



2025 STATE COHORT

Housing as a
Foundational Element
of Family Well-Being





The authors and facilitators of this work—Andrew Johnson, Laura Yepez, Amy Stetzel, Maya Saxena, Krista Thomas, Samantha Steinmetz, Kaya West, Kristan Isom, and Margie Hunt—are gratefully acknowledged for their leadership, expertise, and contributions to the development of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview of Partnership and Cohort

The 2025 Housing as a Foundational Element of Family Well-Being Cohort was a 6-month national learning collaborative convened by Casey Family Programs, CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing), and Chapin Hall. The cohort was developed in response to growing evidence that housing instability and family homelessness are key drivers of child welfare system contact. The goal was to create a shared learning space for state housing and child welfare leadership teams to advance policy, practice, and resource alignment to better serve children and families amid a complex and evolving funding and policy landscape.

The cohort included cross-sector leadership from **New Jersey, Colorado, Kentucky, and Oregon**. CSH, Chapin Hall, and Casey Family Programs provided peer learning and cross-sector collaboration opportunities through monthly cohort meetings and tailored technical assistance in individual state sessions. Each state hosted one cohort meeting to share how housing and child welfare agencies collaborate, highlight innovations and promising initiatives, and surface current challenges. Jurisdictional leaders then facilitated discussions to resolve sticking points and review lessons learned with the full group.

At the end of the 6 months, participants reported that the cohort helped them think more creatively about housing solutions and funding opportunities to better support child-welfare-involved families. They learned new ways to reframe housing needs for decisionmakers—especially around cost-saving prevention opportunities—and explored how to blend and braid funding to cover current gaps.



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“Housing-related services and supports can meet the needs of children, youth, and families to prevent unnecessary entries into foster care, expedite safe reunification and permanency, and support family well-being in alignment with broader shifts in child welfare policy and practice to build community-based preventative supports that strengthen families and keep children safe.”

Margaret Hunt, Senior Director, National Partnerships, Casey Family Programs



Policy Context and Overview of Jurisdictions' Challenges

Economic and concrete supports, including resources and services to address housing needs, are essential to promoting child and family stability and well-being.¹ Housing hardship is one of the most reliable economic predictors of child welfare system involvement² and housing-related concerns, like difficulty paying rent or short duration of residence, represent some of the strongest predictors of investigated neglect reports.³ Families with children represent one-third of the U.S. population experiencing homelessness,⁴ and babies and toddlers are the group of Americans most at risk of eviction.⁵

Research evidence demonstrates that interventions like permanent housing subsidies,⁶ supportive housing programs,⁷ eviction protection,⁸ and increased access to affordable housing are associated with better child welfare outcomes.⁹ However, cohort participants reported numerous challenges effectively supporting families at the nexus of housing and child welfare.

Participants reported challenges such as the lack of affordable housing within their jurisdictions for low-income families and youth. They also reported insufficient programs to address poverty, homelessness prevention, and housing stabilization. The limits of the data available and the need to more systematically track the housing needs of child-welfare-involved families were also named as concerns. Participants identified opportunities to improve communication between child welfare and housing agencies. They said the child welfare workforce needs to build its capacity to recognize and address housing-related issues, particularly as they relate to families' capacities to achieve their child welfare goals.

Cohort participants expressed the urgency of meaningfully addressing these challenges, as housing stress continues to increase within their jurisdictions. Nationally, rental costs continue to rise dramatically relative to income¹⁰ and 2023 data showed a record number of people experiencing homelessness.¹¹

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“Addressing housing needs is essential for achieving priority child welfare outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. Cross-sector partnerships, like those represented in this learning cohort, are important building blocks for creating a true child and family well-being system.”

**Krista Thomas, Senior Policy Fellow,
Chapin Hall**



JURISDICTION SUMMARIES

New Jersey

The Team

- New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF)
 - Clinton Page, First Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Child Protection and Permanency
 - Kerry Anne Henry, Assistant Director, Office of Housing
 - Katherine Stoehr, First Deputy Commissioner (former)
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
 - Janel Winter, Assistant Commissioner and Director, Division of Housing and Community Resources
- New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS)
 - Natasha Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Family Development

Overview of Agencies and Cross-Sector Partnership

New Jersey's cabinet-level agencies have a long history of collaborating and jointly investing in housing and child welfare initiatives, led primarily by DCF, DCA, and DHS. These partners align efforts to address the housing needs of families and youth and to strengthen investments that connect stable housing with critical services required by these populations.

