

# Flexible Funds for Concrete Supports to Families as a Child Welfare Prevention Strategy

Meeting Family Needs Series

Chapin Hall Policy Brief | Yasmin Grewal-Kök

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## About this series

The child welfare system was founded with the goal of protecting children from harm. Too often, though, the threats to children and their families come long before circumstances that would trigger child welfare involvement. Economic policies and public health and human service systems that serve families upstream of child welfare and can provide supports—including stable and adequate income, housing, health services, and utility and food aid—are critical to keeping family challenges from becoming crises. This reality necessitates a new direction—one that prevents child welfare involvement by ensuring that family needs are met earlier. This child and family well-being system must be grounded in a shared responsibility and accountability policy framework and approach to human services that will ultimately prevent the unnecessary separation of families. Chapin Hall's new Meeting Family Needs series will provide an in-depth look at policies, practices, and innovations that can be the foundation for a well-being system.

## In this brief

This policy brief provides an overview of the research supporting the effectiveness of flexible funds to meet concrete family needs in the child welfare context. It highlights family preservation and upstream prevention efforts in Kentucky, Indiana, and Wisconsin that include flexible funds as a core component. The brief concludes with policy recommendations and offers future directions to expand economic and concrete support services to families.<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

The central role of economic insecurity and material hardship as drivers of child welfare system involvement underscores the importance of addressing the concrete needs of families (Dolan et al., 2011; Conrad-Hiebner & Byram, 2020). Experiencing economic shocks or material hardship (generally defined as difficulty paying for necessities, such as housing, food, utilities or medical care), particularly for families who are living with low income, is strongly associated with an elevated risk for child welfare involvement (Cai, 2021; Yang, 2015). And, when families experience cumulative hardships, the risk for child welfare involvement is even greater (Yang, 2015; Conrad-Hiebner & Byram, 2020).

Recent research elevates the increasing significance of economic hardship as a predictor of child welfare involvement. Kim and Drake (2023) found that, at the county level, the relationship between child poverty rates and child maltreatment reporting rates intensified by almost 40%, particularly for neglect reports (from 2009 to 2018). The authors suggest that worsening economic conditions for those at the bottom of the income and wealth distributions in the United States due to steadily rising inequality may be intensifying poverty's impact on maltreatment reporting rates.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates the effects of a broad array of economic and concrete supports to reduce risk for child maltreatment and child welfare involvement (Grewal-Kök et al., 2023; [Anderson et al., 2023](#)). This evidence spans macroeconomic supports (tax credits, minimum wage, paid family leave, unemployment benefits), concrete supports (child care, housing, health care, flexible funds, direct cash transfers), and public assistance programs (Temporary

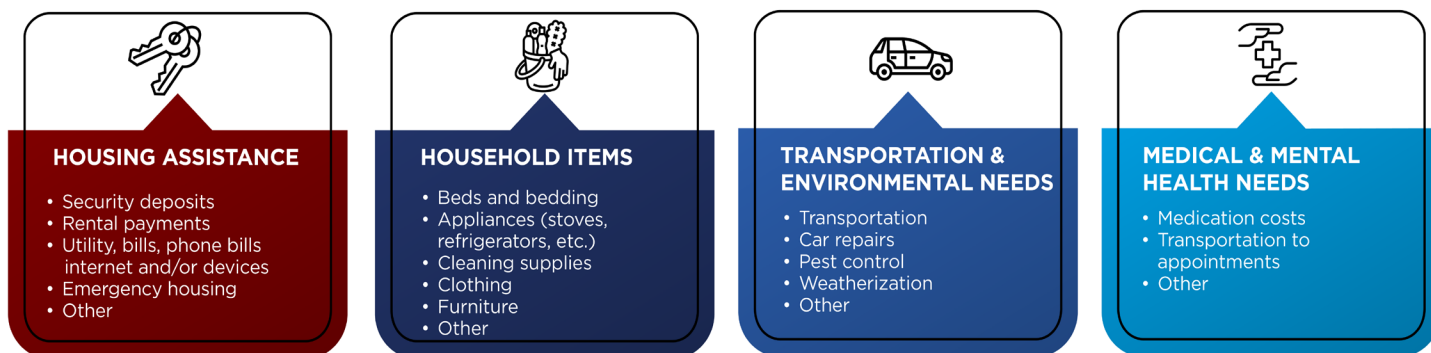
<sup>1</sup> See also Casey Family Programs. (2024). *Strategy brief: How are child welfare systems using flexible funds to support families and prevent the need for foster care?* <https://www.casey.org/flexible-funding-strategies>

Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC]). Because families of color experience deep inequities in income, wealth, and resource access ([Federal Reserve](#), 2020) and are disproportionately more likely to face material hardship and economic insecurity due to longstanding systemic conditions and structural racism (Dettlaff et al., 2021; Shrider et al., 2021), directly addressing families' economic and material needs not only addresses child maltreatment risk factors but may also serve as an important race equity strategy.<sup>2</sup>

Jurisdictions are increasingly using funding in innovative ways to meet the economic and concrete needs of families as a child welfare prevention strategy (for example, [Healthy Families Massachusetts Program](#); [New York State Office of Children and Families Direct Cash Transfer Pilot](#); [Washington, DC Mother UP Pilot](#); [Footbridge for Families](#); [Rx Kids](#)). Several states include flexible funds for concrete supports as part of their family preservation programs—which aim to keep children who have come to the attention of child welfare safely at home with their families—as well as further upstream to families at risk for child welfare involvement.<sup>3</sup>

Flexible funds are discretionary funds that can be used by child welfare agency caseworkers or community providers to address families' immediate, identified needs, such as rental assistance, household items, or car repairs (Pierce et al., 2018; [PCG Economic and Concrete Supports Services Manual](#), 2023).<sup>4</sup> These are intended as emergency or one-time supplements to stabilize families, buffer against economic shocks or cumulative material hardship that elevate risk, and/or prevent crises that might otherwise result in subsequent child welfare involvement or the placement of children into foster care.

*Examples of concrete supports provided through flexible funds:*



<sup>2</sup> Recent analysis simulating the effects of increased household income under three National Academy of Sciences (NAS) anti-poverty policy packages found that implementation could reduce child protective services (CPS) investigations by 11% to 20% annually. Furthermore, implementation would substantially reduce racial disproportionality in CPS involvement: up to a 29% reduction in investigations for Black children and a 24% reduction in investigations for Latinx children, compared to a 13% reduction in investigations for White children (Pac et al., 2023; NAS, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> For example, families in Minnesota who are not involved with CPS can refer themselves or be referred by community or social service agencies to the [Parent Support Outreach Program](#) (PSOP), which provides short-term voluntary services to families experiencing multiple risk factors, including poverty, homelessness, or mental health concerns. Flexible funds to address family stressors and meet basic needs is a key component of PSOP, which is funded with state funding and federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funds ([Minnesota's Title IV-E Prevention Plan](#), 2022). An evaluation of PSOP found effectiveness in reducing subsequent screened-in CPS reports ([Loman et al.](#), 2009). More recent data indicates that over 90% of children remain with their families within three years of their involvement in PSOP services ([PSOP](#), n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> While flexible funds are generally not used to provide direct cash assistance to families, providing direct cash assistance to families is associated with reduced risk for child welfare involvement and improved well-being, including via TANF, tax credits (Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit), and direct cash transfers ([CBPP](#), 2023; Ginther & Johnson-Motoyama, 2022; Kovski et al., 2022; Klevens et al., 2017; West et al., 2021; Troller-Renfrew et al., 2022; Copeland et al., 2022; Bullinger et al., 2023).

# OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE

## Effectiveness of flexible funds to meet families' concrete needs in the child welfare context

The provision of flexible funds to meet the material needs of families participating in child welfare services are associated with reductions in subsequent child welfare involvement. Studies of family preservation programs suggest that even short-term and relatively limited concrete supports may play a protective role for families at risk for intensive child welfare involvement (Chaffin et al., 2001; D'Aunno et al., 2014; Eamon & Kopels, 2004; Meezan & McCroskey, 1996; Mullins et al., 2012; Shook & Testa, 1997; Fraser et al., 1991).<sup>5</sup> For example, families with open child welfare cases who participated in a home-based family preservation program that provided needs-based financial assistance for concrete needs were 17% less likely to experience a subsequent maltreatment report compared to families with open child welfare cases who received the program without any such assistance (Rostad et al., 2017).

In the context of efforts to provide family assessment and support in lieu of child protection investigations (such as through "alternative response" or "differential response" programs<sup>6</sup>), low-income families who received services from a differential response program that provided concrete supports were less likely to experience subsequent maltreatment reports (over a period of 8 to 9 years), compared to low-income families who received the services without any concrete supports (Loman & Siegel, 2012).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Loman and Siegel (2012) found a significant interaction between income and receipt of material services: among low-income families receiving differential response, receiving concrete supports was associated with a lower likelihood of experiencing a subsequent maltreatment report.

Several evidence-based programs that have been rated well-supported by the [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#)<sup>8</sup>—including Homebuilders™, Intercept, and Multisystemic Therapy—include flexible funds as a component of their model to meet families' concrete needs ([Monahan et al., 2023](#)).<sup>9</sup> An evaluation of Homebuilders™ found the concrete supports made available through flexible funds in this intensive family preservation program are associated with reduced likelihood of subsequent maltreatment and foster care placement, particularly for families who reported difficulty paying bills prior to participating in the program (Ryan & Schuerman, 2004).

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<sup>5</sup> Using a common elements approach, D'Aunno et al. (2014) identified distinct elements found within in-home child welfare services that produce relatively strong outcomes. The D'Aunno literature review was conducted as part of the National Resource Center for In-Home Services Technical Assistance program, whose aim was to strengthen jurisdictions' existing in-home services practices. The literature review resulted in the development of a set of evidence-based elements—including concrete supports—within in-home services that are supported by empirical research and are congruent with evidenced-based practices and programs.

<sup>6</sup> Under alternative or differential response programs, families with screened-in CPS reports who are determined not to be high risk are diverted from investigations and instead connected with services and supports to meet their needs.

<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, families with screened-in maltreatment reports who were randomly assigned to a differential response track and who received more concrete supports experienced a lower risk of subsequent screened-in maltreatment reports and child removals (over a period of 8 to 9 years), compared to families assigned to the traditional track and who received fewer concrete supports (Loman & Siegel, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> The Clearinghouse lists evidence-based prevention services that have been reviewed and given a rating of well-supported, supported, promising, or does not meet criteria based on the evidence base. A service must be rated at least promising to be eligible for Title IV-E funding reimbursement through Family First.

<sup>9</sup> The developers and related scholars of these favorably rated evidence-based programs and/or services on the Clearinghouse embedded economic and concrete supports into their program model designs with purpose. This pattern of intervention development suggests that economic and concrete supports may be a much more powerful active ingredient or evidence-based kernel in the effectiveness of these programs ([Monahan et al., 2023](#); Embry & Biglan, 2008). In addition, the evidence-based kinship navigator programs rated as promising or supported by the Clearinghouse offer a variety of economic and concrete supports, including flexible funds, to meet kinship caregivers' material needs ([Steinmetz & Fox, 2023](#)).

