



CONCLUSION: The lack of accountability within the program limits fidelity, possible effectiveness, and the efficient use of state funds. The Helping Families Initiative (HFI) is designed to impact chronic absenteeism and behavior among students. The program is not currently operating as designed across circuits; therefore, the program’s effectiveness on intended outcomes cannot be measured. HFI has been heavily focused on expansion efforts without ensuring efficient and effective use of state funds.

Recommendations

- **Establish** performance metrics that align with intended outcomes.
- **Implement** rigorous tracking, monitoring, and compliance within HFI’s case management system.
- **Ensure** consistent operations by establishing uniform standard operating procedures.
- **Work** with school systems to adopt a universal Code of Conduct.
- **Create** a more equitable, efficient, and accountable funding model.
- **Set** a startup funding amount that is contingent on operations.
- **Require** monthly itemized invoicing that includes all HFI related expenditures.
- **Cap** HFI administrative expenses at 15% and accumulated surplus of state funds to 10% of annual appropriations.
- **Conduct** an impact evaluation to study HFI’s impact on intended outcomes.
- **Discontinue** expansion efforts to new circuits until an impact evaluation is conducted.



Key Findings



There is a fundamental lack of accountability within the program that impacts fidelity, effectiveness, and efficiency.



HFI’s program is not implemented as designed. In each of the six steps, there are serious inconsistencies of operations. No locality operates with **full** fidelity to the model.



Outcome data is not collected. Output data that is collected are self-reported, unverified, and inaccurate.



HFI’s current funding model is not diverse, adaptable, or equitable. It does not consider the status or operations, number of students served, or availability of local resources.



Half of the current localities have amassed a surplus of \$830,000 in state funds.



HFI’s administrative costs have averaged 29% since receiving state funding.



The State Support Team has retained a surplus of \$625,121. The budgeted use of these funds is conditioned on increased funding from the state. This further illustrates the inefficient operations of the program.

FIGURE | HFI’s administrative expenses has averaged 29% a year since receiving state funding in FY17.