NJ DCF is the state agency devoted exclusively to serving and supporting at-risk children and families, assisting and empowering them to be safe, healthy, and connected. This is done with an array of evidence-based, family-centered programs and services that are provided through a robust network of community providers. NJ DCF serves as the statewide public child welfare agency and offers a range of prevention-oriented supports for children, youth, and families. NJ DCF's program array includes examples such as an Office of Housing, the NJ Family Success Center Network (57 family resource centers), early childhood services, and an integrated and inclusive system of care for youth.

NJ DCA provides administrative guidance, financial support, and technical assistance to local governments, community development organizations, businesses, and residents to improve quality of life. Its programs span local government management and finance, affordable housing production, fire and building safety, community planning and development, historic preservation, disaster recovery and mitigation, and information privacy. NJ DCA, Division of Housing and Community Resources, delivers a broad range of services related to housing assistance and production, community development, neighborhood revitalization,

energy assistance, and other community support programs. Beyond DCA statewide programs, there are over 100 local public housing authorities and 16 continuums of care responsible for homelessness response systems across the state, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

NJ DHS serves roughly one in five New Jersey residents and one in three children, providing support to older adults, low-income individuals and families, people with disabilities, parents needing child care or child support, and individuals facing addiction, mental health challenges, or catastrophic medical expenses. The Department administers a broad array of programs to help meet economic and health needs, including Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Child Care Assistance Program, child support services, and various independent living, personal care, and other essential support resources.

State Programs and Innovations

- **NJ DCF Office of Housing:** The Office of Housing coordinates efforts to meet the housing needs of DCF-involved families and youth. Though it does not replace the state's formal housing or homelessness systems, it plays a key internal role in elevating housing as a foundation for DCF's priorities. The office leads DCF's housing investments and partnerships, identifies emerging needs, and strengthens collaboration with NJ DCA, DHS, and other federal, state, and local housing systems to ensure child welfare perspectives are integrated into family and youth housing initiatives.
- **New Jersey Keeping Families Together (KFT):** In partnership with state agencies and regional supportive service providers, DCF's Office of Housing oversees KFT, a supportive housing model that serves higher-acuity families with an open child welfare case who are homeless or unstably housed, often with additional risk factors (for example, substance use disorders, mental health challenges, disabilities, or a parent's own history of child welfare involvement). Since 2014, DCF has integrated data analysis and evaluation into operations, using administrative data to estimate the eligible population and advocate for expansion. KFT has grown from serving 10 families to more than 700 statewide, with [over 90% of participating families](#) remaining safely together and stably housed 2 years after enrollment.
- **NJ DCA Office of Homelessness Prevention:** The Office of Homelessness Prevention leads the strategic, data-driven design and implementation of programs that prevent homelessness and promote housing stability. This work includes advancing upstream strategies such as homelessness prevention, eviction prevention, and diversion. (Diversion is an intervention designed to offer individuals and families who have recently become homeless a safe and viable alternative to entering emergency shelter or being unsheltered.) By leveraging real-time data on how people enter and exit homelessness, DCA and its partners can target interventions more effectively and make informed decisions about allocating funding and resources.

Actionable Next Steps from the Cohort

Next steps for New Jersey partners include a focus on sustainability and scaling child welfare and housing efforts while navigating the impacts of federal and state funding cuts and other uncertainties. Specific strategies include:

- **Expand cross-sector data sharing and coordination:** NJ partners identified additional relevant data opportunities across systems that can strengthen coordination, shared understanding and support continued progress, such as:
 - Analyzing and integrating relevant data, such as DCF's Child Protection Hotline call information—specifically the frequency, types, and acuity of needs related to poverty and housing instability
 - Assessing housing stability and shelter resources delivered by DCF and DHS providers that fall outside the homelessness response system
 - Using these additional datasets to complement Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and DCA system analysis and data, providing a more complete picture of family needs and available support
- **Develop and support joint messaging and targeted education, including policymakers:** New Jersey partners will use shared data and consistent framing to demonstrate the effectiveness of current strategies and interventions. They will also develop educational messages that highlight unmet resource gaps and the relatively small, targeted funding needed across agencies to meet ongoing family and youth housing stability needs. Partners will coordinate communication to support funding requests and build broader understanding and investment from policymakers and stakeholders.
- **Secure funding to continue and expand housing opportunities for families and youth:** To house additional families, DCF will seek to secure and protect a KFT expansion funding allocation through the next round of New Jersey opioid settlement funds. To expand youth housing, 10 additional public housing authorities have been engaged and will receive support to access and provide Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) federal rental assistance vouchers. The Youth Villages LifeSet program will become the foundational service model integrated with FYI, serving young adults ages 18 to 24 years old, including expectant and parenting young people.

