Background

Pilot Project:

In **2020,** the project was to be implemented in up to six counties under the Child Welfare Legal Representation Act (Iowa Code Section 13B.13). In **2023,** the project was granted the capacity to take on up to 16 counties. Now, as of **2026,** the project has been renamed the "Project to Preserve Families", established permanence, and has been approved to be administered in all 99 counties (HF 2356).

Success:

Over 400 referrals have been made to the project since 2020. Of these, only **five** (1.3%) became cases involved in Juvenile Court after participating in the Project.

Funding:

We receive Title IV-E Federal Funding under the **Family First Prevention Services Act of 2017.**

Connect With Us

- We are expanding our resources across the state of Iowa, if you are an attorney interested in providing aid on this project - contact **PTPF@spd.state.ia.us**

-To receive a referral sheet for *yourself* or someone in need - contact **PTPF@spd.state.ia.us**

If the intended referred client is involved in a Child In Need Of Assistance **(CINA) filing, they are ineligible for our services.*

IOWA
FREEDOM TO FLOURISH

State of Iowa Public Defender's

Project to Preserve Families



Preventative Legal Advocacy

If resolving a legal issue can help keep a family safe, stable, and prevent Juvenile Court involvement or child removal, the State Public Defender's Office may be able to help.

Our team uses legal tools and representation to assist families involved in the Child Welfare System by implementing and studying ways to achieve positive outcomes for families, reduce trauma to young children, and deliver financial benefits to families and their communities.



Legal Tools

Guardianship:
Formalize stable care-giving relationships.

Protection Orders:
Legal advocacy protects youth from harmful situations without direct CPS/system involvement.

And More...
Other examples include: paternity, drivers licensing, daycare needs, education issues.

Why these tools?: *We understand informal living arrangements can act as obstacles in youths lives and make them vulnerable.*

Referrals

Who should I refer?

- A custodial parent in need of an attorney to resolve a legal problem that if resolved would stabilize the family. The client is the person deemed the safe parent. Examples include: Divorce, Custody, Civil Protective Order, Landlord/Tenant matter.
- A child's relative or caregiver in need of a legal service to safely maintain placement of the child, such as a Guardianship.
- A family in need of legal and/or social work counseling

