

Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) Program: FFPS Community Pathway Requirements Brief

Overview

This brief provides a consolidated overview of key requirements, activities, and resources for community-based providers and system partners participating in California's Family First Prevention Services (FFPS) Program, including implementation of FFPS Community Pathways. It is intended to assist those providing Title IV-E prevention funded services with navigating program requirements, service delivery responsibilities, evidence-based practice implementation, and continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities within the FFPS Program. FFPS Community Pathway providers and community partners, including community-based organizations, schools, and other trusted entities, play an important role in identifying and engaging families, coordinating with Title IV-E Agencies¹, developing Family Well-Being Plans (FWBP), and connecting families to services and supports, including those available through FFPS. The resources throughout this document can be utilized by providers and system partners delivering services in the FFPS Community Pathway to prepare for implementing [California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan](#) and state law² related to FFPS implementation. This brief is separated into four (4) sections:

- **Section 1: General Program Requirements**
 - This section outlines requirements and recommendations for:
 - [EBPs in Service Delivery](#)
 - [FFPS Training Requirements and Ongoing Learning](#)
 - [Participation in CQI](#)
 - [EBP Tracking, Documentation, Fidelity, and Outcomes Reporting](#)
- **Section 2: Individual Service Delivery Requirements**
 - This section includes requirements and recommendations for:
 - [Candidacy Determination](#)
 - [Case Planning \(Family Well-Being Plan\)](#)
 - [Needs Assessment and Ongoing Engagement](#)
 - [Safety Monitoring](#)
 - [Data Collection and Reporting](#)
- **Section 3: Additional Considerations for Providers Utilizing Motivational Interviewing (MI)**
 - This section includes considerations regarding implementation of MI, training expectations for MI, and fidelity requirements.

¹ *Title IV-E Agencies* are public child welfare or juvenile probation agencies, as well as tribal agencies, authorized under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to receive federal funding that supports foster care, prevention services, and related supports for children, youth, and families

² *California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Sections 16585–16589* establish California's implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), including provisions related to prevention services, eligibility, and program requirements for children, youth, and families.

- [Section 4: Fiscal Considerations](#)
 - This section outlines requirements and considerations for:
 - [Establishing Agreements](#)
 - [Fiscal Reporting](#)
 - [Allowable Activities](#)

Defining Community Pathways

The FFPS Program creates a new opportunity to deliver EBPs through partnerships with Title IV-E Agencies by leveraging federal funding and reinvesting those resources back into communities. It builds on long-standing prevention efforts in some counties while enabling others to expand existing services or develop new programs. The program is intended to complement—not replace—existing funding streams and services, supporting an integrated, "no wrong door" network of care for children and families. This document serves to outline the requirements for implementing FFPS Community Pathways rather than the implementation of broader community pathways.

FFPS Community Pathway

The FFPS Community Pathway is one component of the broader community-based prevention approach with specific requirements, building on existing community supports rather than duplicating them.

Broader Community Pathway (beyond FFPS)

The broader Community Pathway is a community-based service array providing no wrong door access to a broad range of trusted community providers where families naturally seek support, and may include Tribes, schools, health care providers, family resource centers, faith-based organizations, and other local entities. Community Pathways may offer a broad variety of services beyond Title IV-E prevention funded EBPs.

Section 1: General Program Requirements

Evidence-Based Practices in Service Delivery

Service providers can now work with local Title IV-E Agencies to deliver Title IV-E prevention funded EBPs in the FFPS Community Pathway to provide and coordinate services for families and their children early before any child welfare intervention is necessary. The FFPS Program allows for community-based delivery of well-supported EBPs within the following Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse categories:

- Substance Use Disorder
- Mental health
- Parenting skills

[California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan](#) has identified the following well-supported, evidence-based practices, which have been approved to for implementation in the FFPS Community Pathway:

California's 10 FFPS Evidence-Based Practices

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Brief Strategic Family Therapy | 6. Motivational Interviewing (Cross Cutting or focused on Substance Use Disorder Treatment) |
| 2. Family Check-Up | 7. Multisystemic Therapy |
| 3. Functional Family Therapy | 8. Nurse Family Partnership |
| 4. Healthy Families America | 9. Parents as Teachers |
| 5. Homebuilders | 10. Parent-Child Interaction Therapy |

For more information on requirements for implementing the 10 EBPs, refer to the **EBP Tracking, Documentation, Fidelity, and Outcomes Reporting** section below.