To support continuing and potentially expanding housing and services, New Jersey partners will maximize existing resources, leveraging and aligning with other programs, including:

- Medicaid. Housing supports through a new Medicaid 1115 Waiver, which can help reimburse provider costs for eligible Medicaid members to receive assistance finding and applying for activities such as housing search, move-in support, home modifications, and services to help people stay safely and stably housed.
- Title IV-E. Identifying administrative costs and service interventions

- that promote family housing stability through New Jersey's new Title IV-E Prevention Plan via the Family First Prevention Services Act.
- o Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). Conduct a joint review of current expenditures, such as short-term shelter, and identify additional opportunities to maximize and align resources in support of TANF objectives.

NJ partners will seek to better identify, connect with, and engage the full range of short- and long-term housing resources. They will also enhance the triage process to match family needs with the most appropriate housing option. An additional goal is to jointly map out partner roles, responsibilities, and processes to support cross-training and to improve integration, efficiency, and systematization of housing stability efforts across agencies.

Oregon

The Team

- Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS):
 - Erika Conjugacion, ODHS Children's Public Private Partnership Program Director
 - Katie Egan, Housing and Homelessness Policy Advisor, ODHS Director's Office
 - Karissa Hendricks, Family First Implementation Specialist (formerly Family Preservation Project Partner), ODHS Child Welfare Program
 - Stacey Mahler, Child Welfare Housing Coordinator, ODHS Child Welfare Program
 - Matt Rasmussen, Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program Manager, ODHS Self-Sufficiency Programs
 - Claire Seguin, ODHS Self-Sufficiency Programs Director

Overview of Agencies and Cross-Sector Partnership

ODHS is Oregon's primary agency supporting family well-being and independence, serving more than one million Oregonians annually (roughly one-quarter of the state's population). The agency provides services across lifespans and is working to better prevent family separation and promote long-term stability.

A central feature of this transformation is the intentional integration of Child Welfare (CW) and Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP), with an increased emphasis on addressing social and economic factors that affect family stability, including housing. This integration is part of a broader ODHS transformation project focused on creating unified, human-centered services that holistically address families' needs rather than through siloed programs.

State Programs and Innovations

ODHS administers and coordinates a range of housing-related supports across divisions. Key initiatives include:

- **Family Preservation:** A Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency partnership that focuses on family engagement, using a values-based approach (strengths-based, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and parent-driven/youth-guided) to equitably serving families and children in their homes and communities. Rather than defaulting to foster care, Family Preservation emphasizes keeping families together, stable, and safe by addressing concrete and economic needs and tailored supports. Ongoing workforce development and peer-to-peer learning is used to strengthen collaboration and partnership at all levels of engagement with families. Family Preservation is being implemented as a statewide demonstration, currently in 15 communities across 10 counties.

- **Family First Prevention Services:** Family First is one piece of a broader effort to strengthen families and reduce reliance on foster care whenever it is safe to do so. Oregon is given the opportunity through the federal legislation: Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to provide children and youth "at risk of foster care entry" with a range of well-supported, federally approved evidence-based practices (EBPs) in the following categories: Skill-based parent training, mental health care, substance abuse and treatment programs, and Kinship Navigator services. In tandem to Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency, Family First also reflects efforts being made to better align policies and services with the underlying factors that contribute to family instability, including poverty, behavioral health needs, and social needs. The team includes a housing services coordinator role—the only statewide position dedicated to maximizing housing resources for child-welfare-involved youth and families through policy and program change—while also leading education efforts through housing-focused trainings and resource materials.
- **Children’s Public Private Partnership (CP3) and Keeping Families Together (KFT):** Through a strategic partnership between the Children’s Public Private Partnership (CP3), child welfare, and CSH, Oregon is implementing the Keeping Families Together supportive housing model in Marion County. The program is community-led and data-informed, with a diverse core team that includes housing providers, Child Welfare staff, health partners, and individuals with lived experience. The KFT model applies Housing First principles, including early housing needs assessments, needs-based referrals, family-led planning, collaborative decision-making, and community stewardship, to support safe and timely family reunification.

Actionable Next Steps from the Cohort

- **Strengthen regional housing capacity through incentives and shared learning.** Oregon continues to assess regional variation in capacity in housing expertise, partnerships, and resources. Through the cohort, peer states shared a range of strategies to address similar challenges. These included using procurement and funding structures to incentivize collaboration and specific capacity-building activities, such as encouraging experienced urban housing providers to partner with rural or suburban agencies, strengthening street outreach capacity in under-resourced areas, and increasing allowable funding for administrative or non-direct services to support partnership development. Peer states also highlighted the value of shared learning opportunities, such as cross-system convenings facilitated by housing liaisons, to design effective practices, build relationships, and reduce isolation across regions. ODHS is evaluating the relevance and feasibility of these strategies within Oregon’s policy and program context to determine next steps.