# STATE EXAMPLES

## Flexible Funds as a Core Component of Child Welfare Prevention Efforts

Child welfare agencies are using funds and flexibilities to keep children safely at home. By addressing economic stressors and promoting stable home environments, the use of funding to provide concrete supports has shown promising results in preventing subsequent child welfare involvement. While there is variation in when and how these flexible dollars are used by child welfare agencies to strengthen families, this brief highlights the efforts of Kentucky, Indiana, and Wisconsin to integrate and expand flexible funds in their family preservation and upstream prevention strategies.



### Kentucky

Kentucky has a long-standing commitment to investing in flexible funds to meet the concrete needs of families (CWLA, 2022) and it has taken a holistic approach to ensure flexible funds are available across the child welfare continuum as well as upstream of child welfare involvement.

Kentucky's Family Preservation and Reunification Services (FPRS), available statewide to families referred by the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), provides families with children at risk of removal into foster care and families with children returning home from foster care with short-term prevention services, connections to community resources, and "client assistance funds" for concrete supports (FPP Manual, effective 2021). A range of services is available for families with varying risks and needs, and Kentucky is leveraging Title IV-E funding available through the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) to expand the capacity of evidence-based prevention services provided to families participating in FPRS (Kentucky's Title IV-E Prevention Plan, 2021).<sup>10</sup>

An evaluation of FPRS found that it successfully reduced entry into foster care and promoted family well-being. Compared to similar families who did not receive FPRS, families who received FPRS were less likely to experience a subsequent substantiated referral within 6 months of ending services, and less likely to have their children enter out-of-home care after services ended, even though the families who received FPRS had higher cumulative risk factors

<sup>10</sup> These services include Motivational Interviewing, Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Homebuilders, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT).

([Huebner, 2008](#)). Additionally, an earlier evaluation found that 87% of children whose families received FPRS remained in their home 1 year after the services ended ([Huebner, 2008](#)). More recent data indicates that FPRS has seen a 96% success rate in keeping children safely in their homes at the time of case closure and 90% success rate 1 year after services ended ([Kentucky's Title IV-E Prevention Plan, 2021](#)). This coincides with a decline in the number of children in foster care in Kentucky in recent years (12% decline from FY 2018 to FY 2021; [AFCARS, 2022](#)).

Over 2,500 families received FPRS services in state fiscal year (SFY) 2023. From SFY 2019 to SFY 2024, the annual budget for this program has increased from \$16.5 million to \$28 million. FPRS is currently funded through a mix of state general funds, federal Title IV-E Family First (related to the evidence-based prevention services provided through FPRS as well as for the flexible funds that are included as a component in these service models), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Title IV-B (Promoting Safe and Stable Families) funds.

The success of FPRS in preventing families from subsequent child welfare involvement has led to recent increases in state funding for flexible funds to meet the concrete needs of families. Historically budgeted at \$500 per family, the amount was raised to \$1,000 in 2021 for families participating in FPRS, with an average of \$750 in concrete supports budgeted per family ([Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Health, Welfare & Family Services, 2021](#)). These flexible funds are also available for child-welfare involved families receiving [Kentucky Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents](#) and [Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams](#) services.

Kentucky recently allocated new state funding to expand flexible funds across the child welfare continuum. Up to \$4,000 is available through community action agencies to families with active CPS cases, including investigations, alternative response, and ongoing cases, as well as families diverted from CPS and receiving supports through Kentucky's [Community Response Pilot](#)<sup>11</sup> ([DCBS Protection & Permanency Memorandum 23-04, 2023](#)). Families do not receive this financial assistance directly; rather, it may be used to address multiple identified hardships, including (but not limited to) housing assistance and supplies, environmental and transportation needs, and medication costs ([CPS Concrete Goods and Services Funding FAQ, n.d.](#)). Families with active CPS cases who are participating in FPRS qualify for both concrete support fund strategies (up to a maximum of \$5,000). Flexible funds are now also available to meet the concrete needs of families not involved with the child welfare system who are receiving voluntary in-home services through CBCAP-funded [Community Collaboration for Children \(CCC\)](#).