FFPS Training Requirements and Ongoing Learning

Community-based providers delivering Title IV-E funded EBPs in the FFPS Community Pathway must support workforce readiness through completion of core FFPS training and participating in ongoing learning opportunities that strengthen prevention-focused and family-centered practice. This training is divided into three (3) tiers.

TIER	DESCRIPTION	REQUIRED TRAININGS
Tier 1	Tier 1 training establishes a foundational understanding of the FFPS Program, core prevention principles, bias and disproportionality, and collaboration.	❖ Overview of Family First Prevention Services ❖ Shifting Mindset Towards Prevention ❖ Disproportionality and Implicit Bias ❖ Integrate Core Practice Model Overview
Tier 2	Tier 2 training builds upon Tier 1 foundation through role-specific learning opportunities related to service delivery, documentation, case management, and evidence-based practice implementation.	❖ Walking Together with Tribes ❖ Candidacy Determination and Pathway Overview ❖ Safety Through the Lens of Prevention ❖ Case Management Responsibilities for Community Providers
Tier 3	Tier 3 learning opportunities provide model-specific information and implementation support for providers interested in delivering one of the FFPS EBPs.	Tier 3 has no required training. Available Tier 3 training includes informational webinars for each EBP available on the California Training Institute (CalTrin) webpage .

To participate in the CA FFPS Learning Series above, providers will need to have a California Child Welfare Training (CACWT) account. For more information or to register for Tier 1 and Tier 2 training, providers must contact their local Comprehensive Prevention Planning (CPP) Lead. Providers can find the CPP Lead(s) in their county or Tribe by accessing the [CPP Leads List](#).

Resource	Description
Recommended Best Practice Sequencing of Required FFPS Training Document	This document provides recommendations on the sequencing of required FFPS training to help counties, Tribes, and providers plan for workforce preparation and implementation.
FFPS CA Child Welfare Training (CACWT) Access for Community Partners Memo	Guidance for supporting community-based organizations with CACWT access and FFPS training enrollment.
All County Letter (ACL) 25-73: Tier 1	Overview of California's FFPS Learning Series Tier 1 training requirements and audience.
CalTrin Review of Well-Supported Programs Series Archive	Archived webinars, implementation-focused learning opportunities, and evidence-based practice overviews related to FFPS service delivery

Participation in Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is a core requirement of California's FFPS implementation and supports ongoing collaboration, learning, and improvement across prevention services delivered through the FFPS Community Pathway. Community-based providers are encouraged to participate in county-led and regional CQI activities that support service improvement, implementation feedback, fidelity and outcomes review, and shared learning across partners. CQI activities help inform practice improvement efforts, service delivery decisions, and ongoing implementation of prevention services. Title IV-E Agencies will convene CQI teams to support provider participation in FFPS CQI activities.

Resource	Description
California FFPS CQI Plan	Includes an overview of California's FFPS CQI framework, including regional collaboratives, feedback loops, implementation workgroups, CQI roles and responsibilities, and prevention-focused quality improvement activities
California FFPS CQI Implementation Plan	Includes additional guidance related to operationalizing California's FFPS CQI framework, including implementation activities, timelines, reporting structures, and CQI coordination processes
CFPIC CQI and EBP Resource Page	Includes: CQI EBP Briefs, Fidelity & Outcome Reporting Templates, implementation resources, and reporting guidance for FFPS EBPs

EBP Tracking, Documentation, Fidelity, and Outcomes Reporting

Community-based providers delivering EBPs through the FFPS Community Pathway must track and document fidelity and outcomes data to support implementation, evaluation, and CQI efforts. Based on the specific EBP, providers will be required to document service delivery, capacity, and reach and track fidelity and outcome data by completing model-specific reporting templates. Providers should maintain documentation to support coordinated service delivery, accurate reporting, CQI participation, and evaluation of service effectiveness.

Providers will submit capacity and reach data via the CWS-CARES Provider Portal which serves as the automation system for providers to enter required data elements. Fidelity and Outcome data requirements and the data upload process will differ for each EBP. Providers should reference the EBP brief linked below and the Optional Fidelity and Outcome Reporting Template (an Excel tool with calculations to track the information needed for the CWS-CARES template) for specific instructions. Providers will be required to complete and submit a CWS-CARES Fidelity and Outcome Reporting Template and the Optional Fidelity and Outcome Reporting Templates on the CFPIC website (linked and described below) can be used to prepare for this reporting.