- **Advance cross-system data sharing and interoperability.** Improving data integration remains an ongoing challenge, particularly given Oregon's multiple Homelessness Management Information Systems (HMIS) and lack of a statewide data warehouse. Other states are pursuing care coordination interoperability networks led by the governor's office and piloting integrated housing and human services data systems at the county level. Oregon will continue learning from these models while navigating challenges related to privacy and exploring opportunities for stronger coordination across continuums of care and state agencies.
- **Sustain housing as a priority amid uncertainty.** Participants acknowledged significant uncertainty related to leadership transitions, shifting agency priorities, and federal funding changes. While there are no easy solutions, Oregon and cohort partners emphasized the importance of continued peer exchange, resource sharing, and maintaining cross-agency relationships to keep housing visible as a foundational issue for child and family well-being.
- **Deepen codesign with housing and federal partners.** Oregon will continue engaging housing agencies and federal partners to co-design policy and funding strategies that support family stability. This includes ongoing conversations with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and public housing authorities to expand utilization of the Family Unification Program (FUP) and Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers statewide. Participants also noted opportunities to better align resources for young adults with foster care experience who are becoming parents, recognizing the overlap between child welfare, housing, and family support systems.
- **Explore alignment with Medicaid and health-related social needs.** States expressed strong interest in the intersection of Medicaid and housing, particularly through Section 1115 waivers addressing health-related social needs. Oregon noted its own approved 1115 waiver and interest in continued dialogue with other states navigating similar efforts, including considerations around sustainability and scope.

Collectively, these next steps reinforce Oregon's commitment to cross-system collaboration, peer learning, and policy alignment to strengthen housing stability as a foundation for keeping families together and supporting long-term well-being.

Colorado

The Team

- Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS):
 - Minna Castillo, Deputy Executive Director, Community Partnerships
 - Evan Caster, Director of Homelessness Initiatives, Community Partnerships
 - Derek Blake, Transition Services Administrator, Division of Child Welfare
- Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC):
 - Kendra Dunn, Deputy Director, Office of Program Delivery

Overview of Agencies and Cross-Sector Partnership

CDHS's mission is to empower Coloradans to thrive through bold and innovative health and human services programming. The Community Partnership team includes the Director of Homeless Initiatives, whose role is to build and promote collaborative approaches to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time in Colorado. CDHS's Division of Child Welfare includes a Transition Services Coordinator responsible for overseeing programs for foster youth transition to adulthood such as the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program. The Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) envisions a Colorado where all children, families, and early childhood professionals are valued, healthy, and thriving. Together, these two state departments share a vision for families who have access to the resources and supports they need to thrive in Colorado.

State Programs and Innovations

- **Family Stability and Housing Alliance:** This alliance was established in 2004 as a cross-sector early childhood initiative with the goal of collaborating across sectors such as early learning, public health, human services, housing, and policy. The alliance identifies ways to support families with young children who are experiencing housing instability. The alliance focuses on the prenatal to 1 year old population and identifies families to connect them to available resources and access to housing.
- **Family Resource Centers (FRCs):** A robust network of 35 FRCs in rural and urban areas of the state that serves as a front door for coordinated assessment and referrals in response to family strengths, needs, resources and barriers. Since 1989, Colorado FRCs have participated in an FRC Association that hosts quarterly trainings and capacity building efforts. In 2025, Catholic Charities of Central Colorado, an FRC, opened Hunt Family Housing, a rehabilitative project that transformed an unused elementary school into 24 family apartments for families experiencing homelessness.

Resources such as counseling, Head Start, and the Peak Parent Center are located on Hunt Family Housing's campus.

- **John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) Program:** Colorado's Chafee program generally provides support to help youth currently and formerly in foster care successfully transition to adulthood. As part of that program, Colorado has created the Colorado Foster Youth Successful Transition to Adulthood Advisory Board, a board that includes county and state employees, lived experts, and representatives from runaway and homeless youth services providers, who review programmatic functions and make decisions related to the Chafee program. In partnership with the Division of Youth Services (DYS), Colorado has developed the Pathways to Success program which engages transition-aged youth in a coach-like way.

