impacted by trauma. They can provide:
 - Mediation;
 - Relationship preservation for the caregiver and the child or youth; and
 - A family-centered, developmentally appropriate approach.

Statewide Hotline

- ▶ *All* callers will receive phone support from trained and caring counselors even if not within the FURS-eligible population.
- ▶ Hotline will contact caregiver and child or youth within 24 hours after providing support to **offer additional support**.
- ▶ For FURS-eligible callers, hotline staff will make a **referral to a county-based mobile response system** for an in-person response when needed and desired through a **warm handoff**.
- ▶ Children, youth, or caregivers *can decline* the referral for in-person support.



Hotline staff use have limited access to the CWS/CMS database via the CWS-CARES Snapshot tool to assist with determining eligibility.

Warm Handoff: *Connecting caller to county*

- ▶ Warm handoff happens through a **three-way call** between the hotline staff, the county mobile response contact, and the child, youth, or caregiver.
- ▶ Enables the **transfer of key information** to prevent youth and/or caregivers from having to retell their stories or repeat information before in-person support is provided and to help the county **identify which team members** to send out for the in-person response.
- ▶ Hotline staff will remain on the line with the county and caller until the county contact has all the information they need.

Urgent v. Non-Urgent



All mobile responses are considered urgent unless the caller requests scheduling a response at a specific time.

Urgent Responses

Within one hour, but not to exceed 3 hours in extenuating circumstances.

Non-Urgent Responses

Must take place within 24 hours

County Mobile Response Systems

- ▶ County child welfare, probation, and behavioral health agencies were required to jointly develop county-based mobile response systems in all 58 counties.
- ▶ These systems each have a **single point of contact for warm handoffs** from the state hotline to the FURS mobile response system, alongside a **mobile response and stabilization team(s)** able to provide **immediate, in-person, face-to-face responses**.
- ▶ Counties may implement their mobile response system on a per-county basis or by collaborating with other counties through a regional approach, depending on their specific needs.
- ▶ Counties have flexibility in how they structure their mobile response systems.

Mobile Response Teams

- ▶ Information provided during the warm handoff from the state hotline is utilized to **identify the most appropriate team members to send out.**
- ▶ These multidisciplinary teams may be composed of people such as licensed clinicians, public health nurses, and peer partners, all of whom will have received **specialized training in trauma and the foster care system.**
- ▶ Peer partners and others with **lived experience** will play a **critical role** in the response team.
- ▶ All team members are **culturally competent and responsive.** Teams are able to communicate in the languages spoken by the communities they serve.
- ▶ Teams **view the family as a global unit** rather than seeing the child as a problem needing to be solved. To avoid further trauma, they seek to provide supportive services in the least intrusive and most child-, youth-, and family-friendly manner.

Team Responsibilities

Teams will provide in-home **de-escalation, stabilization, and support**, including:

- ▶ Establishing **face-to-face contact** with the child or youth and caregiver;
- ▶ Identifying the **underlying causes** of the situation that led to the instability;
- ▶ Identifying the caregiver interventions attempted;
- ▶ Observing the child and caregiver interaction and **diffusing the immediate situation**; and
- ▶ **Coaching and working with the caregiver and the young person** to preserve the family unit or create a healthy transition plan if necessary.

Mobile Response Teams: Next Steps



Communicate

Mobile response teams will communicate with case-carrying worker and county behavioral health agency to coordinate and ensure linkage to any needed supports.



Follow-up

Mobile response teams will stay in contact after the initial face-to-face response while helping connect the family to longer-term supports in the community.



Establish Connections

FURS teams will ensure children, youth, and their caregivers are connected to ongoing community-based support.



Identify

Identify any **existing Child and Family Team (CFT)**, **behavioral health treatment plan**, and/or **placement preservation strategy** for coordinating response and services.

Summary Report



The Summary Report is a tool created to help mobile response teams communicate key information to the county social worker or probation officer for children currently in foster care, and to CDSS.



