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# FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**LAST UPDATED** \_\_\_\_\_

**SPONSOR** Padilla **ORIGINAL DATE** 1/28/2025

**BILL**

**SHORT TITLE** Fostering Connections Program Eligibility **NUMBER** Senate Bill 6

**ANALYST** Garcia

## ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT\*

(dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
CYFD (Fostering Connections)	Up to \$30.0	Up to \$30.0	Up to \$30.0	Up to \$90.0	Recurring	General Fund
<b>Total</b>	<b>Up to \$30.0</b>	<b>Up to \$30.0</b>	<b>Up to \$30.0</b>	<b>Up to \$90.0</b>	Recurring	<b>General Fund</b>

Parentheses ( ) indicate expenditure decreases.  
 \*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

### Sources of Information

LFC Files  
 Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Agency Analysis Received From  
 Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA)

Agency Analysis was Solicited but Not Received From  
 Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD)

## SUMMARY

### Synopsis of Senate Bill 6

Senate Bill 6 (SB6) amends the Fostering Connections Act (32A-26-1 through 32A-36-12 NMSA 1978) to remove the requirement that a youth to be adjudicated pursuant to the Children’s Code or tribal law prior to being eligible for the Children, Youth and Families Department’s (CYFD) Fostering Connections Program. SB6 expands eligibility to youth who were in CYFD custody but not adjudicated or under a voluntary placement agreement. In addition, the bill pushes forward in time by one year the dates in statute that serve as the cutoff point for the age of eligibility to maintain eligibility up to the age of 21.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No appropriation is contained within the bill.

For analysis submitted for a similar bill during the 2024 legislative session, CYFD noted no

fiscal impact to the department. CYFD already has an extended foster care program in place and is able to draw down federal Title IV-E funds to cover the costs associated with this service population. Additionally, the agency has received general fund and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to support the Fostering Connections Program. At that time, CYFD estimated any additional costs could be absorbed by existing resources.

In March 2024, the governor issued an executive order that rendered the population of young adults considered in this bill eligible for the Fostering Connections Program. At that time, CYFD estimated expanding the Fostering Connections population by 10 to 20 adults. Given the relatively small number of adults who might now be eligible for the Fostering Connections Program because of this bill (roughly 10 to 20 adults), the LFC estimates the fiscal impact of this bill to be minimal and up to roughly \$30 thousand in general fund annually.

In addition, the Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA) noted the bill may result in a relatively small increase in Extended Foster Care petitions (an estimated 10 annually) and the corresponding need to appoint counsel by OFRA to represent these adults. However, OFRA reports the financial impact will be minimal and can be absorbed within the agency's existing budget.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES**

According to the federal Administration for Children and Families, youth aging out of foster care experience considerable challenges. One in four adults who age out will experience homelessness by age 19, one in five will be incarcerated by age 19, and one in 10 will become parents by age 19. Additionally, just 57 percent of adults who age out of foster care report being employed at age 21.

In 2019, the Legislature adopted the Fostering Connections Act, which created an extended foster care program and extended the available age for support and services to young adults involved with CYFD from age 18 to age 21. Extended support programs include supportive housing, connections to community-based behavioral health services, job assistance, food access, and financial assistance for higher education. The Fostering Connections Program is voluntary, and young adults who age out of foster care are not required to receive services.

In FY23, CYFD reported that roughly 280 young adults received in-home services through the Fostering Connections Program, roughly 58 young adults participated in extended foster care behavioral health service coordination, and roughly 34 young adults received transitional living supportive housing.

Currently, young adults who are the subject of abuse, neglect, or are in families in need of court-ordered services actions but who turn 18 before being adjudicated and youth who emancipate from CYFD custody while the subject of voluntary placement agreements are ineligible for the Fostering Connections Program.

## **PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS**

Currently, CYFD tracks several performance measures associated with child well-being and the Fostering Connections Program