Actionable Next Steps from the Cohort

- **Increase capacity of FRCs.** Colorado's FRC Alliance is well positioned to serve families with a variety of resources and referrals to services. Colorado intends to build and strengthen the capacity of FRCs by leveraging their quarterly training schedule to include peer learning and additional capacity building across the state. Colorado aims to increase FRC staff skill set around supporting unhoused youth, using a menu of housing services customized to each community, to gather information about local housing resources, programs, and services. By introducing this menu, FRCs will be able to build partnerships with housing programs and create direct referral pathways for families experiencing housing instability.
- **Launch and evaluate 211 warmline pilot.** 211 is a centralized information and resource hub updated daily that Coloradans can access by phone and online. Launched in 1999, 211 aims to streamline services and provide one central location where people can get connected to the resources they need. Colorado is in the process of launching a 211 Warmline pilot in three counties with the goal of reducing child welfare involvement by connecting families to consultation, resources, and services without engaging child protective services. Colorado realized that of the calls made to the child protection hotline, most ([71%](#)) were screened out for not meeting investigative criteria. The Warmline pilot aims to redirect callers who call the child protection hotline, but whose needs fall outside of the scope of child protective services to resources without triggering a formal investigation.
- **Leverage public-private partnerships.** Colorado recognizes that funding for service provision has historically been limited. Nonprofits are often piecing together multiple funding streams to continue operations and, more recently, funding cuts have deeply impacted the field of service provision. Colorado aims to strengthen public-private partnerships to increase the availability and sustainability of services throughout the state. [Colorado's Multi-Sector Plan on Aging](#) focuses on supporting and empowering Coloradans over the age of 60. The Plan is specifically focused on connected communities, healthcare

access, service delivery, and economic security. The state will experiment with leveraging public-private partnerships through this initiative to increase the capacity and availability of services to Coloradans over the age of 60. As Colorado identifies successful public-private partnership interventions, they will be scalable to other sectors, such as homelessness.

- **Strengthen interagency partnerships.** Building on the strong success of each of Colorado’s human services departments, Colorado aims to strengthen interagency partnerships. Leveraging each department’s expertise, there is potential for progressive interagency collaboration and programs between CDHS’s Community Partnerships, the Department of Education, Department of Early Childhood, Department of Local Affairs, and the Division of Child Welfare. Throughout the Housing as a Foundation to Family Well-Being cohort, interagency connections sparked innovative conversation for various state departments.

Kentucky

The Team

- Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), Department for Community Based Services (DCBS)
 - Gena Boyle, Deputy Commissioner
 - Amanda Body, Division Director
 - Mary Carpenter, Executive Advisor
 - Kaye Lawlis, Executive Advisor

Overview of Agencies and Cross-Sector Partnership

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is the Commonwealth's primary agency for promoting the health, safety, and well-being of children, families, and communities. Within CHFS, the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) administers child welfare, family support, adult protection, prevention and community well-being, and public assistance programs while the Department of Public Health (DPH) oversees population health initiatives. CHFS works across its departments and in partnership with private and community-based organizations to identify and address factors that affect child and family stability and well-being. Housing insecurity remains a central issue for child-welfare-involved families, contributing to the increased risk of system involvement and delays in permanency.

State Programs and Innovations

- **Kynect (kynect.ky.gov/resources):** An online statewide comprehensive platform sponsored by CHFS that connects Kentuckians to public benefits, services, and other supports, including housing resources. It is a free, statewide directory and referral management system available to residents and the organizations that support them.
- **Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being (DPCW):** Leveraging the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) and other federal resources, DCBS established the Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being and expanded the array of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention services available to Kentuckians involved with, or at risk of involvement with, the child welfare system. Kentucky is a leader in national child welfare prevention efforts and is committed to extending early access to prevention services, including economic and concrete supports, to address family conditions and circumstances that compromise child safety and increase the risk of family separation through foster care. A core strategy is to build systems of community well-being so that communities have the capacity to meet the needs of children and families locally through organizations they know and trust. By creating the DPCW, DCBS aligned its organizational structure with these strategic goals.

- **Opportunities for Prevention and Transformation (OPT-IN for Families):** Kentucky is one of several pilot sites supported by the Doris Duke Foundation to design, implement, and test a [prevention-oriented well-being system](#) as a meaningful alternative to a response-driven child welfare system. The initiative aims to demonstrate that actively connecting families to direct assistance for basic needs and coordinated support services in their communities at the earliest sign of need is a safe, cost-effective, and scalable way to prevent maltreatment and keep families together. Kentucky is receiving approximately \$3M over 3 years to provide economic and concrete supports to families, including resources to address housing needs.
- **Alternative response:** A family-centered, strengths-based approach for addressing screened-in reports of child maltreatment with allegations that exhibit less risk. The primary tenets of Kentucky's Alternative Response model are to keep children safe while supporting families to address the conditions and circumstances that may put their child in danger. The model recognizes that families are unique, and they are more than the difficulties they are facing. Families are supported in the model by being connected to the right people and resources to address the conditions that brought them to the attention of the child welfare system, which may include inadequate shelter.

