

# Family Preservation Accomplishments 2023

## To our demonstration site partners

It is difficult and sometimes painful working toward a way of being that is not what our systems have been built for. As we reimagine our practice together, we want to ground every change in how your community has come to be. We want to understand how you and your peers have come to work and engage in the way you do and understand how your families have come to experience services in the way they do.

We are so grateful for your patience, humility and dedication to this ever-changing work. There have been many wins in 2023 and just as many opportunities for repair and growth.

We've watched you create new spaces that have never existed before to build stronger, more sustainable cross-program relationships for families. We brainstormed with you, listened to your BIG ideas for innovation, and celebrated with you as we saw more and more families stay together in their homes. At the same time, we learned about barriers that continue to make collaboration difficult and reflected on how our own team can engage with you all more transparently. We still see Black and Native families overrepresented in many areas, and we still see challenges with addressing institutionalized biases.

Collaboration makes it possible to move with urgency toward an anti-racist, family-centered, trauma-responsive web of support for families. This includes collaboration across programs, across central and local teams, across community partners and our agency, and perhaps most importantly, **collaboration with families**.

We so look forward to continuing on this journey with you all!

- Statewide Family Preservation Team

*“To take dynamic action against a system, we must have dynamic understanding of how it functions.*

*To create something new, we must likewise understand how the people of a place relate to the land and to each other and what developments have driven their current condition.*

*Any reimagining of a community that does not take these factors into account is speculative fiction.”*

- Mariame Kaba

# Overview of Family Preservation

In 2020, our agency's Child Welfare program (CW) formally introduced the *Vision for Transformation* that says, "we believe children do best growing up in their family and on values related to honoring and supporting cultural wisdom, building community resilience and voice, and ensuring the self-determination of our communities of color."

*Family Preservation is HOW we will transform our system to prioritize keeping families together and in their communities.*

Recently, Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP) also introduced the *Vision into Action* that says, "we believe that everyone in Oregon deserves opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential. Maximizing people's potential helps our communities thrive and benefits our entire state."

Family Preservation is a co-created approach to shifting agency practice and actualizing the *Vision for Transformation* (CW) and *Vision in Action* (SSP). In early 2021, members of the nine Tribes of Oregon, parents who have had their children removed by our agency, youth separated from their families, CW and SSP leadership, and staff collectively developed the initial design and theory for implementing Family Preservation.

Family Preservation is an approach to make sure that we, together as an agency, make our *Vision for Transformation* and *Vision into Action* come true.

## Long-term timeline

**Demonstration Sites** include local offices and counties that have applied and been selected to receive coaching, technical assistance and funding support to equitably implement the Family Preservation approach.

**Cohort 1** began in April 2022, and includes three demonstration sites: Douglas County, Klamath County, and the Alberta Branch in Multnomah County.

**Cohort 2** began readiness work in 2023 and will begin data collection in April 2024, and includes: Polk County, the Gresham Branch in Multnomah County, Coos/Curry Counties, Jackson/Josephine Counties, and Washington County.

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<b>Phase 1</b> (2024-2025)	Cohorts 1 and 2 focus on preventing separation and recidivism for families that are collectively served by CW and SSP.
<b>Phase 2</b> (2025-2026)	Based on readiness, Cohorts 1 and 2 expand their scope to include families within the Foster System and Reunification Program. Cohort 3 (unselected) is onboarded.
<b>Phase 3</b> (2026-2027)	Based on readiness, Cohorts 1, 2 and 3 expand their scope to include families involved in Substitute Care. Remaining branches are onboarded.

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# Foundational Elements

Our theory of change says that:

If local offices transform the following **four Foundational Elements** through an equity-centered and data-informed lens, **then** Family Preservation can become an effective and sustainable approach to preventing family separation after child welfare contact.

Intra-Agency Relationships

Community Engagement

Practice

Support and Services

To transform the four Foundation Elements, demonstration sites will receive direct implementation and capacity building support to:

- Align staff and leadership mindset and values to prioritize anti-racism and keeping families together in their communities to prevent foster system entry.
- Shift practice to enable earlier, more proactive collaboration between CW and SSP staff and leadership to equip families with concrete supports and connections.
- Strengthen, repair and develop mutual accountability between agency programs, and between local offices and their communities (including community-based organizations).
- Understand, develop and strengthen local innovations to account for disproportionality, enable sustainability and build community capacity.
- Use quantitative and qualitative data to understand disproportionality and inequities in practice, and develop partnerships to address it.

