



Children, Youth & Families Department

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Brian Blalock, Cabinet Secretary

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Improving the Quality of Life for Our Children.

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CYFD Selected For National Support to Improve Family Well-Being

SANTA FE – The Children, Youth & Families Department was selected as one of 12 states, tribes or municipalities to receive support through Thriving Families, Safer Children: A National Commitment to Well-Being. As a member of the Thriving Families Round Two cohort, CYFD will receive invaluable support and assistance to continue strengthening community connections and providing equitable support to all families in New Mexico.

“We are excited to have been selected for the Thriving Families, Safer Children cohort. Families are the experts in their own lives and our department is already working with them tailor services to their needs,” said CYFD Cabinet Secretary Brian Blalock. “Support from these national thought leaders will help us integrate best practices into how we engage families and children and address inequities in care.”

Thriving Families, Safer Children (TFSC) national partners include United States Children’s Bureau, Casey Family Programs, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Prevent Child Abuse America. These well-respected organizations are committed to directly addressing structural and social determinants of health, including systemic and structural racism.

“This extraordinary moment provides an opportunity to shift the narrative from child welfare to child well-being,” said Dr. Melissa T. Merrick, president and CEO of Prevent Child Abuse America. “We must leverage this new way of thinking to develop and deliver effective and impactful community-based resources that assist families in ways which strengthen and help keep them together.”

These national partners will assist CYFD in providing a full continuum of support to strengthen community protective factors, lift the voice of families to strengthen community support, enhance parental protective capabilities, and mitigate associated risk factors. These priorities align with the Department’s strategic plan and CYFD welcomes the expertise and guidance as we continue to improve systems to better serve New Mexico’s families.

A preliminary list of supports for New Mexico and tribes to consider as core efforts for their involvement in TFSC Round Two include:

- Developing robust networks of community based primary prevention supports (family resource centers as an example);
- Establishing warm lines and community responses as an alternative to child abuse hotlines for situations in which child maltreatment is not suspected;

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- Integrating key human services agencies;
- Establishing state level offices of adolescent well-being and connection;
- Cross-system, cross-sector data sharing and data linkages;
- Leveraging other jurisdictional initiatives (i.e. Preschool Development Grants, CBCAP, etc.)
- Establishing partnerships and infrastructure to provide preventative legal services to address civil legal collateral issues such as housing instability;
- Revising statutory definitions of neglect and mandatory reporting that clearly differentiate maltreatment from poverty;
- Establishing or expanding state or tribal wide home visiting programs;
- Developing/implementing ways to integrate family/youth/community expertise into design, operation and improvement of well-being systems;
- Develop partnerships with other state child and family serving agencies, the private sector, and prevention partners and commit to a common vision (for example child welfare and housing authorities);
- Identify and develop strategies to address systemic barriers to creating a well-being system;
- Bring existing efforts that are consistent with the vision to the broader information sharing component of Thriving Families, Safer Children; and
- Identify strategies for bringing smaller scale efforts to scale.

Many of the efforts outlined above are already underway at CYFD. The Thriving Families, Safer Children Tier Two cohort met for the first time at the end of February and CYFD and its partners look forward to ongoing collaboration and support in developing a child well-being system.

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