Actionable Next Steps from the Cohort

- **Establish new partnerships.** By establishing the Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being, DCBS created additional infrastructure for engaging a more expansive network of public and private agency partners grounded in shared values of local investments and community well-being. DCBS plans to sustain the momentum generated through the new division to build intentional partnerships that increase collective impact on child-, family-, and community-level outcomes.
- **Advance [Thriving Families, Safer Children Kentucky](#).** Thriving Families, Safer Children Kentucky is a robust collaboration of statewide partners focused on creating the conditions for strong, healthy communities where children are safe and families are supported. Within the context of this initiative, Kentucky is pursuing two new partnerships. The first is with [Thrive from the Start](#), a confederation of national organizations leading transformation efforts in early childhood, housing, and homelessness systems focused on ensuring infants, young children, and their parents have the resources and housing stability needed to grow and thrive. The second is with the Imagination Factory, a nonprofit that builds community and infrastructure to support families to ensure healthy early childhoods, housing stability, and family infrastructure. This includes strengthening the service array for those experiencing homelessness or housing instability by engaging individuals with lived experience.
- **Integrate screening activities for housing security.** Multiple child and family programs in Kentucky have screening and assessment tools and

processes designed to understand and address families' needs. However, screening for housing insecurity is not systematically integrated into these processes, including for families engaging with the child welfare system. DCBS is exploring how housing screening tools or a set of core questions can be integrated into the screening activities across child and family program areas.

- **Convene interagency learning and planning sessions.** DCBS, Chapin Hall, CSH, and Casey Family Programs will continue the work of this housing cohort with two meetings in early 2026. Meetings will include a set of strategic public, private, and community-based partners that are all working in the shared space of housing and child welfare. The initial meeting will be focused on sharing what this cohort learns alongside a presentation of the research evidence demonstrating the connections between housing security and welfare outcomes. The second meeting will include short presentations by each partner on the work they are leading, followed by shared exploration of how and where participants can establish or expand collaboration opportunities. Together, this group will establish how to move forward.
- **Train child welfare staff on housing and risks associated with homelessness.** If staff do not fully understand the fundamental impacts of housing instability, screenings may not be as effective for those at risk. Strengthening staff knowledge in this area could help ensure the process is more meaningful and responsive to the needs of families.

CONCLUSION

What We Learned: Key Themes and Successes

The 6-month cohort consisted of light touch technical assistance for each state team and monthly full cohort meetings where all state teams were brought together to engage in peer learning and discussion. The monthly full cohort meetings created a valuable space for members of various state agencies to share how they collaborate to build and implement innovative programs that support family well-being. Cohort members highlighted the importance of working across sectors and agencies; state teams noted that cross-sector initiatives between housing and child welfare departments are a key part of preventing families from entering systems of care.

As the cohort continued to meet and states shared challenges to cross-sector collaboration, themes emerged. State teams identified barriers to collecting and accessing high-quality cross-sector data due to interdepartmental agreements and misaligned data collection systems. Creating new partnerships across state agencies also proved challenging, as implementing new ways of working requires dedicated staff time and state agencies are frequently at capacity with their existing work.

During the duration of this cohort, the funding and policy landscape continuously shifted, with many unknown but significantly impactful changes to housing and child welfare systems. Despite the implications of potential federal changes, the cohort was energized to identify creative solutions to braiding and blending funding and working across sectors to ensure their state agencies were able to prioritize family well-being.

What Comes Next

The conclusion of the 6-month cohort marks the beginning of a broader movement toward housing stability for families involved in the child welfare system. By identifying new methods to communicate housing needs to decision makers and navigate complex funding streams, jurisdictions are positioned as catalysts for change. In the coming year, Casey Family Programs, CSH, and Chapin Hall will prioritize knowledge transfer and sharing findings and lessons learned through this cohort with other jurisdictions to foster cross-collaborative learning opportunities. By scaling the "lessons learned," they aim to empower a wider network of leaders to think more creatively about housing solutions, ensuring the innovative strategies piloted become the standard for family support nationwide.

To facilitate this shared learning, the findings have been translated into actionable tools for the field. The evidence is clear: creative housing solutions are essential to long-term family stability. Based on the insights gleaned from the participating jurisdictions, this report is a codeveloped resource to assist public

systems and community leaders in evaluating their local landscapes. This guide enables leaders to understand various housing models and identify specific strengths, gaps, and opportunities within their current family housing resources. By identifying these gaps, communities can develop targeted strategies that keep families safely and stably housed. You are invited to explore these 6 months of collective expertise by downloading the [Worksheet: Menu of Housing Interventions for Families](#) (also attached in Appendix 1).



“When state leaders from across sectors unite around a common belief that stable housing and supportive services are foundational to family well-being, they spark transformative progress, inspire peer learning, and shape impactful policies and investments that strengthen families and help them thrive.”