# What are local offices saying?

## Polk County

After their SSP team presented the SSP 101 training to their Child Welfare staff, Polk's CW Program Manager Amber McClelland, shared:

*"Thank you SSP for the valuable 101 training yesterday for Child Welfare staff. The stories shared were inspiring and at one point I leaned over and whispered, 'they make me want to be a family coach!' The work being done is phenomenal and I am so excited about our next steps in collaboration in Family Preservation."*



## Multnomah County – Alberta Branch

Alicia Reynolds, Child Welfare Program Manager at Multnomah County, shared how proud she and her team are about the number of cases closed in Family Preservation.

**94%** of children served in-home remained in-home. The number of non-court-involved in-home cases **went up**. In September, **30%** of families were able to stay together, and not separated for foster care. When they started to see a lull in the number of families entering Family Preservation, their CW team worked with SSP to assist in serving families earlier on.

## Douglas County

Teams for Families is Douglas County's local innovation, which brings community partners to the table to collectively brainstorm and provide community-based resources and services to families to keep them out of foster care. This year, Teams for Families continues to show promising data for supporting families prior to involvement with ODHS and supporting children currently in foster care to get back home.

## Klamath County

Indigenous/Native American children are no longer overrepresented in Child Welfare in Klamath County! Members of Klamath Tribes, ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht, and ODHS Tribal Affairs Director Adam Becenti joined Klamath County in December 2023 to celebrate the first anniversary of the Indian Child Welfare Act Court in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

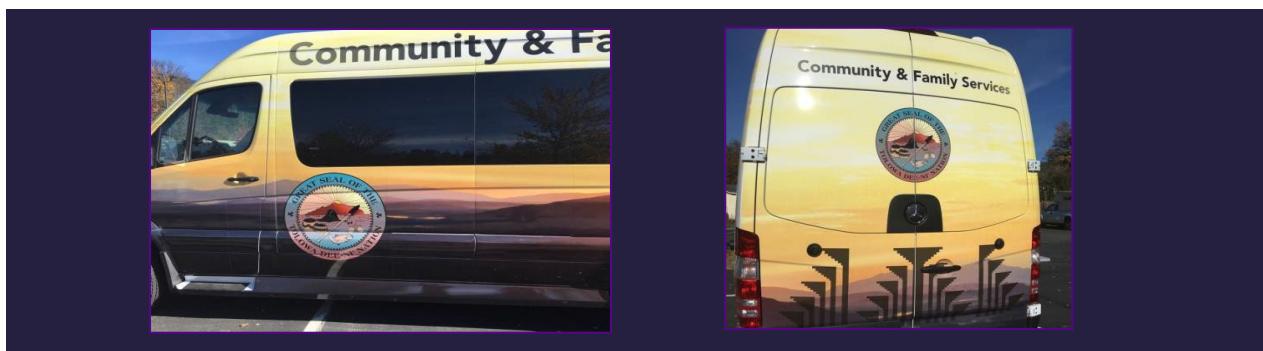
Reflecting on their Family Preservation approach, Engagement Specialist Norma Luna shared:

*"In our collaboration with Child Welfare, we also have the opportunity to go out with the Protective Service workers to do a warm hand-off for the Family Stability Referrals that we receive. This is a great opportunity for the family to see the separation between Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency but still see the collaboration between the two entities."*



## Jackson and Josephine Counties

In Jackson and Josephine Counties, they are building the model for a fully mobile ODHS team that works alongside community partners to make sure people and families have access to the services they need. They're trying this in their local community first, with the intention to create a model that can be used in communities across the state. Their focus populations include families in recovery, adults and youth experiencing houselessness, and women and gender-expansive people involved with the justice system.



## Coos and Curry Counties

Cambria Turnbow, Family Coach and TANF Supervisor, shared this about how CW and SSP programs are collaborating in District 7:

*“Family Coaches that are Family Pres points are beginning to co-locate with Child Welfare 2-3 days per week to build relationship. They are also participating in weekly huddles together and attending weekly CW unit meetings. We have seen an increase in communication between programs that has been beneficial for even non-family pres cases and multi-gen family members who are caring for relatives in care. They are looking at ways to blend funding where we are able to stretch financial support...”*

*“From the family standpoint, what we are noticing is that the [Family Coach] has been an advocate in the parent’s corner to break down what can be a very overwhelming situation into manageable steps, and then walking alongside the individual, or family to address each piece.”*

## Washington County

Washington County’s CW team has been working closely with the OEMS Child Welfare Service Equity manager to promote more equitable practices within the local permanency committee process. There will be exciting news and information sharing about the work and outcomes later in 2024!