**In Kentucky, families with active child protective services cases as well as families with no ongoing child welfare involvement can receive up to \$4,000 in concrete supports through community action agencies.**

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<sup>11</sup> Community Response Programs (CRPs) voluntarily engage families screened out of CPS and connect them to community providers who provide economic and concrete supports and case management, among other services. Evaluations of CRPs have shown some promising results in reducing risk for child welfare involvement (Slack & Berger, 2020; Slack et al., 2022; Allan et al., 2018; Allan et al., 2023). Evaluators of the Wisconsin CRP noted "[t]he use of flexible funds has been identified as an important part of the program in terms of family engagement and immediate stress reduction" (Maguire-Jack & Bowers, 2014, p. 72).

Recognizing the impact of economic and concrete supports in child welfare prevention, Kentucky is committed to expanding upstream efforts. Given the increasing demand for available funds to meet families' material needs and the importance caseworkers place on these funds and their ability to use them flexibly to support families, DCBS intends to seek increased budget for flexible funds across its prevention continuum.

## Indiana

Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) launched [Indiana Family Preservation Services](#) (INFPS) in June 2020 with the goal of preventing child removals and repeat maltreatment for children involved in the child welfare system. INFPS, now offered statewide, serves all families where child maltreatment has been substantiated but where DCS (and the court, when applicable) believes the child can be safely maintained at home with strengths-based and family-driven services and supports ([INFPS Service Standards](#), n.d.). Like Kentucky, Indiana is leveraging Title IV-E Family First funding to expand the capacity of evidence-based prevention services provided to families participating in INFPS ([Indiana's Title IV-E Prevention Plan](#), 2021).<sup>12</sup>

**Indiana family preservation service providers are required to use concrete supports as a prevention tool to address families' unmet basic needs.**

Eligible families are referred by DCS to an INFPS provider in their community, who conducts an assessment in collaboration with the family and provides a tailored array of in-home services and supports.<sup>13</sup> Services must include at least one evidence-based intervention (rated as promising, supported, or well-supported by the [California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse](#)) as well as concrete assistance to address unmet basic needs when necessary to prevent child removal ([INFPS Service Standards](#), n.d.). INFPS service providers are expected to utilize funds received from DCS for concrete supports, which include:

- providing assistance for rent, utilities, food, clothing, and other material needs,
- connecting families to community resources, and
- assisting families with applications for federal assistance.

Because there is no cap on the amount of funding for concrete supports that may be provided to a family to prevent their child(ren) from entering foster care, INFPS providers focus on meeting immediate needs while also connecting families to long-term resources and supports.

The number of children in out-of-home placement in Indiana has *decreased by 50%* since peaking in October 2017, and by over 4,300 children since INFPS was launched ([DCS Placements by Region](#), 2023; [Casey Family Programs](#), 2022; [AFCARS](#), 2022). A preliminary evaluation of INFPS found short-term effectiveness in reducing repeat maltreatment for children and families receiving these services, compared to a similar cohort of in-home cases (Goodwin et al., 2023).<sup>14</sup> Importantly, the evaluation found that Black children and their families had more positive outcomes than white families who participated in INFPS, experiencing fewer incidents of repeat maltreatment and child removal. However, only a small portion of families in this evaluation received concrete supports (9.9% of INFPS families and 9.2% of comparison families). Given that flexible funds to meet concrete

<sup>12</sup> These services include Motivational Interviewing, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), and Healthy Families America (HFA).

<sup>13</sup> INFPS service providers are reimbursed through a per-diem model, allowing them to focus on outcomes for families, not hours billed.

