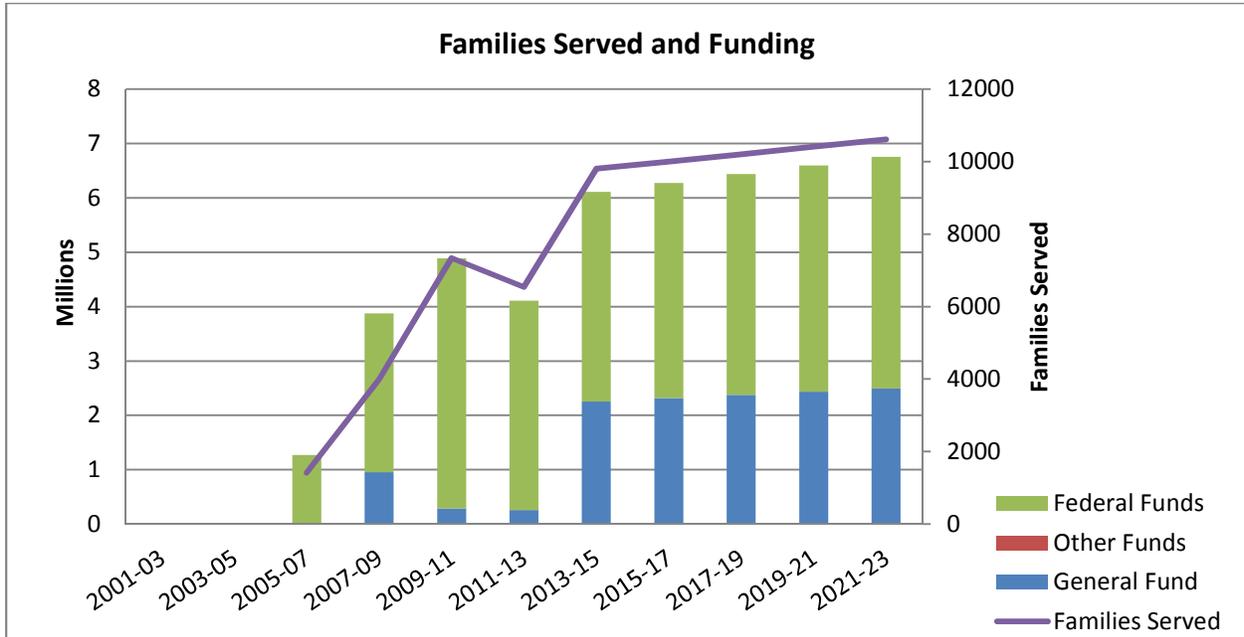


Department of Human Services: Family Support and Connections Program

Self Sufficiency Programs

Primary Outcome Area: Safety
 Secondary Outcome Area: Economy and Jobs
 Program Contact: Xochitl Esparza, 503-945-6122



Note: The Family Support and Connections program began in fall 2005. With a decrease in funding for the program, fewer families were served in the 2011-13 biennium.

Executive Summary

Family Support and Connections (FS&C) is a child abuse and neglect prevention program that provides services through home visits. These families are eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, a safety net program that provides cash assistance to parents. FS&C services are generally provided to families with barriers or issues that put them at a higher risk of involvement with the Child Welfare system. Services are provided through contracts with local community organizations. The services focus on strengthening parenting and family stability, and decreasing the risk factors for child abuse and neglect to prevent children on TANF from entering the foster care system. Through home visits, families develop relationships with a community organization that can effectively assess the family’s environment to best understand its needs and connect the family with the appropriate resources in its community.