Andrew Johnson, Director, Systems Transformation, Family and Youth, CSH

APPENDIX A. CSH HOUSING MENU

Worksheet: Menu of Housing Interventions for Families

This worksheet provides an overview of the most common housing models and interventions, from short-term housing to long-term housing. It is important to provide families with timely access to housing options that meet their unique needs. However, communities often have limited housing resources and mismatches between family needs and available housing options. This worksheet helps community leaders understand the various housing models and identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities within their current family housing resources. By identifying these gaps, communities can develop strategies that keep families stably housed.

This worksheet can be used alongside the Framework for Identifying and Addressing Family Housing Stability. This worksheet enables communities to evaluate current housing resources, while the framework helps communities identify family housing needs and work with cross-sector partners to address housing instability.

Housing Intervention	Related Information
Eviction prevention	<p>For families at risk of losing their current housing due to lease violations or eviction notices.</p> <p>Eviction prevention services are intended to keep families in their current housing by mitigating factors that may cause eviction.</p> <p>Eviction prevention services typically look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal assistance and advocacy • Rental assistance • Utility assistance • Mediation between property management and tenant <p>And may extend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to concrete supports and public benefits • TANF, SNAP, WIC, Medicaid/health care, child care
Emergency shelter	<p>For families who have no other place to stay.</p> <p>Family emergency shelters are intended to provide time-limited shelter to families who have no other option for temporary or permanent housing. Family emergency shelter should be considered as a last resort when seeking housing options.</p>

	<p>Family emergency shelter typically looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely short-term overnight stays • Onsite supportive services • Crisis nurseries • Domestic violence shelters • Referrals to family’s most immediate needs (for example, emergency health care, child care, food pantries, formula, etc.)
<p>Transitional housing</p>	<p>For families in need of rental assistance and services.</p> <p>Transitional housing is intended to provide medium-term (an average of 18–24 months) temporary housing with rental assistance and services.</p> <p>Transitional housing typically looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site-based: The transitional housing program owns building(s) to lease units to tenants while providing a rental subsidy and services <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered site: The transitional housing program provides a rental subsidy and services to tenants in units scattered throughout the jurisdiction • Supportive services that encourage family stability and tenancy skills needed for stable housing
<p>Flexible funding</p>	<p>Flexible, family-centered options allowing timely, low-barrier resources that enhance family housing stability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct cash transfers Often one-time or time-limited monthly payments directly to families, allowing them to move into and remain stably in housing. Families can choose how to best cover their housing-related expenses. • Flexible funding programs: Funds allowing community programs to provide resources in innovative and adaptive ways tailored to meet specific housing and service needs and circumstances of each family. Often can stabilize families that may not be eligible or appropriate for other housing interventions by providing short- to medium-term support.
<p>Rapid rehousing</p>	<p>For families in need of short-term rental assistance and services.</p> <p>Rapid rehousing is intended to provide short-term (6 to 24 months) temporary housing through rental assistance and services.</p> <p>Rapid rehousing typically looks like:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site-based: Rapid rehousing program owns building(s) to lease units to tenants while providing a rental subsidy and services <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered site: Rapid rehousing program provides a rental subsidy and services to tenants in units scattered throughout the jurisdiction <p>Supportive services that encourage family stability and tenancy skills needed for stable housing.</p>
<p>Rental assistance</p>	<p>For families in need of stable housing with a rent subsidy due to low family income.</p> <p>Affordable housing is housing where rent and utility payments are no more than 30% of the family’s household income. Public housing authorities own and manage affordable housing buildings and units and provide various rental subsidies to families to ensure the housing is affordable.</p> <p>Affordable housing typically looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site-based: The public housing authority owns building(s) in which they lease units to tenants while providing a subsidy to ensure affordability <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scattered site: The public housing authority provides a rental subsidy to tenants in units scattered throughout the jurisdiction <p>Public housing authority subsidies for families typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing choice vouchers • Tenant-based rental assistance • Family Unification Program vouchers • Foster Youth to Independence vouchers <p>Public Housing Authorities may offer others supports such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord risk mitigation funds • Landlord incentives
<p>Supportive housing</p>	<p>For families in need of affordable, stable housing with a standard lease and voluntary wraparound services such as case management, tenancy supports, mental health, substance use, intellectual and developmental disability, and employment services.</p> <p>Supportive housing is affordable housing where rent and utility payments are no more than 30% of the family’s household income that provides wraparound, voluntary supportive services for each family member.</p>

	<p>Supportive housing typically looks like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site-based: the supportive housing program owns building(s) to lease units to tenants while providing a subsidy to ensure affordability and wraparound voluntary supportive services to each family member <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scattered site: the supportive housing program provides a rental subsidy to tenants in units scattered throughout the jurisdiction and wraparound voluntary supportive services to each family member• Population focused (families, aging adults, transitional aged youth, etc.) <p>Quality supportive housing for families should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tenant and family centered• Quick to access• Coordinated• Sustainable
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Glossary