This report will not be included in case plans or court reports. It is intended only to be used to ensure linkage to ongoing supportive services.

For further information regarding the completion of the FURS Summary Report, refer to the [FURS Summary Report Guide](#).

Key Messages

For Caregivers:

- ▶ Reaching out for help is a sign of strength
- ▶ You are not alone, we are here to support you
- ▶ Supports placements, preserves relationships
- ▶ These services will assist in a crisis and help avoid some crisis situations
- ▶ We're not here to take sides; we want to be a neutral party

For Youth:

- ▶ Support is available
- ▶ This is a judgment free and safe, and resource
- ▶ You can call for all things big and small
- ▶ We want you to feel heard and understood
- ▶ We're not here to take sides; we want to be a neutral party

Local Outreach

Below are some ideas for local dissemination of FURS outreach materials:

- ▶ Include in Placement Packets
- ▶ Include in Adoptive Placement paperwork
- ▶ Include with Adoption Assistance mailers
- ▶ Include in RFA Trainings/Annual Reviews
- ▶ Provide information to Resource Family Recruiters
- ▶ Share on county social media and websites
- ▶ Contact Local Law Enforcement Agencies to discuss/distribute
- ▶ Local libraries
- ▶ Local Youth Organizations/Community Centers/etc.
- ▶ Faith-based centers

24/7 SUPPORT

Are you a current or former foster youth? Having problems at home? Frustrated? Need someone to talk to? The 24/7 FURS hotline is here to help.

CALL OR TEXT: 1-833-939-FURS | 1-833-939-3877

Family Urgent Response System (FURS) is a free 24/7/365 hotline for current or former foster youth and your caregivers to call and get **immediate** help for any big or small issues you may be having.

- You will be connected to a trained counselor or peer who will listen to you.
- FURS is a **safe, judgement-free, and private** space to talk about your worries and vent.
- If you want more support, a team can come directly to where you are to help you work on the problem and to create a plan to help stabilize your situation and keep you safe.
- The team will follow-up by helping connect you and your caregiver to local services and support.



CHECK OUT: CAL-FURS.ORG



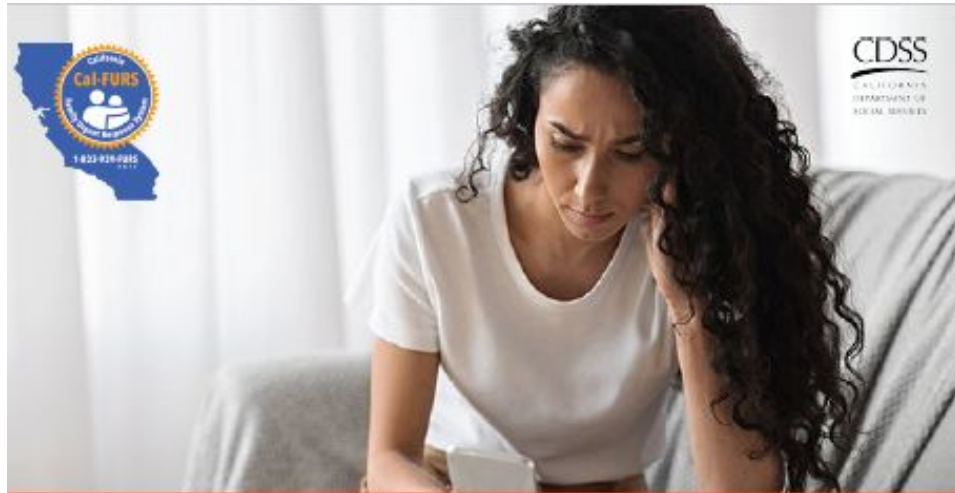
www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/foster-care/furs

Youth Outreach

- FURS is a **positive** resource.
- Call for all things big and small.
- A **judgment-free** and **safe** resource.
- A space for youth to feel heard and understood by a **neutral party**.
- We're not here to take sides.



