

## **Family and Consumer Partnership Initiatives**

*Objective 7.1: Increase the percentage of state Title V activities and programs that engage with families and consumers to 10% by 2030.*

### *Parent-to-Parent Program with Families Together, Inc.*

Kansas Title V will continue its partnership with Families Together, Inc., to expand and enhance the [Parent-to-Parent Support Program](#), a key strategy to strengthen family engagement and increase access to peer support services for families across the state. This collaboration is critical to support families navigating complex needs within the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) system, particularly families of children and youth with special health care needs and those experiencing social, geographic, or systemic barriers to care.

Through continued investment in this partnership, Kansas Title V aims to broaden the program's reach, ensuring more families have access to trained parent mentors who can provide emotional support, resource navigation, encouragement, and guidance grounded in shared lived experience. The program is designed to reduce isolation, strengthen family resilience, and empower caregivers to more effectively engage with healthcare, educational, and community-based systems.

During Year 2 of the contract period, activities will focus on expanding outreach efforts, recruiting and training additional parent mentors, and strengthening referral pathways to ensure families are connected to appropriate supports and services in a timely and coordinated manner. Kansas Title V and Families Together, Inc. will also continue developing opportunities for family connection and engagement through both individualized peer support and group-based activities. These opportunities will include one-to-one peer mentoring, regularly scheduled parent support groups, book clubs, and in-person family gatherings designed to foster community, shared learning, and social connection among participating families.

### *Family Advisory Council*

The Bureau of Family Health Family Advisory Council (FAC) will continue to serve as a key mechanism for integrating family voice and lived experience into the development, implementation, and evaluation of Kansas Title V priorities. FAC members will remain actively engaged in workgroup projects aligned with the objectives and performance measures outlined in the Kansas Title V Five-Year State Action Plan. In addition to project-based work, FAC members will participate in full council meetings that offer opportunities to learn about emerging Maternal and Child Health (MCH) initiatives, statewide resources, and cross-sector partnership efforts across Kansas.

In response to ongoing member feedback and to support meaningful engagement, Kansas Title V will continue the meeting structure implemented in FY24, consisting of three virtual meetings and one in-person, two-day retreat annually. This hybrid structure has improved accessibility while also preserving opportunities for relationship-building, collaboration, and strategic planning during in-person gatherings. To reduce travel burden and increase geographic accessibility for members across the state, in-person

meetings traditionally rotate locations annually. The FY27 in-person retreat will be held in either Topeka or Lawrence.

Kansas Title V will continue year-round recruitment efforts to strengthen and diversify FAC membership, with particular emphasis on increasing representation from fathers and other historically underrepresented populations within MCH systems. Efforts to increase public awareness of the FAC and its impact will support recruitment, sustainability, and broader family engagement across Kansas communities.

Each FAC workgroup identifies and leads projects designed to advance Title V priorities and improve outcomes for Kansas children and families. Current workgroup focus areas include:

*Women/Maternal Health Workgroup:* The Women/Maternal Health Workgroup focuses on improving women's experiences before, during, and after pregnancy. Current efforts center on increasing awareness of the role doulas, midwives, and lactation consultants play in supporting healthy pregnancies, positive birth experiences, maternal wellbeing, and infant health outcomes. The group also seeks to elevate family perspectives related to access to culturally responsive perinatal support services across Kansas.

*Fatherhood Workgroup:* The Fatherhood Workgroup is collaborating with the KDHE BFH staff to expand and strengthen father-focused resources originally developed through a prior fatherhood internship initiative. The workgroup has reviewed, refined, and expanded the available materials and is currently planning to develop a dedicated fatherhood section within the Welcome Babies platform. This effort is intended to increase access to relevant, father-inclusive information, resources, and support services for fathers and caregivers across Kansas.

*Early Childhood Workgroup:* The Early Childhood Workgroup is partnering with Maddie Wegner, Child/Adolescent Consultant and Help Me Grow Kansas State Lead, to identify strengths, gaps, and barriers related to developmental screening availability across frontier and rural counties. This work will help inform strategies to improve equitable access to early identification and referral services for young children and families across the state.

*Child and Adolescent Workgroup:* The Child and Adolescent Workgroup is focused on improving interactions between law enforcement personnel and individuals with special healthcare needs and neurodevelopmental differences. The group is exploring opportunities to strengthen training, tools, and resources that support law enforcement officers in recognizing and appropriately responding to individuals with special needs within legal and community settings. Planned activities may include developing educational materials, resource guides, and additional training supports related to neurodiversity awareness and response strategies.

*Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Workgroup:* The CYSHCN Workgroup is focused on expanding and improving access to community-

based resources for Kansas families of children and youth with special health care needs by enhancing the 1800ChildrenKS website. Planned activities include creating a dedicated CYSHCN resource category, organizing information by areas of need, and adding at least 50 new disability-related resources by the end of the project year. The workgroup is also committed to ensuring statewide representation of resources across all Kansas regions and will engage community organizations and partners through surveys and collaborative efforts to collect resources.

### *Kansas Family Leadership Training (KS FLT)*

The Family Systems Consultant is working to fulfill a long-standing priority identified by many Kansas Title V. The program members, as well as current and former FAC members and families across the state, through the development of the Kansas Family Leadership Training (KS FLT) program. Led by the Family Systems Consultant in collaboration with three Help Me Grow Kansas (HMG KS) Family Leaders, this initiative is designed to strengthen family leadership capacity and support meaningful family engagement within health, education, and community systems.

The KS FLT program is intended to equip family leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to participate effectively in systems-level change efforts, advisory councils, advocacy activities, and community leadership opportunities. Training content is being developed collaboratively to reflect the needs, experiences, and priorities of Kansas families.

During the initial phase of development, efforts have focused on reviewing and refining curriculum content and identifying best practices for implementation. The Family Systems Consultant previously participated in the Iowa Family Leadership Training Institute, which has served as a foundational model and inspiration for the Kansas program. Building upon this experience, the three HMG KS Family Leaders are currently participating in the Iowa Family Leadership Training Institute to gain firsthand experience and further inform the development of a sustainable, family-centered leadership training model for Kansas families.

### *Title V Family Delegate*

Following an extensive review and evaluation of the Title V Family Delegate Program, Kansas Title V is excited to relaunch the program with an enhanced structure designed to strengthen family partnership, leadership development, and meaningful engagement across maternal and child health initiatives. Beginning in Summer 2026, Kansas Title V will select its first Family Delegate under the redesigned model. The updated program reflects a strategic investment in authentic family voice and shared decision-making by incorporating several key enhancements, including a structured four-year term commitment, expanded opportunities for leadership development, professional and peer mentorship, and deeper integration into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Kansas Title V programs and activities. Through this strengthened framework, the Family Delegate will serve as a valued partner in advancing family-centered policies and programs, ensuring that lived experience informs priorities, systems improvement efforts, and statewide maternal and child health strategies.