Affordable housing	Housing is considered affordable when a person or household does not pay more than 30% of their monthly income toward rent and utilities and never pays more than 50%.
Emergency shelter	Any facility that provides temporary shelter for someone experiencing homelessness or for specific populations of the homeless (for example, families, youth) and does not require people to sign leases or occupancy agreements.
Eviction	Court-ordered move out of the person living in the home or apartment because the tenant has violated the rental agreement or lease or did not comply with a notice ending the tenancy.
Rapid re-housing	Short-term housing, usually less than 24 months, provides rental assistance and services. The goals are to help people obtain housing quickly, increase self-sufficiency, and stay housed.
Scattered site	A programmatic aspect of housing programs where units are scattered across an area, often with 1–3 units per building (for example, housing vouchers).
Site-based	A programmatic aspect of housing programs where units are all located on a single site, often within 1–3 buildings on the same property.
Supportive housing	Supportive housing combines affordable housing with services that help people who have experienced homelessness find safety, support, and care.
Supportive services	Services that may help a person move into supportive housing, and that assist people with living successfully in housing.
Transitional housing	Temporary housing (up to 24 months) designed to provide homeless individuals and families with interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain stable housing.

[Worksheet: Menu of Housing Interventions for Families](#)

APPENDIX B. LIBRARY OF RESOURCES

At each cohort meeting, partners shared resources to support continued learning. They are listed below for easy reference.

Casey Family Programs

- [Community Opportunity Map](#)
- [Case Study: How Families Forward Virginia Used the Community Opportunity Map to Build a Family Resource Center Network](#)
- [Strategy Brief: How are Child Welfare Systems using Flexible Funds to Support Families and Prevent the Need for Foster Care?](#)
- [Issue Brief: How Does Homelessness and Housing Instability Impact Families Involved with Child Welfare?](#)

Chapin Hall

- [Policy Toolkit: Maximizing the Impact of Direct Cash Transfers to Young People](#)
- [Policy Toolkit: Advancing Effective Policy on Economic and Concrete Supports](#)
- [Policy Brief: Flexible Funds for Concrete Supports to Families as a Child Welfare Prevention Strategy](#)
- [Policy Brief: Child Welfare and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#)

Corporation for Supportive Housing

- [Policy Brief: Using Medicaid's Housing Related Services \(HRS\) to Create New Supportive Housing](#)
- [Youth and Families – Housing and Cross-Sector Solutions](#)
- [One Roof - Child Welfare and Housing Resource Hub](#)
- [How Child Welfare Leaders Can Support Families and Prevent Family Eviction](#)
- [How The Family Unification Voucher Program Keeps Families Together Through Crisis](#)
- [Supportive Housing Services Budgeting Tool](#)

Other Resources

- [Strengthening Families Through Housing Stability](#) by National Conference of State Legislatures
- [This is How the Child Welfare System Becomes Less Traumatizing](#) by *The Nation*
- [Nobody Blames the Landlord. They Just Take Away the Kids](#) by *The Nation*
- [Blending and Braiding: Funding Our Kids 101](#) by Children's Funding Project
- [Guide to Funding Supportive Services in Housing](#) by Homeless and Housing Resource Center

ABOUT CSH

CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) advances affordable and accessible housing aligned with services by advocating for effective policies and funding, investing in communities, and strengthening the supportive housing field. Since our founding in 1991, CSH has been the only national nonprofit intermediary focused solely on increasing the availability of supportive housing. Over the course of our work, we have created more than 512,500 units of affordable and supportive housing and invested more than \$2.2 billion in communities. Our workforce is central to accomplishing this work. We employ approximately 170 people across 30 states and U.S. Territories. As an intermediary, we do not directly develop or operate housing but center our approach on collaboration with a wide range of people, partners, and sectors.

For more information, visit [csh.org](https://www.csh.org)

ABOUT CHAPIN HALL

Chapin Hall is an independent, mission-driven policy research center dedicated to improving the well-being of children, youth, and families.

We partner with agencies and organizations to advance equitable systems, scale evidence-based solutions, and uplift community-led change.

For more information, visit [chapinhall.org](https://www.chapinhall.org)

ABOUT CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

Founded in 1966, Casey Family Programs works in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and with tribal nations across North America to influence long-lasting improvements to the well-being of children, families, and the communities where they live.

We believe:

- Every child deserves a safe, supportive and permanent family.
- Every family will thrive with the support of a caring community.
- Every community can create hope and opportunities for its children and families.
- Every one of us has a role to play in Building Communities of Hope.

For more information, visit [casey.org](https://www.casey.org)

Endnotes

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