

LIAISON REPORT

AGENCY: ChildServe

LIAISON: Joel Hochstein

1. Need for Program: ChildServe, an Iowa-based non-profit serving children with facilities in Ames, Des Moines, Iowa City and Johnston, receives funding from ASSET for approximately 8-10 children who can't afford services but don't meet DHS criteria for reduced fee services. ASSET funding is used to offset the cost for these 8-10 children. ChildServe offers various services for children and families from day care to specialized services for children with various physical and mental needs.

ChildServe likely meets the priorities for the following:
United Way of Story County: Health (1 & 2) & Education (1 & 3)
City of Ames: #1 & #3
ISU Student Government: #1
Story County: #1 & #2

2. Program Strengths: ChildServe is proud of the 100% academic readiness of the children that go through their programming. They also provide spaces for general child care for area families in their Ames facility. The services provided by ChildServe are critical for many families in central Iowa and within Story County. Prior to the pandemic, ChildServe was serving a higher-than-normal amount of clients with currently clients back to around normal at this time.

3. Program Weaknesses: One of the main challenges facing ChildServe this year has been changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the decimation of services that has resulted. The pandemic, and the tighter guidelines resulting from it, have created staffing issues due to the nature of their overall programming. However, the shift to some telehealth services has assisted their overall financial stability and can continue to provide various services through this mechanism.

Accurately estimating the amount of ASSET funding they use each year is also a challenge. Each year they make adjustments and each year still seem to use the full funding from ASSET with room for requesting additional funding.

4. Financial Outlook: ChildServe indicated that ASSET funding is a very small percentage of their overall funding structure. COVID-19 had a significant impact on its services across the board as most of their generated funding comes from childcare. Specialized services are not generally main sources of revenue for the organization. If ASSET funding decreased, the organization is large enough to be able to absorb the funding currently provided by ASSET, however, the 8-10 children they generally serve may not be able to be served.

5. Internal Management Practices: ChildServe has several layers of management including their board of directors. I did not attend a board of directors meeting to learn more about the intersection of the board with the services provided to story county citizens. However, Brendan Messmer, operations director, indicated that the board does meet monthly and many items go through the board for decision making or comment. It was also noted that ChildServe has 2 sites in Ames. They are currently renovating a space across from their main location to include administration space that will free up the main facility for additional space for services. Space has been an on-going issue for the organization.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT:

ASSET funding for ChildServe is a small part of the overall funding structure of the organization and serves to help 8-10 children in Story County receive services that may not otherwise qualify.