CDSS
CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



Are you a caregiver of a current or former foster youth?
Are you feeling frustrated? Would you like additional support?

FURS Support is Always Available

- 24/7 hotline support via phone, text, and chat.
- Local mobile response support with COVID-19 precautions in place.
- Personalized support and stabilization at the hotline and local level.
- Relevant aftercare support and follow-up.



Family Urgent Response System

The Family Urgent Response System (FURS) includes a statewide hotline as well as local mobile response teams to provide immediate trauma-informed support to current and former foster youth and their caregivers.

Local mobile response teams are comprised of compassionate, trained professionals who are available to provide face-to-face support during critical moments.

Both the statewide hotline and local mobile response teams are available 24/7/365.

FURS Provides Support When Needed Most

Call or Text:
1-833-939-FURS

Online:
CAL-FURS.ORG



www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/foster-care/furs

Caregiver Outreach

- Reaching out for help is a **sign of strength**.
- FURS is here to support you - you're not alone.
- FURS is here to support placements and **preserve relationships**.
- An opportunity to speak with a **neutral party**.

Success Story: *Supporting Resource Parent and Parenting Youth*

Hotline Call:

- ▶ Resource parent contacted the Cal-FURS hotline seeking help about a teen foster youth who was placed in the home with her infant. She was concerned about the youth's reported mental health needs and her ability to care for her child.
- ▶ Hotline staff conducted a warm handoff to the county mobile response team.

Mobile Response:

- ▶ Mobile response staff met with the resource parent in her home;
- ▶ Assisted her with arrangements for the baby to be taken to doctor for a medical evaluation;
- ▶ Identified collateral supports and services for the resource parent and the youth.;
- ▶ Discussed the need for respite care as a follow-up service;
- ▶ Helped the resource parent prioritize and develop a plan for addressing the youth's mental health needs.

Success Story:
*Supporting
Resource
Parent and
Parenting
Youth (Cont.)*

Outcome:

- Caregiver was really clear that she was feeling uncertain about the youth and her infant's "fit" in the home prior to the interaction, but the placement was stabilized.
- Caregiver expressed a willingness to continue providing care to the youth and her baby after she talked it out, and a plan was developed to address all of the issues that led to her making the call to Cal-FURS.

Success Story: *Supporting Resource Family and Youth*

Hotline Call:

Cal-FURS hotline received a call from a caregiver who called because an 8 year old youth was destroying property and being physically violent after being asked to eat fruits and veggies instead of a third serving of pasta. The situation had escalated quickly.

The Cal-FURS staff helped the family by:

- ▶ Engaging the youth over the phone, listening to her, coaching her in relaxation strategies, and supporting her in calming down

Outcome:

- ▶ The youth reported feeling much better and started eating her strawberries.
- ▶ The caregiver felt supported rather than judged for having difficulty managing what may have seemed like an everyday parenting situation.
- ▶ The family's evening was back on track within about 20 minutes.

Success Story: *Supporting Youth*

Hotline Call:

Cal-FURS hotline received a call from a youth who was thinking of running away from her placement. Hotline staff conducted a warm handoff to the county mobile response and stabilization team.

Outcome:

- ▶ The mobile response staff met with the youth and:
 - ▶ Provided immediate support by taking her out of the home to process her feelings and plan for how she could communicate with foster mom
 - ▶ Facilitated a conversation between the youth and her caregiver
 - ▶ Assisted her and the caregiver in creating a safety plan that helped the youth stay in the home.



CDSS Outreach Materials:

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/foster-care/family-urgent-response-system/outreach-materials>



Cal-FURS Hotline Access and Resources Webpage:

<http://www.cal-furs.org>



CDSS FURS Policy Webpage:

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/foster-care/furs>



CDSS Policy Inbox: FURS@dss.ca.gov