<sup>14</sup> Although INFPS was associated with reduced repeat maltreatment by about 3–4% at the case level and about 2–3% at the child level, it was not significantly associated with decreased likelihood of child removal.

needs are a key component of INFPS, this finding points to the need for future efforts to bolster the deployment of available funds and additional analysis to understand organizational barriers to providing the funds. Indiana is currently conducting a follow-up evaluation of INFPS to study longer-term outcomes, which will include findings around the impact of concrete supports (Goodwin et al., 2023), with the goal of having this program reviewed by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

Over 11,500 families (and 23,000 children) have been served through INFPS since 2020, receiving an average of \$300 in concrete supports. With an annual budget of \$75 million for INFPS, and the intention that approximately 11% of this budget is used to meet families' concrete needs, there is considerable opportunity to expand concrete supports provided to families served by this program. INFPS is currently funded through a mix of state dollars and federal Title IV-E Family First funding (for the evidence-based prevention services provided through INFPS).

In the future, DCS hopes to amend its Title IV-E Family First Prevention Plan to include a [community pathways approach](#) that would allow Title IV-E funds to support its [Community Partners for Child Safety \(CPCS\)](#) program. This longstanding upstream prevention effort connects families in Indiana who do not have an open DCS case to community resources and includes flexible funds to address families' material needs.

## Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families invested in significant flexible funding resources to support families in-home with the launch of [Targeted Safety Support Funds](#) (TSSF) in 2020. TSSF aim to reduce trauma to children by keeping families who come to the attention of child welfare safely together with the provision of family-strengthening supports and resources ([TSSF Program & Fiscal Guide](#), 2023).

Targeted Safety Support funding is allocated directly to county child welfare agencies and 11 federally recognized Tribes in Wisconsin, allowing them to decide at the local level what supports are needed to serve children and families in their unique communities. Local child welfare agencies consider TSSF an integral tool to flexibly and immediately address the greatest needs of families involved in the CPS system ([Wisconsin's Title IV-E Prevention Plan](#), 2022). Through TSSF, families may access an array of concrete supports and services needed to maintain child safety.

Time-limited<sup>15</sup> supports include:

- emergency housing assistance,
- transportation,
- child care, and
- food and clothing services.

Families with TSSF cases may also receive a variety of additional services that are not time limited, including in-home health supports, crisis services, household supports (such as assistance for furniture, utilities, and home repairs), parenting supports, mental health services, case management, recreational activities, and respite services ([TSSF Program & Fiscal Guide](#), 2023).

**Local child welfare agencies in Wisconsin consider Targeted Safety Support Funds (TSSF) an integral tool to flexibly and immediately address the greatest needs of families involved in the child protective services system.**

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<sup>15</sup> Households may receive these concrete supports through TSSF for 4 consecutive months plus one 2-month extension, if needed, within a 12-month period. After this time frame, local child welfare agencies may use other funding sources to continue to provide these concrete supports to families.

Coinciding with a 15% decline in the number of children in foster care in Wisconsin from FY 2018 to FY 2021 ([AFCARS, 2022](#)) has been the steadily increasing number of child welfare-involved families who have been able to be served in-home with the help of flexible funding resources, including TSSF ([Wisconsin's Title IV-E Prevention Plan, 2022](#)). As of 2022, 77% of children served by TSSF did not experience a removal into foster care ([Putting Families First, 2022](#)).

More than 3,500 children and their families received concrete supports through TSSF from 2020 to 2022. The TSSF budget has steadily increased since these funds were launched, from \$4.9 million in 2020 to \$11.2 million for 2024. TSSF is funded primarily through TANF.

In addition to TSSF, Wisconsin launched its community-centered [Family Keys Program](#) in 2022, allocating Family First transition funds to local child welfare agencies specifically to address families' housing stress. The need for this program became especially clear during the pandemic, when data showed that approximately 30% fewer children were separated from their families due to housing insecurity during the eviction moratorium ([Family Keys Program; APHSA, 2022](#)). Under Family Keys, housing supports are provided to families with children at risk of removal due to housing insecurity and to families unable to reunify due to inadequate housing. Supports available for families include immediate housing (short-term hotel vouchers and transitional housing), incidentals (security deposits, housing application fees, utility fees, and transportation to housing meetings), and housing navigators to provide case management ([Family Keys, 2022](#)). Family Keys is being piloted in three counties, and lessons learned will inform future policy and programmatic considerations.



