

Family Urgent Response System (FURS) Overview

Jessica Haspel, Children Now
Associate Director, Child Welfare Policy
jhaspel@childrennow.org

Family Urgent Response System

FURS was created to provide current and former foster youth and their caregivers with **immediate, trauma-informed support** when they need it.

It consists of state and local components:

- **24/7/365 statewide hotline** to respond to caregiver or youth during situations of instability
- County-based **mobile response and stabilization teams** available 24/7/365 in all 58 counties to provide in-person support

FURS History

- ▶ FURS proposal developed by a broad cross-system coalition of stakeholders.
- ▶ FURS was first enacted in 2019 ([Senate Bill 80](#)) and minor amendments followed in 2020 ([Assembly Bill 79](#)).
- ▶ Implementing language is in California Welfare and Institutions Code Sections: 16526, 16527, 16528, 16529, and 16530.
- ▶ Cal-FURS statewide hotline launched 3/1/21 and all 58 counties launched their full mobile response systems by 7/1/21.

FURS Goals

- ▶ Prevent placement disruptions and **preserve the relationship** between the child or youth and their caregiver
- ▶ Prevent 911 calls or **law enforcement involvement** and the needless criminalization of traumatized youth
- ▶ **Prevent hospitalization** and placement into **congregate care**
- ▶ **Promote healing** as a family
- ▶ **Promote stability** for youth currently or formerly in foster care, including youth in extended foster care
- ▶ Connect families to **ongoing resources** in their communities

Intent

Immediate Need	Create new, robust resource to provide immediate trauma-informed support to promote stability and preserve relationships.
User Driven	Put families and children in the driver's seat – youth and caregivers determine when they require immediate support, not a professional.
Coordinated	Break down silos between child-serving systems
Support	Provide support for situations of instability that include, but are not limited to, mental health crises.

Who Does FURS Serve?

- ▶ **“Current or former foster youth”** includes children or youth (up to age 21) who are currently or previously were in foster care through the child welfare OR probation/justice system.
- ▶ **“Caregiver”** is defined broadly to include individuals in a caregiving role.
- ▶ FURS is available during **“situations of instability”** as defined by the child, youth, or caregiver.

Cal-FURS Statewide Hotline

- ▶ Can be reached at **1-833-939-3877** (via call or text) or by visiting **Cal-FURS.org** (for live chat).
- ▶ Available **24/7** to support a caregiver or current or former foster child or youth during situations of instability via call, text, or live chat
- ▶ Staffed by caring counselors **trained in conflict resolution and de-escalation** for children and youth impacted by trauma. Counselors are a mix of professionals and paraprofessionals, including mental health clinicians & youth and peer partners
- ▶ CDSS contracted with Sacramento Children's Home, a non-profit, to operate the Cal-FURS hotline.

Cal-FURS Hotline continued

- ▶ All individuals will receive phone, text, and/or live chat support from a caring counselor even if not within the FURS-eligible population.
 - ▶ Staff will contact caregiver & 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 desired by the caller through a **warm handoff**.
 - ▶ Children, youth, or caregivers *can decline* the referral

Warm Handoff

- ▶ This warm handoff happens through a **three-way call** between the hotline staff, the county mobile response contact, and the child, youth, or caregiver.
- ▶ It 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.

Required timing for urgent responses:

- **Within one hour**, but not to exceed 3 hours in extenuating circumstances.
- Required timing for non-urgent responses:
 - **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.
- ▶ Each county must have a **single point of contact** for warm handoffs and **mobile response and stabilization team(s)** able to provide **immediate, in-person responses 24/7/365**.
- ▶ Counties have flexibility in how they structure their mobile response systems.

Mobile Response Teams

- ▶ These multidisciplinary teams may be composed of people such as licensed clinicians, case managers, peer partners, and resource coordinators who have all received **specialized training in trauma and the foster care system.**
- ▶ **Peer partners** and others with lived experience should be part of the team whenever possible.
- ▶ Provide **in-person de-escalation, stabilization, and support** to address immediate needs and then help ensure youth and caregivers are **connected to ongoing community-based support.**
 - ▶ Will stay in contact while helping connect to services

Mobile Response: Coordination

- ▶ Mobile response teams **cannot delay or decline to provide immediate, in-person support** on the basis that there is another professional involved, but they should try to coordinate whenever possible & desired by the child, youth, or caregiver.
- ▶ Must have a process for identifying any existing **child and family team (CFT), behavioral health treatment plan, and/or placement preservation strategy** for coordinating response and services.
- ▶ For children with an open case, the team must also **communicate with the county of jurisdiction and the county behavioral health agency** regarding the service needs of the child or youth and caregiver

Communication / Information Sharing

- ▶ If no a referral is made for a mobile response, no information is shared.
- ▶ If a mobile response referral is made, the **FURS Summary Report** is completed by the team after the response.
- ▶ The Summary Report is a tool created by CDSS 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.
 - ▶ For children with a closed care, the summary report is only provided to CDSS for program improvement purposes.
- ▶ The summary report, and any of its contents, should not be included in case plans or court reports. It is **intended only to be used to ensure linkage** to ongoing supportive services.

Mobile Response System Structure: LA

- ▶ LA County has developed a dedicated FURS Unit that works alongside DCFS' Placement Stabilization Team (PST) within the Advanced Placement Team
- ▶ When an in-person response is wanted, a Cal-FURS counselor conducts a warm handoff to the dedicated FURS Unit and a team is sent out.
- ▶ DCFS partners with LA County Department of Mental Health to activate mental health staff employed by or contracted with DMH as members of the FURS mobile response team when there is a mental health need

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.



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**.

How You Can Help

- ▶ Help **spread the word** about this new resource to children and youth on your caseloads and their caregivers
 - ▶ Encourage youth with cell phones and caregivers to program the Cal-FURS phone number into their phone contacts
- ▶ **Reach out** to the Cal-FURS hotline when you're with a youth and an issue arises in which support is needed
- ▶ **Share any feedback** you hear on FURS so we can continue to refine it to best meet the needs of children, youth, and caregivers.

Resources

- ▶ Cal-FURS Hotline Access and Resources Webpage: <http://www.cal-furs.org>
- ▶ CDSS Policy Webpage: <https://cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/foster-care/furs>
- ▶ CDSS Outreach Materials: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/cdss-programs/foster-care/family-urgent-response-system/outreach-materials>