Resource	Description
Evidence Based Practice (EBP) Briefs Executive Summary	Overview of California's FFPS Evidence-Based Practices and related CQI, fidelity, and outcomes reporting activities
EBP-Specific CQI Briefs Click each EBP to learn more about its specific CQI and reporting requirements. Access the CFPIC CQI and EBP Resource Page to download the Optional Outcomes and Fidelity Reporting Template for each EBP. NOTE: there will be a required CWS-CARES Fidelity and Outcome Reporting Template available soon.	❖ Brief Strategic Family Therapy ❖ Family Check-Up ❖ Functional Family Therapy (FFT) ➤ FFT, LLC ➤ FFT, Partners ❖ Healthy Families America ❖ Homebuilders ❖ Motivational Interviewing (Cross Cutting or focused on Substance Use Disorder Treatment) ❖ Multisystemic Therapy ❖ Nurse Family Partnership ❖ Parents as Teachers ❖ Parent-Child Interaction Therapy

Section 2: Individual Service Delivery Requirements

Candidacy Determination

To meet federal and state guidelines, community-based providers participating in the FFPS Community Pathway must complete FFPS candidacy determination requests for the Title IV-E Agency when seeking to deliver Title IV-E funded services. When a family may be an eligible candidate for prevention services, the provider will complete a candidacy determination via the CWS-CARES Provider Portal. The Title IV-E Agency will be responsible for approving or denying the candidacy determination request. Candidates for prevention services include those identified within the California State Prevention Plan and within the local Comprehensive Prevention Plan. All approved Comprehensive Prevention Plans can be found on the [CalTrin Approved CPPs webpage](#). It is important that providers approach the candidacy determination process with transparency, strengths-based practices, and culturally responsive engagement and by emphasizing voluntary participation.

Resource	Description
FFPS Candidacy and Service Pathway Brief	Overview of FFPS candidacy determination, prevention pathways, FFPS Community Pathway implementation, and examples of prevention service workflows and family engagement processes.

Case Planning (Family Well-Being Plan)

The Family Well-Being Plan (FWBP) is a required component of FFPS prevention service delivery used to meet federal requirements. It may also be used as a case management tool to capture and monitor family strengths, needs, goals, other prevention services, and ongoing service coordination activities. Within the FFPS Community Pathway, providers may work with families to develop FWBPs, complete ongoing updates, document activities, and coordinate service delivery. Community-based providers participating in the FFPS Community Pathway will not upload FWBPs into the Provider Portal; however, providers are responsible for maintaining records of completed FWBPs and will report required de-identified data for federal reporting. Community-based providers may utilize their existing planning processes, assessment instruments and other tools that align with required FFPS data elements while continuing to reflect their organizational processes and needs of the families they serve. Community-based providers participating in the FFPS Community Pathway will collaborate with local partners and Title IV-E Agencies to establish an agreed-upon local process and documentation expectations.

To meet federal requirements, providers must develop a 12-month case plan with the family and document:

- ⇒ **The start date of the plan**
- ⇒ **The identified EBP, and**
- ⇒ **The service end date**

Resource	Description
FFPS Family Well-Being Plan Implementation Brief	Guidance for Family Well-Being Planning, including required FFPS data elements, family engagement, and documentation requirements.

Needs Assessment and Ongoing Engagement

Providers participating in the FFPS Community Pathway are required to meet federal requirements by conducting periodic risk assessments. This can be in the form of ongoing needs assessment to ensure the provision of services addresses the family's needs. Needs assessment activities may include identifying family strengths, protective factors, service needs, barriers to stability, and opportunities for connection to prevention-focused supports and community-based resources. Providers are expected to coordinate with families, Title IV-E Agencies, Tribes, and community partners, as appropriate, to support continuity of care and coordinated service delivery.

Safety Monitoring

Providers delivering services through the FFPS Community Pathway are responsible for maintaining processes that support child and family safety throughout prevention service delivery. Safety monitoring activities must include ongoing observation and assessment of safety concerns, communication with system partners, documentation of identified risks, and coordination related to service planning, safety planning, and mandated reporting responsibilities. Safety monitoring is not a stand-alone activity; it is integrated into ongoing engagement, service planning, documentation, and coordination activities in ways that are transparent, supportive, and responsive to family needs. Providers will maintain clear protocols for determining when identified safety concerns will be reported to the Title IV-E Agency for evaluation, including communication, documentation, consultation, and escalation processes when necessary. Providers will coordinate with local Title IV-E Agencies and system partners to identify local safety monitoring expectations.