**Table 1: Overview of family preservation efforts in Kentucky, Indiana, and Wisconsin that include flexible funds to meet family concrete needs**

State	Who is eligible?	Is participation voluntary?	Who coordinates services & supports to participating families?	Are there restrictions on concrete supports that can be provided to families?	What is the funding source for the flexible funds?	What is the maximum amount of flexible funds available per family to meet concrete needs?	What is the program's total annual budget (2024)?
<b>Kentucky FPRS</b>	Families referred by child welfare who have a child at risk of entry into foster care or a child returning home from foster care	Participation is voluntary	Community-based organizations	There are no restrictions	State funds, TANF, Title IV-B and Title IV-E (for Family First services that include flexible funds as a component of the service model)	Up to \$1,000 per family participating in FPRS, plus up to \$4,000 for families who also have an active CPS case (up to \$5,000 total)	\$28 million
<b>Indiana INFPS</b>	Families with a substantiated incident of child maltreatment where child welfare determines the child can remain home with appropriate services	All families with in-home cases receive INFPS	A single service provider works with each family	Concrete supports must be provided when necessary to prevent child removal	State funds	No cap on the amount of funding for concrete supports that can be provided to prevent child removal	\$75 million
<b>Wisconsin TSSF</b>	Families referred by child welfare who have an open CPS case and safety plan, or who are on trial home reunification with a safety plan (limited eligibility exceptions exist)	Participation is voluntary	Local child welfare agencies (counties and Tribes)	Housing assistance, transportation, child care & food/clothing necessary to maintain child safety are time limited to 6 months (additional supports available to families are not time limited)	Primarily TANF	No cap on the amount of funding for concrete supports that can be provided to maintain child safety	\$11.2 million

