



SB 352 CPS ISSUES WORK GROUP **DRAFT** WORK PLAN 2023-2024

Milly Allen, Research Analyst
For review on November 17, 2023

BACKGROUND

THE TRANSITION REVIEW COMMITTEE

[Senate Bill 352](#), introduced during the 2023 Legislative Session, established a work group to modify and improve child protective services in Montana. The work group is attached to the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP includes legislators and experts appointed in accordance with SB 352:

- Senator Dennis Lenz, Chair of the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee
- Representative SJ Howell, Vice Chair of the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee
- Representative Jennifer Carlson
- Nikki Grossberg, Children and Family Services Division Administrator, Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Heather Webster, Deputy County Attorney, Yellowstone County
- Hon. Brenda Gilbert, 6th Judicial District Judge
- Kelly Driscoll, Family Defense Bureau Chief, Office of State Public Defender
- S. Chase Rosario, member of the public having experience with the dependency and neglect court system
- Sgt. Jon Kadner, Cascade County Sheriff's Office

The Legislative Services Division provides staff support to the committee:

- Milly Allen, Research Analyst – milly.allen@legmt.gov
- Jolanda Songer, Secretary – jolanda.songer@legmt.gov

PLANNING YOUR WORK

WORK PLAN

A tool for the work group, its staff, and the public.

SB 352, SUBSECTION (2) directs the work group to investigate and report to the interim committee on topics including but not limited to:

- (a) the removal of children from homes;
- (b) centralized intake reports and procedures;
- (c) investigations of reports of abuse and neglect;
- (d) the potential for family support to help prevent removal of children or expedite reunification;
- (e) foster care;
- (f) kinship care;
- (g) the interaction of child protective services with the judicial system;
- (h) department of health and human services policies and procedures;
- (i) reunification of children with their families of origin; and
- (j) topics related to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

The Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Interim Committee has 0.2 FTE (full time equivalent) from its research analyst. Part of that 0.2 FTE is used for this work group. Reports and presentations by state agencies or other entities require staff time to organize and process. Administrative work, including placing requests for information and drafting committee communications and reports, also requires staff time.

PRIORITIES

Table intentionally left blank for work group priorities.

Priorities

MEETING SCHEDULE

The work group must complete its work by September 15, 2023. It has the budget for four one day meetings in Helena. A proposed meeting schedule is below. The committee must adopt a meeting schedule at its November 17 meeting for planning purposes.

Date	Action Items
Friday, November 17, 2023	Set priorities, adopt meeting schedule
Friday, January 19, 2024	Initial presentations on priorities
Tuesday, May 7, 2024	Follow up presentations; discuss and outline recommendations
Tuesday, July 16, 2024	Review and edit work group report; adopt report.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

COMMITTEE WEBSITE

The work group's legislative web page is the sole official repository of task information, including presentation aids, documents, meeting minutes, and exhibits. You may find it here:

<https://leg.mt.gov/committees/interim/cfhhs/cfhhs-sb352/>

At that website, the public may also:

- Submit written public comment;
- Register to testify remotely; and
- Sign up for email communications from the work group.