
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 898
Author: Bryan (D)
Amended: 9/4/25 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 5-0, 6/16/25
AYES: Arreguín, Ochoa Bogh, Becker, Limón, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0, 5/8/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: The Family Urgent Response System

SOURCE: County Welfare Directors Association of California and Children Now

DIGEST: This bill authorizes counties to deploy mobile response teams without requiring a state-level call and expands who is served by the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) to include families receiving family preservation services and those participating in voluntary or court-ordered family maintenance services.

Senate Floor Amendments of 9/4/25 are technical in nature and originate from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

ANALYSIS:

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes a state and local system of child welfare services, including foster care, for children who have been adjudged by the court to be at risk of abuse and neglect or to have been abused or neglected, as specified. (Welfare & Institutions Code (WIC) § 202)
- 2) Provides that a child who has suffered, or is at substantial risk of suffering, abuse or neglect, as provided, by the child's parent or guardian is within the

jurisdiction of the juvenile court, which may adjudge the child a dependent child. (WIC § 300)

- 3) States that the purpose of foster care law is to provide maximum safety and protection for children who are currently being physically, sexually, emotionally abused, neglected, or exploited, and to ensure the safety, protection, and physical and emotional well-being of children who are at risk of harm. (WIC § 300.2)
- 4) Defines “FURS” as meaning a coordinated statewide, regional, and county-level system designed to provide collaborative and timely state-level phone based response and county-level in-home, in-person mobile response during situations of instability, for purposes of preserving the relationship of the caregiver and the child or youth, providing developmentally appropriate relationship conflict management and resolution skills, stabilizing the living situation, mitigating the distress of the caregiver or child or youth, connecting the caregiver and child or youth to the existing array of local services, and promoting a healthy and healing environment for children, youth, and families. (WIC § 16526(d))
- 5) Defines “caregiver,” for the purposes of FURS, as meaning 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. (WIC § 16526(a))
- 6) Defines “current or former foster child or youth,” for the purposes of FURS, as including a child or youth adjudicated a dependent or ward of the juvenile court and who is served by a county child welfare agency or probation department, and a child or youth who has exited foster care to reunification, guardianship, or adoption, until they attain 21 years of age. (WIC § 16526(b))
- 7) Defines “mobile response,” for the purpose of FURS, as meaning the provision of in-person, flexible, responsive, and supportive services where the caregiver and child or youth are located to provide them with support and prevent the need for a 911 call or law enforcement contact. (WIC § 16526(g))
- 8) Creates a 24-hour, seven days a week, statewide hotline, established by CDSS, as the entry point for FURS to respond to calls from both caregivers and current or former foster children during moments of instability. (WIC § 16527(a))

- 9) Allows CDSS to contract with an outside entity that meets certain requirements, as provided, to operate the state-wide hotline. (WIC § 16527(d))
- 10) Provides, through the statewide hotline, both hotline workers who are trained in techniques for de-escalation and a conflict resolution telephone response specifically for children and referrals to a county-based mobile response system, for further support and in-person response. (WIC § 16527(a)(1)-(2))
- 11) Requires FURS referrals to occur as follows:
 - a) A warm handoff whereby a hotline worker establishes direct and live connection through a three-way call that includes the caregiver, child or youth, and county contact. Further allows the caregiver, child, or youth to decline the three-way contact with the county contact if they feel their situation has been resolved at the time of the call;
 - b) If direct communication cannot be established pursuant to a) above, a referral directly to the community or county based service and a follow up call to ensure that a connection to the caregiver, child, or youth occurs; and
 - c) A hotline worker to contact the caregiver and child or youth within 24 hours after the initial call to offer additional support, if needed. (WIC § 16527(a)(2))
- 12) Requires the statewide hotline to maintain contact information for all county-based mobile response systems, based on information provided by counties, for referrals to local services, as provided. (WIC § 16527(b))
- 13) Requires CDSS to collect de-identified, aggregated data regarding individuals served through the hotline and county-based mobile response systems. Further requires CDSS to publish annually on their internet website, beginning January 1, 2022, FURS data, including: the number of caregivers served, separated by placement type and status as current or former caregiver; number of current and former foster children or youth, separated by county agency type, current or former foster care status, age, gender, and race; whether the call was made by the caregiver or youth; county based outcomes date; and disposition of each call, among other things. (WIC § 16527(c))
- 14) Requires CDSS, in consultation with stakeholders, to: develop methods and materials for informing all caregivers and current or former foster children or youth about the hotline; establish protocols for triage and response; establish minimum education and training requirements for hotline workers; and,

consider expanding the hotline to include communication through electronic means. (WIC § 16527(e))

