

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4796

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Delegates Pinson, Burkhammer, and Leavitt

[Introduced January 23, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources then
Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
2 designated §49-13-1, §49-13-2, §49-13-3 and §49-13-4, relating to placement of foster
3 children; establishing a central reception center; establishing emergency resource homes;
4 and requiring a report.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 13. CENTRAL RECEPTION CENTER AND EMERGENCY RESOURCE
HOMES.**

§49-13-1. Definitions.

1 "Central Reception Center" means a dedicated facility providing short-term, temporary
2 supervision, assessment, and support services to children awaiting placement.

3 "Emergency Resource Homes" means foster homes designated to provide emergency
4 overnight care to children who do not yet have permanent placements.

5 "Behavioral Stabilization Services" means crisis intervention, de-escalation, and clinical
6 support for children experiencing mental or behavioral health crises.

§49-13-2. Central Reception Center establishment.

1 (a) The West Virginia Department of Human Services shall contract with at least two
2 central reception centers to serve as a short term arrangement for children awaiting foster
3 placement.

4 (b) The central reception center shall operate 24 hours per day and be open every day of
5 the year and provide:

6 (1) Supervised care and temporary shelter for children who have been disrupted from
7 placements;

8 (2) Behavioral assessment and stabilization services;

9 (3) Case coordination with child welfare professionals and agencies to identify appropriate
10 foster placements; and

11 (4) Educational continuity and medical or therapeutic support as needed.

12 (c) The central reception center shall be licensed as a residential treatment facility.

13 (d) A child staying at the central reception center may not remain more than 72 hours but
14 shall be placed in an emergency resource home or other suitable foster home by the end of each
15 72-hour period.

§49-13-3. Emergency Resource Home recruitment and expansion.

1 (a) The Department of Human Services shall in conjunction with child placing agencies
2 expand recruitment of emergency resource homes to ensure an adequate number of emergency
3 foster placements across the state.

4 (b) Emergency resource home parents shall be:

5 (1) Provided with specialized training in trauma-informed care and crisis intervention;

6 (2) Offered financial incentives to ensure homes remain open and available; and

7 (3) Supported by 24/7 crisis response teams for immediate intervention if needed.

8 (c) The Department of Human Services shall actively recruit emergency resource homes in
9 high-need areas and prioritize homes for adolescents, justice-involved youth, and children with
10 special needs.

§49-13-4. Reports.

1 The Department of Human Services shall submit an annual report to the Legislative
2 Oversight Commission on Health and Human Resources by December 1 concerning;

3 (1) The number of children served;

4 (2) Placement success rates;

5 (3) The effectiveness of behavioral stabilization interventions; and

6 (4) The progress on emergency resource homes recruitment and retention.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a central reception center and emergency resource homes for foster children and eliminating the practice of placing children in hotels due to lack of foster care placements.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.