Their SSP 101 trainings have been so successful that their SSP team has been asked to offer these training for all CW staff, as well as for school social workers. Internally, since conducting these trainings, the common case email box shared between CW and SSP program team has had increased communication.

Looking ahead to 2024, Washington County is partnering with the Muslim Educational Trust to host a transformative community forum to create a collective vision for keeping families together, stable and safe.

## Cohort 1 data

### *Families being served in-home*

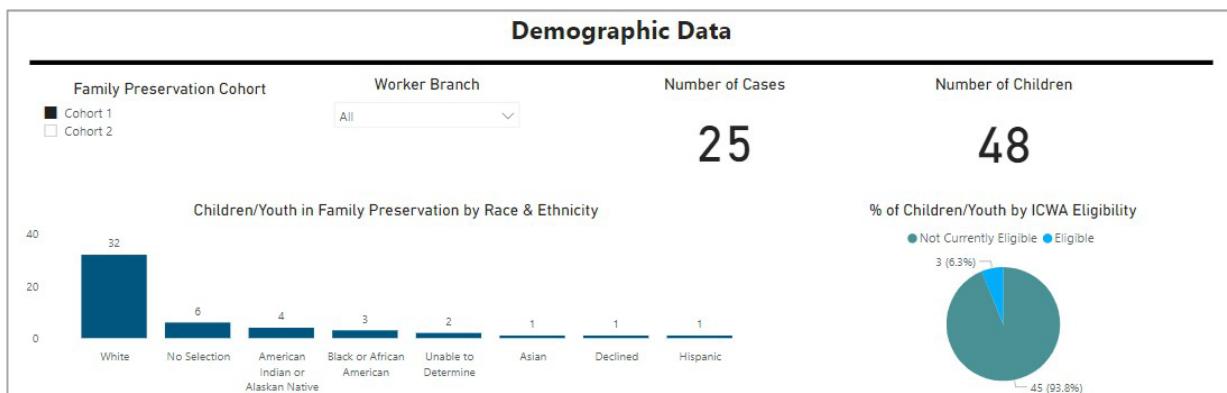
When Cohort 1 sites onboarded in April 2022, only 7% of families were served in-home.

By October 2023, **17% of families** were being served in-home.

- Alberta Branch, Multnomah County: 6.6% in April 2022, to 17.3% in October 2023
- Klamath County: 1.3% in April 2022, to 15.9% in October 2023
- Douglas County: 10.1% in April 2022, to 18.4% in October 2023

### *Demographic data*

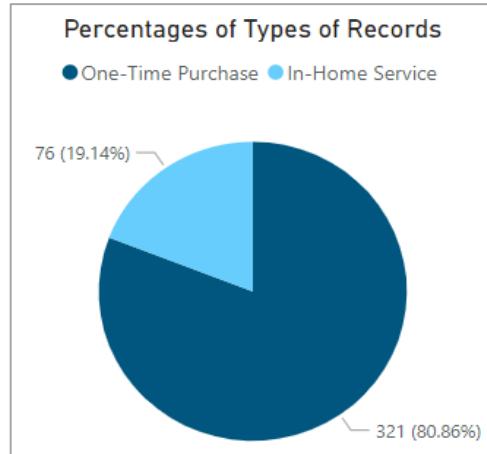
Of the Family Preservation cases in Cohort 1, a majority of children are White.



### *Economic supports*

National and demonstration site data has shown that providing economic supports to families can prevent entry into Child Welfare and significantly impacts the length of time families are involved with Child Welfare.

This graphic indicates how the demonstration sites are meeting the needs identified by families (light blue indicates in-home change services such as parenting supports; dark blue indicates financial supports such as rent, utilities).



**Data collection will begin for Cohort 2 sites in March 2024.**

## Remember

- **All** families who meet in-home criteria at the CPS assessment are officially Family Preservation cases.
- Families don't need to be court-involved to be a Family Preservation case.
- Families that have a safety threat identified and are non-court involved **will** be a family preservation case.