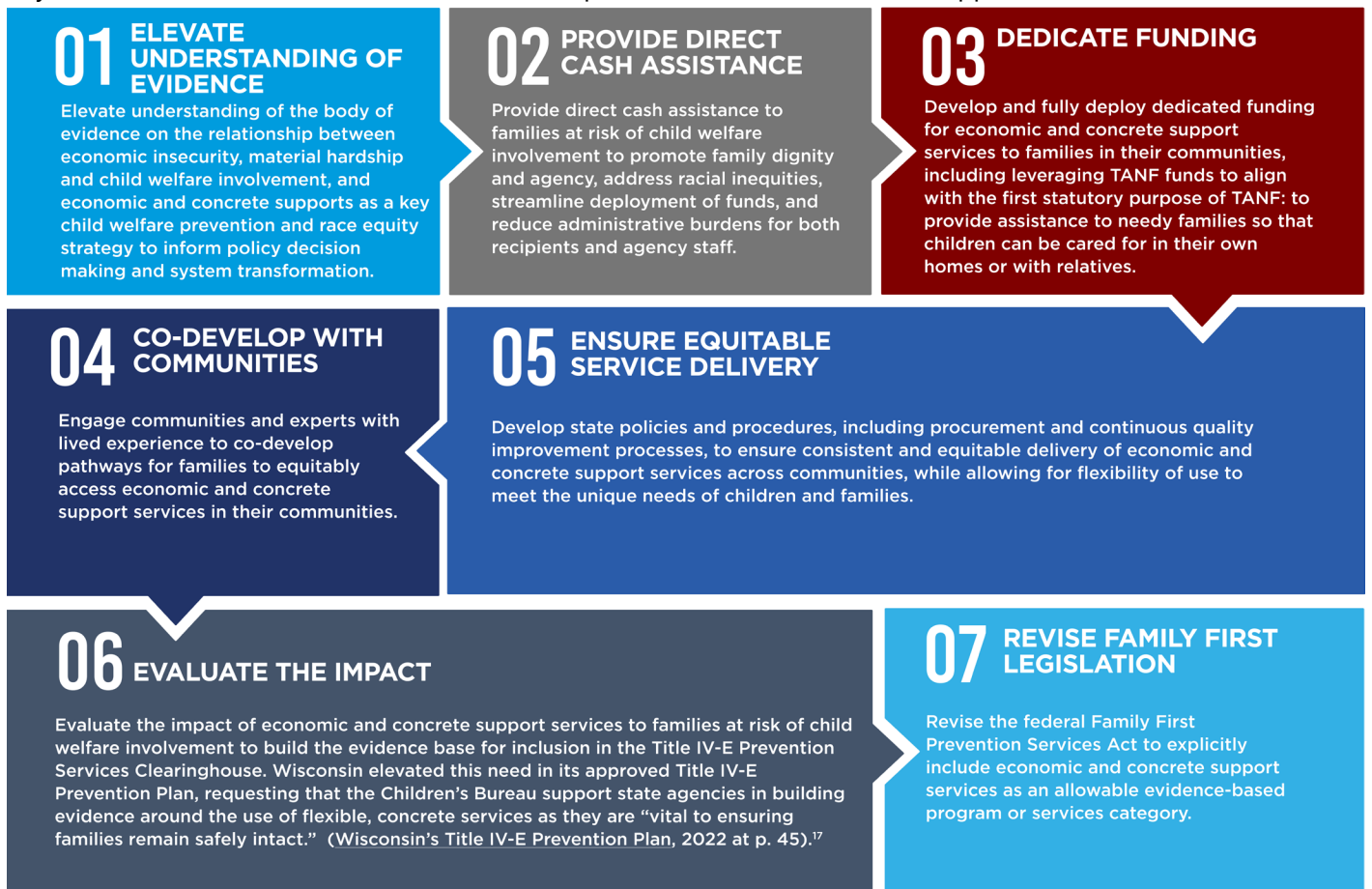
# RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

## Expanding family economic & concrete supports

Kentucky, Indiana, and Wisconsin have successful prevention strategies that reflect a strong vision and commitment to family well-being and unity. By prioritizing flexible funding to meet concrete needs and buffer against economic shocks, each state's family preservation model has been developed with an understanding of the importance of addressing families' economic and material needs to avoid more intrusive and traumatic child welfare interventions. As these three states continue to increase investment in prevention and use flexible funds in innovative ways to support families upstream of child welfare, they recognize the potential for long-term cost savings by meeting needs early and focusing on strengthening families.<sup>16</sup>

Expanding economic and concrete support services to families as a comprehensive child welfare prevention strategy will require a **policy framework for shared responsibility and accountability across the public health and human service platform** that reorients resources and effort to prevent child maltreatment and the unnecessary activation and deployment of child protective services and the use of foster care. As Kim and Drake (2023) emphasize, there is a need to "reorient human services to recognize the core and expanding importance of poverty as a fundamental threat to human functioning" (Kim & Drake, 2023, p. 13).

Key recommendations and future directions to expand economic and concrete support services to families include:



<sup>16</sup> An evaluation of Kentucky's family preservation program found that every \$1 spent on FPRS saved \$2.85 in out-of-home care costs (Huebner, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Indiana stated in its approved Title IV-E Prevention Plan: "DCS used Title IV-E Waiver evaluation dollars to evaluate whether concrete supports keep families and children stable in their home. In our previous evaluations, DCS found that concrete services are effective in preventing removals (Hall et al., 2017) and when children were removed, concrete supports decreased the number of placements (Winters et al., 2020). As such, DCS has requested that concrete supports and services be rated as a promising practice by the IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse considering the evidence that concrete supports aid Indiana families" ([Indiana's Title IV-E Prevention Plan](#), 2021, p. 60).

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## ABOUT CHAPIN HALL

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