Program Funding Request

	Family Support and Connections			
	GF	OF	FF	TF
LAB	255,865		3,855,115	4,110,980
ARB	2,255,865	0	3,855,115	6,110,980
Difference	2,000,000	0	0	2,000,000
Percent Change	781.7%		0.0%	48.7%

Significant Proposed Program Changes from 2011-13

	Family Support and Connections			
Self Sufficiency Investments/Reductions	GF	OF	FF	TF
Add Family Support and Connections services to 4,400 more families	2.00	0.00	0.00	2.00

(\$ Millions)

This proposal funds the Family Support and Connections (FS&C) program closer to the need. FS&C helps families in extreme poverty decrease the likelihood of child welfare involvement through increased parenting skills and help with barriers to family stability. These families have identified risk factors shown to lead to child abuse and neglect. Expanding this program will allow an additional 4,400 families to be served, essentially doubling our efforts, with timely service delivery to address child wellness and family stability issues before they need further more expensive state services.

Program Description

FS&C is part of the continuum of community supports to prevent child abuse and neglect. This program focuses on TANF families who may be at risk for involvement with the foster care system. DHS collaborates with numerous local and State, and informal and formal prevention services and activities to meet families’ needs. Program staff work within the existing community structure to coordinate referrals and offer some direct services where gaps or needs exist for a family. For example, the FS&C home visitor may facilitate a parenting support group, and also help with referrals to community services for assistance with rent and other needs.

Services are designed to increase parental protective factors and decrease the risk factors of child abuse and neglect. Families receive weekly home visits for approximately six months. The program served 7,336 families during the 2009-2011 biennium. This program provides voluntary home visiting services in all 36 counties and works collaboratively with Self Sufficiency and Child Welfare program staff, contracted staff and other community partners.

FS&C also provides provide services and supports to families to help them move towards greater independence while promoting the health and well-being of all family members. The service array focuses on immediate, crisis needs of families but also provides prevention and early intervention services that help families avoid reaching a crisis.

Because a diverse population is served through the program, FS&C providers are asked to design their program in a culturally appropriate way to best meet the needs of the families served. This is achieved by hiring staff that reflect the local community. Local FS&C Steering Committees provide guidance and direction on how services are provided and ensure that community linkages are established, and are required to have membership representative of the cultural

diversity in the district they serve. The Steering Committees also includes representatives from agencies working with minority and special needs populations, and faith-based organizations.

Occasionally referrals are made to Child Welfare but in the cases where risk does exist, the early intervention and assistance from FS&C can help the family stabilize sooner and help keep children safe.

The program provides short-term interventions including home visits, family assessments, advocacy for services in the community, supports to strengthen parenting, coping and other skills to support the healthy development of children, individualized interventions and joint outcome-based case planning. The services are community-based and tailored to meet a family's needs. FS&C advocates support the family by working with them to identify risks and strengths. Together they tackle issues before there is irreversible damage, reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

FS&C aims to build genuine partnerships with families that recognize their strengths in the context of the family's culture. This program combines the best practices of a family strengthening model with a unique partnership providing joint case planning with FS&C, Self Sufficiency and Child Welfare programs. FS&C also uses a combination of principles using an empowerment approach and building a helping alliance with the family. Families volunteer for the program.

The major cost drivers are the number of families in need of child abuse and neglect prevention services as well as the number of contracted staff needed to provide the preventative interventions. It is estimated that DHS serves less than half the need.

Reductions in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, understaffing in TANF and rising caseloads have impacted referrals to the program.

Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcome

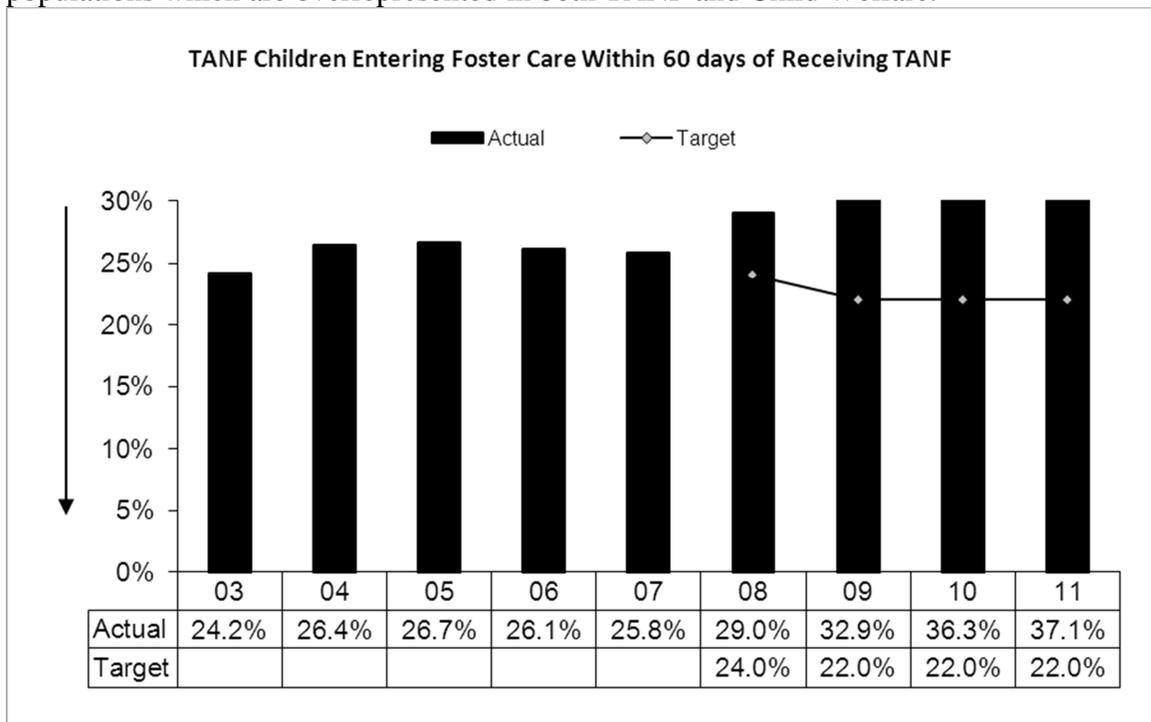
This program contributes to the Safety Outcome Area through its goal of increasing family stability and child safety. The goal of this program is to prevent children receiving TANF from entering foster care. Children who enter foster care are more likely to fail in school, experience homelessness and unemployment, and may become part of the juvenile and adult corrections system. Most TANF families served through FS&C have significant needs that run the range from help with parenting to housing or other stabilization services. The connection to TANF is an important part of the service array. TANF provides cash assistance, case management, and employment and training services to families with children living in extreme poverty. Families must be under 40 percent of the Federal Poverty Level to participate. For a family of three, their income must be below \$616 per month to participate.

The FS&C program is also linked to the Economy and Jobs Outcome Area by helping families stabilize. Stabilization helps prepare clients to participate in employment and training activities, and connect the family to resources to address crises.

Program Performance

The primary performance measure is the percentage of children entering foster care who received TANF 60 days prior to foster care entry. Since the recession, more Oregonians are accessing programs for low-income Oregonians such as TANF. This is also true of families who are involved with other DHS program areas such as Child Welfare. The TANF caseload has continuously increased since the onset of the economic recession. The display below shows the percentage of children entering foster care who had received TANF has also been increasing.

There is a high percentage and disproportionate number of African American children who received TANF prior to entering foster care. FS&C is aligning with the new Differential Response program in Child Welfare and other family stability efforts such as In-Home Safety and Reunification Services to better serve all at-risk families and improve equity in outcomes for populations which are overrepresented in both TANF and Child Welfare.



FS&C also uses a Protective Factors Survey to measure program performance. The survey includes a pre- and post-evaluation tool to measure changes in protective factors. The protective factors covered in the survey are family functioning, emotional support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and parenting knowledge. An initial report capturing 2011 outcomes will be completed by Fall 2012.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended by P.L. 111-320, authorizes grant funds to be released to the states and names the program Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CBCAP). The grant requires a 20 percent match of State General Funds.

The TANF program is authorized under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), and the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

Funding Streams

The FS&C program is funded with a blend of TANF Federal funds, CBCAP grant funds and State General Fund dollars. The CBCAP grant awards additional leveraged funds each year based on a formula giving credit for the previous year's contribution of state General Fund dollars. In addition, individual contracted programs in the DHS districts add leveraged funds on the local level from agency donations, grants and fundraising.