



CDSS

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM (PSSF)

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PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES (PSSF) PROGRAM

I. What is PSSF?

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) is a federal program under Title IV-B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act for states to operate coordinated child and family services including community-based family support services, family preservation services, time-limited family reunification services and adoption promotion and support services to prevent child maltreatment among at-risk families, assure safety and stability of maltreated children, and support adoptive families.

II. Authority

Federal: The PSSF Program was first established as the Family Preservation and Support Services Program under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66). In 1997, the program was reauthorized under the Adoption and Safe Families Act (P.L. 105-89) and was renamed the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) with two additional service components put in place: time-limited reunification and adoption support services. The PSSF Amendment of 2001 (P.L. 107-133) extended the program through 2006 and the Child and Family Services Improvement Act (P.L. 109-288) reauthorized the program through FY 2011. More recently, the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (P.L. 112-34) reauthorized the PSSF Program through FY 2016.

State: Funding under the PSSF Program is distributed to states under a formula grant based on the number of children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. States are permitted to use ten percent of the funding for administrative costs. To maintain eligibility, states must provide a twenty-five percent state match. Additionally, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) must meet a \$13,200,000 Maintenance of Effort (MOE). The MOE was established when CDSS first began participation in the PSSF Program in FFY 1994. The CDSS has continued to meet both the twenty-five percent match and MOE requirements via State Family Preservation (SFP) Program expenditures.

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) within CDSS has been designated by the Governor as the single state agency to administer and oversee the funds. The OCAP provides training and technical assistance through its consultants, departmental resources and subcontractors.

Counties: Eighty-five percent of California's PSSF funds are allocated to counties. County allocations are based on the number of children zero to 17 years of age and the number of children in poverty residing in the county. In order to ensure an adequate level of funding for smaller counties, the minimum PSSF county allocation is \$10,000. The county child welfare agency must administer PSSF funds at the local level and is responsible for adhering to the PSSF assurances.

Under Assembly Bill 118, SFP funds were realigned to local revenue funds. If every county that operated a SFP Program in FY 2011-12 continues to expend funds at the same level in ongoing FYs, California's match and MOE will continue to be met.

III. Purpose

The four PSSF Program components: (1) family preservation, (2) community-based family support, (3) time-limited family reunification and (4) adoption promotion and support, are intended to provide coordinated services for children and families across the continuum from prevention to treatment through aftercare. The objective, target population and allowable services and activities for each component are described in the tables below.

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IV. Target Populations & Allowable Activities

1. Family Preservation	
Objective	
To prevent maltreatment among families through the provision of community-based, supportive family services designed to help families (including adoptive and extended families) at risk or in crisis.	
Target Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable families with children that are at risk of abuse or neglect. • Families that have one or more risk factors. • Families that have already demonstrated the need for intervention and have an open child welfare case. • Services may be provided for youth being served by child welfare and probation agencies that have met Title IV-E eligibility requirements and are in a qualified placement setting. 	
Allowable Services and Activities (include but are not limited to)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services designed to help children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safely return to families from which they have been removed. ○ Be placed for adoption with a legal guardian. ○ If adoption or legal guardianship is determined unsafe, in some other planned permanent living arrangement. • Pre-placement preventive services programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intensive family preservation/maintenance programs, designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families. • Follow-up care to families to whom a child has been returned after a foster care placement. • Respite care (to children) for temporary relief for parents and other caregivers (including foster parents). • Services designed to improve parenting skills with respect to matters such as child development, family budgeting, coping with stress, health and nutrition. • Infant safe haven programs to provide a way for a parent to safely relinquish a newborn infant at a safe haven designated pursuant to state law (i.e. Safely Surrendered Babies). 	
Services* Frequently Supported by Family Preservation Funds (not an exhaustive list):	
Basic needs, concrete supports Behavior health, mental health services Case management Childcare (temporary) Differential Response Domestic violence services Early childhood services Family Resource Center or other multi-service center Financial literacy education	Health services Home visiting (for parents with children ages 0-5) Housing services Parenting education Peer support Respite care Substance abuse services Team Decision Making Transportation Youth programs
2. Community-Based Family Support Services¹	
Objective	
To assure children's safety within the home and to preserve intact families in which children have been maltreated.	

¹ Community-based services refers to programs delivered in accessible settings in the community and responsive to the needs of the community and the individuals and families residing therein. These services may be provided under public or private nonprofit auspices (45 CFR 1357.10(c)).