- 15) Requires the statewide hotline to be operational no sooner than January 1, 2021, and on the same date as the county mobile response system, unless prior to that date CDSS has notified the county that the county satisfies either of the following: the county has established a mobile response system or has an alternative method to accept and respond to referrals from the statewide hotline pending the establishment of the mobile response team. Requires CDSS, in consultation with stakeholders, to: develop methods and materials for informing all caregivers and current or former foster children or youth about the hotline; establish protocols for triage and response; establish minimum education and training requirements for hotline workers; and, consider expanding the hotline to include communication through electronic means. (WIC § 16527(f))
- 16) Requires CDSS, in collaboration with the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and in consultation with stakeholders, to issue all necessary guidance for county-based mobile response systems for purposes of FURS, including, but not limited to, data tracking and claiming of federal funding. (WIC § 16528(a))
- 17) Requires county child welfare, probation, and behavior health agencies, in each county or region of counties, to establish a joint county-based mobile response system that includes a mobile response and stabilization team for the purpose of providing supportive services to: address situation of instability, preserve the relationship of the caregiver and the child or youth, develop healthy conflict resolution and relationship skills, promote healing as a family, and stabilize the situation. Further sets certain criteria for the formation of these mobile response systems and services they must include, as provided. (WIC § 16529)

This bill:

- 1) Clarifies that the statewide hotline shall be the primary entry point to FURS.
- 2) Adds to the requirement of information CDSS is required to collect to include data on the number of calls received by a county-based mobile response system, including calls received through the statewide hotline and portal.

- 3) Requires the coordinated plans submitted to CDSS by counties and other organizations that describe how the county-based mobile response system shall meet the requirements in law and be updated and submitted on a biennial basis.
- 4) Adds to the requirements of information to be included in these coordinated plans to include date of plan submission and point-of-contact information for the plan, including name, telephone number, and email address.
- 5) Provides that a county-based mobile response system that is not otherwise responding to calls placed through the statewide hotline may utilize mobile response team staff based on local needs, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - a) Engaging in in-person education and outreach.
 - b) Responding to local child, youth, or caregiver requests for support.
 - c) Providing ongoing support to a child, youth, or caregiver who has received mobile response services.
 - d) Responding to calls from children and families during a hotline investigation or who are receiving family preservation or voluntary or court-ordered family maintenance services.
- 6) Provides that the county-based mobile response system shall prioritize calls placed through the statewide hotline for urgent responses and shall maintain sufficient staffing to ensure county-based mobile response teams maintain compliance with all specified requirements.
- 7) Provides that if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

Background

Purpose of this Bill. According to the author, “AB 898 is a bill designed to expand access to FURS, which provides timely, state-level phone-based responses and county-level in-home, in-person mobile responses during periods of instability. This bill will make county-level mobile-response teams directly accessible to community members, expand eligibility to families using family preservation services to prevent foster care entries, and promote regular reviews to keep these services updated and effective. Through these efforts, AB 898 will ensure that

FURS remains readily available for families in need, ultimately supporting greater retention in caregiver placements for foster youth and at-risk non-foster youth impacted by the child welfare system.”

Child Welfare Services (CWS) The CWS system is an essential component of the state’s safety net. Social workers in each county who receive reports of abuse or neglect, investigate and resolve those reports. When a case is substantiated, a family is either provided with services to ensure a child’s well-being and avoid court involvement, or a child is removed and placed into foster care. In 2024, the state’s child welfare agencies received 417,513 reports of abuse or neglect. Of these, 46,457 reports contained allegations that were substantiated and 17,390 children were removed from their homes and placed into foster care via the CWS system.

Family Urgent Response System (FURS) FURS was enacted in 2019 (SB 80, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) as a child welfare specific support system that includes a 24/7/365 statewide hotline as well as in-person mobile response teams in all 58 counties. FURS is available to help in any situation where youth currently or formerly in foster care or caregivers need extra support or help. The program was created to preserve placements in family homes, recognizing that stable placements are critical to the wellbeing of children and youth in foster care. This program receives approximately 5,000 requests for help annually. Many of these calls result in an in-person response from their county mobile response team. While the program is still new, the hotline became available in March 2021, data shows that the majority of these calls have resulted in stabilized placement and ongoing supports for the youth and/or the caregiver. When youth or caregivers call the hotline they are connected with trained counselors and mobile units can be dispatched to the home, often within an hour. This system provides an alternative to calling 911 and is designed to deescalate situations using trauma informed support. There is no other program that provides the kind of immediately, individualized and in-person trauma informed services that FURS provides.

The supports provided by FURS prevents the unnecessary criminalization of youth in foster care, reduces costs associated with disrupted placements and improves outcomes for young people who have been in foster care. This bill seeks to expand and improve how FURS provides these critical services. Current law requires a state hotline to dispatch county mobile response teams. This bill would authorize counties to deploy the mobile response teams without requiring a state-level call. This bill would also expand who it serves to include families receiving family preservation services and those participating in voluntary or court-ordered family maintenance services.

Related/Prior Legislation

SB 80 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 27, Statutes of 2019) establishes the Family Urgent Response System, a statewide hotline for caregivers and youth who experience emotional, behavioral, or other difficulties and are in need of immediate help. Also allows counties to establish or expand mobile response teams to provide in-home response on a 24/7 basis to stabilize situations and assess needs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/04/2025)

County Welfare Directors Association of California (Co-Sponsor)

Children Now (Co-Sponsor)

All for Kids

Alliance for Children's Rights

Aspiranet

California Family Resource Association

California State Association of Counties

Child Abuse Prevention Center

California Family Resource Association

County of Fresno

County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake

Seneca Family of Agencies

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/04/2025)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 73-0, 5/8/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Boerner, Carrillo, Jeff Gonzalez, Irwin,
Celeste Rodriguez

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