Community providers may also engage in short-term safety planning with families to address instability factors families are experiencing, support families in avoiding unsafe situations, and develop a shared understanding of what safety looks like for the family. Based on county-level decisions, the requirement of safety monitoring may be met by adhering to mandated reporting protocols and community supporting efforts. Providers may contact their county or Tribe's CPP Lead for more information on the local requirement for safety monitoring within FFPS.

Resource	Description
Implementation Brief #1: Requirements, Roles, & Responsibilities	Guidance related to provider and Title IV-E Agency roles and responsibilities associated with 1) candidacy determination, 2) needs assessment, 3) case planning, and 4) safety monitoring.

Data Collection and Reporting

Providers participating in the FFPS Community Pathway are responsible for documenting and reporting FFPS service delivery data on a monthly basis. In addition to EBP-specific data that is tracked and reported, providers must report individual-level de-identified service details via CWS-CARES including: 1) FWBP dates; 2) service location, dates, and cost; 3) service costs; 4) risk and safety monitoring; and, when applicable, closure and renewal information. Documentation and reporting activities support state

and federal reporting, CQI efforts, implementation monitoring, and evaluation of prevention services delivered through the FFPS Community Pathway.

Resource	Summary
FFPS Community Pathway Data & Reporting Overview	Visual overview of FFPS CARES data fields, reporting activities, and documentation expectations for community-based providers and IV-E Agency staff.

Section 3: Additional Considerations for Utilizing Motivational Interviewing

Overview of Motivational Interviewing within FFPS

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is one of the evidence-based practices included within California’s FFPS Program and is the most commonly implemented EBP within the FFPS Community Pathway in California. MI is a collaborative, person-centered EBP that engages individuals in exploring and strengthening their own motivation for positive change. Within FFPS implementation, MI may be delivered either as a substance use disorder intervention or as a cross-cutting case management service model that supports engagement and service coordination. As with all EBPs in the California State Plan, providers delivering MI services within the FFPS Community Pathway must meet state-approved training, fidelity, and reporting requirements.

Resource	Summary
FFPS Motivational Interviewing Training Fact Sheet	Overview of Motivational Interviewing within California’s FFPS Program, including implementation expectations and key training and fidelity considerations
FFPS Motivational Interviewing (MI) Statewide Training Plan	Statewide MI training proposal outlining minimum MI training expectations, implementation pathways, fidelity requirements, and coaching expectations
Motivational Interviewing (MI) CQI Brief	Guidance related to MI reporting expectations, fidelity monitoring, coding requirements, coaching activities, and CQI processes
FFPS Motivational Interviewing Cross-Cutting Case Management Framework in California	Provides guidance on using Motivational Interviewing across the phases of case management and clarifies which activities may be considered MI services or child-specific administrative activities for FFPS claiming.

Section 4: Fiscal Considerations

Establishing Agreements

The FFPS Program involves delivering services via the FFPS Community Pathway based on agreements established between the Title IV-E agency, cross-system partner³ (when applicable), and the service provider. This includes creating agreements that take into consideration the requirements outlined above and any additional requirements that may be established locally based on specific county, Tribe, or provider needs. Agreements should include all of the requirements outlined in this document and can be in the form of a contract, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), an interagency protocol, or other local agreement that serves as the baseline of requirements for FFPS Community Pathway implementation. Providers and Title IV-E Agencies can also expand⁴ on existing contracts to deliver FFPS-funded services. There are no standardized rates for delivering FFPS-funded services. Rates for delivering FFPS-funded services should be developed in collaboration between the Title IV-E Agency, cross-system partner (when applicable), and the service provider.

Resource	Summary
CQI EBP Contract Guidelines	Specifies contract guidelines for specific EBPs to ensure CQI, EBP data collection, and fidelity requirements are met.
FFPS Fiscal Myth-Busting	Details and dispels common fiscal myths associated with FFPS with 4 major areas: 1) FFPSA/IV-E Claiming, 2) Contracting and Rate-Setting Requirements (Procurement/Finance Structure), 3) Provider Eligibility/Participation Requirements, and 4) Program Design / Scope.
Chapin Hall EBP Exploration and Cost Tool	Tool developed by Chapin Hall to support budgeting and understand the costs associated with implementing the Evidence-Based Practices.

Fiscal Reporting

As part of the federal Title IV-E prevention services reporting requirements, the CDSS must submit child-level information regarding prevention services and outcomes to ACF. CWS-CARES captures child-level information regarding Title IV-E prevention services, including certain service cost information, that supports CDSS's federal Title IV-E Prevention Services Data (IV-E PSD) reporting requirements. FFPS Community Pathway providers are responsible for entering required service and cost-tracking information

³ System partners (e.g., public health, behavioral health, education, etc.) may contract with direct service providers to deliver FFPS services under an agreement with the Title IV-E Agency, provided all FFPS Community Pathway requirements are met.

⁴ If expanding on current contracts, mechanisms should be in place to ensure that contract activities leveraging different funding sources can be distinguished from one another and that supplantation does not occur.

into the CWS-CARES Provider Portal in accordance with applicable reporting requirements. Fiscal data that must be entered into the CWS-CARES Provider Portal includes: ongoing (monthly) cost of service, units of service, and the final cost of service at the end of 12-month Family Well-Being Plan.

To ensure providers are meeting ongoing requirements for the FFPS Program, they should work with the Title IV-E Agency to determine the process and expectations for maintaining internal controls and protecting Personal Identifying Information (PII) within the agreements they establish to deliver services. Maintaining internal controls and documentation will be essential for tracking services and costs to support claiming. Providers and Title IV-E Agencies can use the FFPS Documentation and Internal Controls Guide to support discussions and agreements regarding the internal controls and documentation needed for claiming.

Separately, Title IV-E prevention expenditures are reported through California's fiscal claiming processes and are used by CDSS to complete the federal CB-496 Title IV-E Expenditure Report. Information maintained in CWS-CARES may support or be cross-referenced with certain CB-496 elements, but the two reporting processes serve different purposes and are not expected to align on a one-to-one basis.

Resource	Summary
FFPS Prevention Reporting Fields	Details the required fields to be entered into CWS-CARES Provider Portal and is audience-specific (Title IV-E Agency vs. Community Pathway Provider). Community Pathway Provider CWS-CARES Provider Portal data requirements begin on page 5.
Implementation and Claiming Steps for IV-E Funding: Community Pathway Overview	The document provides an overview of the steps to implement and claim IV-E funding and details fiscal vs. program responsibilities by audience. The document also includes a system for entering data for the fiscal component and examples of support documents for compliance purposes.
EBP Units of Service	Details the units of service established for each evidence-based practice in order to support standardization when reporting units of service in CWS-CARES.
FFPS Fiscal Documentation and Internal Control Guide	This guide provides information to support fiscal documentation and internal control processes associated with FFPS implementation and claiming.

Allowable Activities⁵

Delivering an FFPS prevention service may involve activities and costs beyond the direct delivery of the EBP. When establishing agreements and rates, Title IV-E Agencies and providers should consider the full

⁵ State Block Grant guidance has been provided to Title IV-E Agencies regarding reallocation of funds and allowable activities for utilizing funds and can be referenced in both [County Fiscal Letter \(CFL\) 26/27-04](#) and the [Utilizing the State Block Grant Resource](#).

scope of activities necessary to implement and deliver the EBP, meet fidelity requirements, and satisfy FFPS program, reporting, training, and CQI requirements. These may include service delivery, preparation and documentation, engagement and coordination, transportation or childcare needed to support participation, data reporting, training, fidelity monitoring, and CQI activities. Costs associated with these activities may be eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement when applicable FFPS eligibility and claiming requirements are met. Provider rates may incorporate multiple components of the cost of delivering the program and are not limited to direct service time. Title IV-E Agencies should consider these activities when developing contracts, agreements, and provider payment rates so that rates reasonably reflect the resources required to deliver the service as intended. A provider rate may, therefore, incorporate multiple components of the provider's cost of delivering the FFPS Program.

Resource	Summary
FFPS Administrative Activities Considerations	Details the workload and non-exhaustive administrative tasks associated with the FFPS Program and may assist counties and providers in understanding considerations related to contracting and implementation.
Motivational Interviewing (MI) Claiming FAQs	Addresses frequently asked questions related to claiming for implementing MI as a case management model.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on this brief. Please take a few moments to complete the [Feedback Survey](#) to share your input and suggestions. Your feedback will help inform future resources and ensure they are clear, effective, and supportive of FFPS Program implementation.

Questions?

For additional questions regarding FFPS Program policy and requirements, please contact the CDSS FFPS Team at ffpsapreventionservices@dss.ca.gov.