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Target Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable families with children that are at risk of abuse or neglect. Families that have one or more risk factors. Families that have already demonstrated the need for intervention and have an open child welfare case. Services may be provided for youth being served by child welfare and probation agencies that have met Title IV-E eligibility requirements and are in a qualified placement setting. 	
Allowable Services and Activities (include but are not limited to)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service that promote the safety and well-being of children and families. Services that increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and extended families). Services that increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities. Services that afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment. Services that strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages. Services that enhance child development, including through mentoring². 	
Services* Frequently Supported by Community-Based Family Support Funds (not an exhaustive list)	
Basic needs, concrete supports Behavior health, mental health services Case management Childcare (temporary) Differential Response Domestic violence services Early childhood services Family Resource Center or other multi-service center Financial literacy education Health services	Home visiting (for parents with children ages 0-5) Housing services Parenting education Parent/sibling visitation Peer Support Respite care / crisis nursery Substance abuse services Team Decision Making Transportation Youth programs
3. Time-Limited Family Reunification	
Objective	
To address the problems of families whose children have been placed in foster care so that reunification may occur safely and timely.	
Target Population	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children that are removed from their home and placed in a foster family home or a child care institution. Parents or primary caregiver of such a child, in order to facilitate the reunification of the child, safely, appropriately and in a timely fashion, but only during the 15-month period that begins on the date the child is considered to have entered foster care. 	
Allowable Services and Activities	

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- Individual, group, and family counseling
- Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services
- Mental health services
- Assistance to address domestic violence
- Temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries.
- Peer-to-peer mentoring and support groups for parents and primary caregivers
- Services/activities that facilitate access to and visitation of children by parents and siblings.
- Transportation to or from any of the services and activities described above

Please note: Case management and/or linkages to services are not allowable under PSSF TLFR. **These funds are for the provision of the direct services specified above only.**

Time-Limited Family Reunification Services* are limited to the following:

Behavior health, mental health services Childcare (temporary) Domestic violence services Parent/sibling visitation	Peer support Respite care Substance abuse treatment Transportation
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4. Adoption Promotion and Support Services

Objective

To support adoptive families by providing support services necessary for them to make a lifetime commitment to children.

Services and activities are designed to encourage more adoptions out of the foster care system, when adoptions promote the best interests of children, including such activities designed to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families.

Target Population

- Current dependents in the foster care system with a case plan goal of adoption.
- Children whom have had a finalized adoption and their adoptive families and families exploring adoption.
- Services may be provided for youth being served by child welfare and probation agencies that have met Title IV-E eligibility requirements and are in a qualified placement setting.

Allowable Services and Activities (include but are not limited to)

- Pre- and post-adoptive services designed to support adoptive families so that they can make a lifetime commitment to their children
- Activities designed to expedite the adoption process and support adoptive families

Services* Frequently Support by Adoptions, Promotion, and Support (not an exhaustive list)

Adoptive parent recruitment Basic needs, concrete supports Behavior health, mental health services Case management Childcare Family Resource Center or other drop-in multi-service center Financial literacy education	Health services Livescan Fees Parenting education Peer support Respite care Team Decision Making Transportation Youth programs
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* = please refer to OCAP Service Categories definitions on the OCAP extranet
<http://www.cdsscounties.ca.gov/OCAP/res/pdf/Service%20Categories.pdf>

V. Use of Funds

A minimum of 20 percent of the county's total annual PSSF allocation must be spent under each of the four program components. Counties have flexibility in how the remaining 20 percent is expended.

No more than 10 percent may be used for administrative costs. Administrative (i.e. indirect) costs are defined as:

Costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be identified specifically with a particular project, program, or organizational activity. Depreciation, software, and office equipment are examples of administrative costs.

Allowable costs that would not have been incurred had it not been for the program are direct program costs not administrative (e.g. program staff, training, supplies, travel).

VI. Program Requirements

The PSSF Program is not an entitlement program and counties must meet program requirements through the County Self-Assessment (CSA) and System Improvement Plan (SIP) components of the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) as well as submittal of the CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Annual Report. Counties must:

- A. Establish a PSSF Collaborative (local planning body) to develop county plans as required by CDSS. The county Board of Supervisors (BOS) shall oversee the local planning process and approve each plan before it is transmitted to CDSS for approval. The planning process shall include:
 1. Broad involvement and consultation with a wide-range of appropriate public and private non-profit agencies and community-based organizations and parents, including families, parents, and youth who have been involved with or are currently receiving child welfare services;
 2. Coordination in the provision of services for children and families;
 3. Collection of information to help determine at-risk populations, target areas, assess service needs, identify gaps in services, select priorities for funding and services, formulate goals and objectives and develop opportunities for bringing more effective and accessible services for children and families;
 4. A description of services to be provided. For each service provide a description of:
 - a. The population to be served;
 - b. The geographic area where services will be provided;
 - c. The number of individuals and families to be served.
- B. Utilize a quality assurance process that measures quantity, quality and effectiveness of funded activities.

Whether funds are used for in-house services or contracted with a provider, the county is required to report participation rates and outcomes achieved to the OCAP.

VII. References

[42 U.S.C. 629: Subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families](#)

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[45 CFR 1357: Title IV-B Requirements](#)

[Assembly Bill 118 \(Chapter 40, Statutes of 2011\)](#)

[Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 \(Public Law 109-288\)](#)

[Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act \(Public Law 112-34\)](#)

[County Fiscal Letters](#)

[OCAP Service Categories Defined](#)

[Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 \(Public Law 103-66\)](#)

[Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendment of 2001 \(Public Law 107-133\)](#)

[Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16600-16605](#)

VIII. Program Resources

- [Family Development Matrix](#)
- [Strategies](#)
- [Strengthening Families](#)
- [The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse](#)