

# BUDGET REQUEST: MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™



## BILL OVERVIEW:

Every year, public agencies around Washington put forward budget requests and recommendations to the governor's office for programs and departments they run. This year, DCYF has included a request for \$4.5 million dollars to assist in state-wide implementation of MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™. This includes:

- 8.5 full-time DCYF employees to implement and oversee Constellations statewide
- Funds to train 3 private Child Placing Agencies to successfully implement MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™
- Funding and staff to support the launch of 15 Constellations across WA
- Funding 15 current Constellations that support families and youth and young adults

## YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT VOICE:

Many foster youth and young adults feel more supported in their Constellations. As one child of MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ shared, "My Mockingbird family means that I am never on my own and always have someone I can go to or trust in... I always think they will be a part of my life even when I leave care."

## BILL CHAMPION:

- Rep. Orwall, LD 33 (King County area)

## ACTION STEPS:

- *The Mockingbird Society is seeking new partners to implement MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ in their own communities*
- *The Mockingbird Society continues to fundraise for the expansion of Constellations everywhere*

**If you know of any potential community partners or supporters for this topic, please contact:**

- **Mockingbird's Acting Public Policy Director / Lobbyist, Sam Martin at [sam@sdmartinconsulting.com](mailto:sam@sdmartinconsulting.com)**
- **Mockingbird's Director of Practice Innovation, Hayley Bridwell: [hayley@mockingbirdsociety.org](mailto:hayley@mockingbirdsociety.org)**

## BACKGROUND:

- MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ reflects how children were raised for generations – by creating strong, culturally relevant extended family networks that keep children and young people connected to their identities, culture, and communities
- It does this by giving agencies an alternative approach to the traditional foster care structure that is effective in providing the supports and life-long connections all families and youth need.
- First launched in 2004 in Seattle, families around the world are now supported by Constellations in Washington, New York, and California, as well as in the UK, Nova Scotia, the Netherlands, Japan, and Australia, with more agencies implementing MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ every year.

## IMPACTS:

- Over 60 agencies have been trained to implement and run over 120 Constellations worldwide.
- Over 90% of families in Constellations keep fostering (compared to the 30-50% national average).
- Families are more likely to take placement of a young person in care.
- Youth and families have better outcomes per dollar compared to "traditional" foster care.
- Active inclusion of the cultural, religious, and identity needs of participants is at the core of every MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™ Constellation

For more information about MOCKINGBIRD FAMILY™, follow the QR code:

