FAMILY DEVELOPMENT IN INDIANA

A report for the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

CHAMBERLIN/DUNN LLC | DATA AIMS LLC

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SUMMARY

In early 2021, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) commissioned a third-party evaluation of Family Development Programs (FDP) implemented by Community Action Agencies (CAA) in Indiana. The evaluation had four objectives:

1 **Examine differences** in program design and implementation across four agencies.

2 **Determine what, if any, outcomes** are being achieved by families participating in these programs.

3 **Compile lessons learned** regarding what has been effective and what has not been effective in increasing family self-sufficiency through these programs.

4 **Discover the extent to which programs interact** or integrate with other agencies or programs of community partners.

Four agencies volunteered to participate in the evaluation. The programs operated by Human Services, Inc. (HSI), Interlocal Community Action Program (ICAP), and South-Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) are standalone FDP and can be considered "comprehensive personal or family mobility pathways," as defined by the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty.[i] The fourth agency included in the evaluation, TRI-CAP, does not have a defined FDP and currently provides economic mobility programming through other "building blocks" programs like Head Start and Healthy Families.

The evaluation was conducted with a mixed methods design that incorporated a series of four in-depth, semi-structured interviews with core program personnel; interviews with community partners and other staff; collection and analysis of program artifacts and performance data; and, where possible, a family survey of recent FDP participants.

Evaluated Programs

HSI *Coaching for Success*
Clients receiving regular coaching to achieve goals to move towards self-sufficiency. The frequency of coaching meetings is based on client comfort and urgency of goals, but are typically weekly 1-hour meetings. Clients go through a 2-3 hour vetting meeting to understand Coaching for Success and to start to identify goals.

ICAP *Family Development Program*
Clients are enrolled in the program for at least 90 days and work with FDP coaches to increase self-sufficiency. Action plans are created following client intake and clients meet with coaches monthly to work toward goal achievement. Clients are considered successful if they have participated for 90 days and achieved two goals or improved their family development matrix score by at leat 4 points.

SCCAP *Thriving Connections*
Thriving Connections fosters a community of individuals working to move out of generational poverty into stability. Based on a "Ship" model, the Captains (clients) have 2-3 Allies (volunteers from the community) to support their achievement of goals. TC requires an 18-month commitment. The entire community meets weekly to discuss a variety of topics and receive training. Youth programming is included simultaneously.

TRI-CAP *FDP elements in multiple programs*
Coaching to move indivudals towards self-suffiency exists within multiple programs at TRI-CAP. All programs work with clients to set and achieve goals to improve education, employment, housing, finance & budgeting, and parenting skills. Program length and completion requirements vary by program.

Key Findings

Similar Objectives, Different Designs

All evaluated FDP shared the common objective of moving individuals and families out of poverty and to self-sufficiency. They are similar in that Family Development is conducted through coaching, either one-on-one or in small-group settings. In all programs, clients set goals that are customized to their needs and judgment; although staff help guide needs assessment and goal setting processes, all four agencies noted the importance of individual and family self-determination in those steps.

The most significant differences in design are program duration—a minimum of 90 days for one FDP, 18 months for a cohort-based FDP, and no set duration or minimum participation for a third FDP. (The fourth provides FDP-type services through other programs and does not operate it as a standalone program.) The other biggest difference is the role of staff. For three agencies, staff provide virtually all FDP services, except those that require referral to a partner agency. One agency uses a community-building model with significant staff coordination and facilitation, which pairs weekly FDP participant meetings with monthly coaching meetings with groups of community-member volunteers.

Common Themes, but Many Ways, to Measure Results

CAA in Indiana described program goals and objectives in similar terms to those put forth by the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty—improvements in the status of basic needs, shifts in mindsets for individuals and families in poverty, and achievement of self-sufficiency. The three CAA with designated FDP track a variety of metrics that generally fall within six categories.

Program-level Outputs and Outcomes	Participant-level Outputs and Outcomes
• Operations • Number of individuals and households participating	• Participation • Mobility factors • Economic circumstances • Goal achievement

Although categories are similar, their definitions are tailored to each program's design. For example, under *Participant – Participation*, ICAP examines the number of individuals or families who participate after 90 days, and participation becomes official when an individual returns after the intake meeting for a second meeting. SCCAP also tracks participation, used to measure *development of social capital*, but in terms of a participant's (Captain's) achievement of weekly attendance goals, monthly attendance goals, and involvement in the local community. It would likely be impractical for Indiana to attempt to design a single set of metrics for FDP statewide.

Despite Differences, FDP Share Common Strengths and Challenges

Variations on themes of strengths and challenges were present based on program design, location, and organizational culture, but they shared commonalities as well.

Common Strengths

Mutual Benefit. Ensuring that programming and personnel not only support participants, but also address the needs and support the broader community, as well as aligning with partners' goals.

Individualization/Flexibility. Enhancing effective program design and staff and participant engagement by building in individualized focus; capitalizing on strengths, interests, and needs; and allowing for mid-course correction when necessary.

Relationship Building. Creating strong and lasting relationships with community partners and organizations and participants, through effective communication and trust building.

Mentoring/Support Systems. Encouraging participant and staff engagement and retention through ongoing mentoring, coaching, and establishment of a wide network of support systems.

Common Challenges

Capacity/Time Commitment. Recognizing and navigating the reality that programs are often understaffed and that partners also may have competing priorities for their time.

Meeting Expectations/Burnout. Addressing potential retention issues related to participants needing to meet program expectations, as well as staff burnout around job expectations.

Perceived Competition. Working with partners to help realize the value of working collaboratively toward goals and that services, even when overlapping, do not need to be in competition.

Communicating Outcomes. Demonstrating program outcomes to a wide variety of audiences (including funders), especially from a quality over quantity standpoint

Families Move Towards Self-Sufficiency

Participants who responded to a family survey reported that they were able to achieve goals during and after the program, that the goals made a significant difference in their life and for their families, and that the program helped them achieve those goals (72% strongly agreed with each statement).

Each agency tracked outcomes based on program and individual participation, program operations, goal achievement, economic progress, and social supports, but the specific datapoints varied. Generally, agencies track the percent of families that achieve goals, but do not track specific goals or types of goals because of the individualized nature of FDP.

Outcome data was available for three of the four agencies, as TRI-CAP has multiple programs that do Family Development work, and therefore does not have aggregated outcomes across those programs. The three other agencies served 64 households in 2020 through the FDP. Families were able to achieve personal goals and increase their stability in a variety of basic needs.

HSI: 100% of participants achieved a family goal and eliminated a barrier, with 70% improving in the family development matrix score.

ICAP: 68% of families achieved two or more goals or improved the family development matrix score by at least four points.

SCCAP: 90% of families achieved at least four goals in 2020 and 94% increased stability in Food, Physical health, Financial, Shelter, Transportation, Work, Childcare, Integrity and Trust, Emotional, and/or Spiritual/ Cultural.

Even with lower participation for two agencies, all three agencies reported positive results for percent of families progressing toward self-sufficiency in 2020.

For two agencies, individual and household participation as well as the rate of improvement in economic circumstances were down between in 2020, compared with 2019, likely a reflection of the effects of the COVID-19 program modifications and the economic impacts of job losses in certain sectors. Even with lower participation for two agencies, all three agencies reported positive results for percent of families *progressing* toward self-sufficiency in 2020.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The coaching-based FDP included in this evaluation are implementing many of the recommended approaches from experts such as those who participated in the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty; one of the group's specific recommendations, for example, is to support coach-navigator interventions, especially those based on brain science, that used goals-based tools and processes to help families work toward outcomes across multiple domains of economic and social mobility.[ii]

The elements-based FDP is considering the possibility of bringing FDP components of other "building blocks" programs into a standalone FDP. Based on the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty framework, this would be the next step in moving families beyond the individual fundamentals that lead toward mobility and into a comprehensive program with the objective of reaching family self-sufficiency. However, comprehensive mobility pathways programs can be expensive to operate and difficult to scale; CAA leaders must determine the right balance of high-touch coach engagement, which could lead to more profound transformation for a family, versus program capacity, when resources are limited and there is a perception that some funders want to see breadth of impact over depth.

Recommendations for CAA Starting, Modifying, and/or Changing Programs

Overall

- Anticipate high resource and time commitments to achieve results.
- Track and measure progress tailored to family goals.

- Consider how programs can build both economic and social mobility.
- Use Brain Science for program development and staff training

Staffing

- Provide ongoing professional and emotional-wellness support for staff; watch for burnout.
- Consider the benefits of the Thriving Connections "Ship" model that relies on networks of human capital beyond CAA staff.

Family Recruitment and Engagement

- Anticipate the need to attract and recruit families and individuals.
- Emphasize relationship-building and connectivity for all staff within the CAA, and for families within their communities.
- Establish and implement a family agreement with clear and reasonable expectations for both CAA staff and participating individuals and families.
- Be flexible and adaptive with families while maintaining expectations and boundaries.
- Expect a wide variety of participation commitments, including attrition.
- Gather and celebrate stories of impact.

Partnerships

- Assess agency capacity to address all 13 building blocks to help families move out of poverty.
- Dedicate the time to participate in community workgroups to build reciprocal relationships, maintain referral resources, and build interconnected networks of support that can respond to individual and family needs.

Recommendations for IHCDA

Support CAA as they implement coach-based FDP, recognizing the work is naturally difficult, resource-intensive, individualized, and naturally long-term.

Create additional FDP resources and supports; explore the potential for a workgroup or roundtables on practices and approaches as well as a state manual on CSBG funding and FDP interventions. If possible, reinstitute the certification and/or provide training dollars for new staff, especially family coaches.

Support CAA in gathering stories of impact and of lessons learned from the families participating in FDP around the state. Such an initiative could include the Most Significant Change[iii] evaluation technique that uses stories from the field for program monitoring and continuous improvement.

“*They helped me,
they can help you too.
You're not alone in your journey.*”

- FDP Participant

CONTENTS

> " The move from poverty in its many forms
> to a life of dignity, inclusion, and
> middle-class security
> **must be understood as a journey**
> rather than an event. "
>
> - *Creating Mobility from Poverty: An Overview of Strategies[iv]*

INTRODUCTION

In early 2021, the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) commissioned a third-party evaluation of Family Development Programs (FDP) implemented by Community Action Agencies (CAA) in Indiana. The evaluation had four objectives:

1 **Examine differences** in program design and implementation across four agencies.

2 **Determine what, if any, outcomes** are being achieved by families participating in these programs.

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4 **Discover the extent to which programs interact** or integrate with other agencies or programs of community partners.

About Family Development

Family Development Programs (FDP) all focus on increasing family self-sufficiency. They support families in setting and achieving individualized goals that build a stronger foundation for families to move out of poverty. CAA work toward this common objective, however, through a variety of interventions and program designs that differ in duration, intensity, activities, expectations, and program terminology and names.

This report examines four different approaches to family development, implemented at Human Services, Inc. (HSI), Interlocal Community Action Program (ICAP), South-Central Community Action Program (SCCAP), and TRI-CAP.

About the Evaluation

The evaluation of four FDP in Indiana was conducted with a mixed methods design that incorporated a series of four in-depth, semi-structured interviews with core program personnel; interviews with community partners and other staff; collection and analysis of program artifacts and performance data; and, where possible, a family survey of recent FDP participants. CAA voluntarily participated in the evaluation.

Evaluators descriptively analyzed quantitative data and thematically analyzed qualitative data to draw conclusions related to the four evaluation objectives. See Appendix B for a full description of the methodology and limitations.

IHCDA creates housing opportunities, generates and preserves assets, and revitalizes neighborhoods by facilitating the collaboration of multiple stakeholders, investing financial and technical resources in development efforts, and helping build capacity of qualified partners throughout Indiana.

CAA are local private and public non-profit organizations that promote self-sufficiency, and work to reduce the causes and conditions of poverty in the communities they serve. They were founded as a part of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act to fight poverty by empowering the poor as part of the War on Poverty.

1
PROGRAM
DESIGNS

"Great programs matter...
But for anyone seeking to expand mobility,
the reality and the nature of the task are daunting."

- *Creating Mobility from Poverty: An Overview of Strategies*

A Framework for Economic Mobility Programs

Although there is no universal way of classifying interventions that help those in poverty increase their economic and social mobility, the U.S. Partnership for Economic Mobility developed a framework that combines "elements of who, or what, or where an activity is targeted and its core strategic thrust or method." It includes six types of interventions at three levels: fundamental building blocks, strategies that combine building blocks, and large-scale transformation.

1. Many interventions focus on the "**fundamental 'building blocks'** for promoting mobility" and target one or several interrelated elements of mobility out of poverty. These programs often weave multiple elements together but are typically focused on a "primary goal or track."

Three types of strategies combine fundamental building blocks in various ways:

2. **Comprehensive personal or family mobility pathways** "focus primarily on a specific individual or family and determine what combination of services, training, and support they need to succeed." Generally, a closely collaborating coach or advocate helps the person or family members determine their needs and goals and helps find those needs either within the program or from other programs in the community.

Three of the four FDP included in this evaluation could be considered
"comprehensive personal or family mobility pathways,"
with dedicated coaches or support teams and combinations of services and supports
tailored to each family's individual needs and goals.
The fourth currently operates FDP within "fundamental building block" programs,
incorporating coaching services into programs with other primary foci.

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3. **Place-conscious strategies to create neighborhoods of choice and opportunity** "address the combination of economic, social, and cultural structures and institutions within places. They typically focus on neighborhood-level systems of "housing, education, social services, and community-building programs for a bounded geographic area that (1) counters the negative influences of crime and poverty and (2) offers mobility-advancing supports, such as good schools, to the individuals and families who live in the place."

4. **Regional, cross-sectoral, jointly accountable partnerships** "bring together community leaders from across multiple sectors to hold themselves accountable for setting joint goals and achieving significant results." They are often expressed as "Collective Impact."

Two additional types of strategies focus on large-scale transformation:

5. **Large-scale economic, political, and institutional changes** seek to fundamentally reform the aggregate economic and policy context through, for example, macroeconomic policy, criminal justice reform, and political empowerment.

6. **Accountability, informational, and managerial innovations** work toward timelier, more relevant data to spur innovation, accountability, and learning.[v]

Family Development in Indiana
An evaluation of four approaches

Evaluated Programs
This evaluation included four FDP:

HSI *Coaching for Success*
Clients receiving regular coaching to achieve goals to move towards self-sufficiency. The frequency of coaching meetings is based on client comfort and urgency of goals, but are typically weekly 1-hour meetings. Clients go through a 2-3 hour vetting meeting to understand Coaching for Success and to start to identify goals.

SCCAP *Thriving Connections*
Thriving Connections fosters a community of individuals working to move out of generational poverty into stability. Based on a "Ship" model, the Captains (clients) have 2-3 Allies (volunteers from the community) to support their achievement of goals. TC requires an 18-month commitment. The entire community meets weekly to discuss a variety of topics and receive training. Youth programming is included simultaneously.

ICAP *Family Development Program*
Clients are enrolled in the program for at least 90 days and work with FDP coaches to increase self-sufficiency. Action plans are created following client intake and clients meet with coaches monthly to work toward goal achievement. Clients are considered successful if they have participated for 90 days and achieved two goals or improved their family development matrix score by at leat 4 points.

TRI-CAP *FDP elements in multiple programs*
Coaching to move indivudals towards self-suffiency exists within multiple programs at TRI-CAP. All programs work with clients to set and achieve goals to improve education, employment, housing, finance & budgeting, and parenting skills. Program length and completion requirements vary by program.

Similarities in Design and Implementation
The four agencies' approaches to Family Development have foundational similarities with unique program elements and implementation styles. The primary similarity is the fact that Family Development is conducted through **coaching** to work towards individualized goals. The individuals and families in each program are **set their own goals**, with guidance and support from FDP staff. Staff from each agency explained the importance of meeting each family "where they are" and allowing them to set goals, rather than imposing staff beliefs on what is or is not important. All programs allow families to **remain in the program longer than the minimum duration** if they are continuing to set and meet goals.

Each agency tracks progress towards goals **using specific tools**, many modeled from an existing Family Development Matrix. Three of the four agencies have **one or two dedicated Family Development staff** and are supported by other coaches (ICAP and HSI) or volunteers (SCCAP). Families are **recruited** primarily through word of mouth and outreach events at each agency and families undergo an **in-depth interview intake process**. Each agency had **similar criteria for enrollment** into the program, focusing on the drive to complete goals, ability to identify goals, and commitment to regular communication. When bringing on new staff or coaches, three of the four include **shadowing existing staff** as part of the process.

Differences in Design and Implementation

The most significant differences in design include the **duration of the program** and the metric for successful **program completion**. **HSI does not have set duration or minimum participation** and has the most flexibility with participant enrollment. Families can remain in the program as long as they are working toward goals, and staff recognize that some individuals might need a significant amount of time to reach goals, such as going from homelessness to secure housing, while others might need assistance meeting one or two immediate goals and then are ready to continue their journey towards self-sufficiency. With this, HSI **does not have a standard for "program completion"** and it is based on each individuals' own needs. The FDP at **ICAP has a minimum of 90 days** of participation and successful completion is measured by **goal achievement and/or family development matrix score increases**. Thriving Connections at **SCCAP requires the longest commitment** from families at 18 months, which includes weekly meetings with all TC families and monthly "Ship" meetings.

Among the programs evaluated, SCCAP has a **unique meeting format, a unique community-building focus,** and is the only program to **utilize a large number of volunteers** in program implementation. While the other FDP have regular (weekly to monthly) one-on-one meetings with clients, SCCAP families are assigned two to three "Allies" who are volunteers from the community and they meet monthly to track progress towards goals.

TRI-CAP **does not have one formal FDP** but implements an individualized coaching model within a variety of programs, such as Head Start and Healthy Families Indiana, which work to move families out of poverty.

Family Development in Indiana
An evaluation of four approaches

	HSI	ICAP	SCCAP	TRI-CAP
Primary Goals	Provide resources to clients Increase client self-sufficiency Teach skills to overcome and eliminate barriers Educate individuals on generational poverty	Increase participant's self-sufficiency Decrease generational poverty	Move participants out of generational poverty into stability. Create a support system for participants. Supporting kids. Achieving goals in education, personal growth, and sustainable employment.	Connect clients to resources Increase client self-sufficiency Varies by specific program
Outcomes	Goal and milestone achievement Job attainment & retention	Goal achievement	Goal achievement Reduced public benefits Job attainment & retention Health insurance	Goal achievement
Minimum Duration	No set minimum or maximum participation	90 days	18 months (20–24-week initial training included)	3 years (Healthy Families)
Recruitment strategies	Word of mouth Internal & external referrals Local advertisements and social media (previously)	Outreach events Partner Referrals	Existing SSCAP families, including Head Start Partner referrals Word of mouth Presentations and outreach events Open houses	Word of mouth Outreach events Radio spots (previously)
Intake Process	2–3-hour vetting meeting. Includes visualizing where they are now and where they want to be in 5 years	Preliminary Interview Assessment Interview with participant agreement (officially become client) Action Plan meeting	Informal discussion Attend a weekly meeting (not required) Application Formal interview – 2+ hours Commitment Form 6-month check-in with TC Coach	Healthy Families has in-depth process and scoring requirement
Tools Used	Bridge tool	Family Development Matrix Action Plans (other tools occasionally used)	Star Charts Modified Head Start family development matrix	Family Development Matrix
Common Goals	Housing Childcare Support system Employment and wages Substance use, mental health Education	Affordable housing Employment or wage increase Fixing credit Transportation	Education Employment Personal Growth	Budgeting Parenting skills Literacy Employment Communication

Family Development in Indiana
An evaluation of four approaches

	HSI	ICAP	SCCAP	TRI-CAP
Meeting / Coaching Frequency	Typically weekly 1-hour meetings, but can vary based on the needs of the individual and ranges from multiple times a week to once a month	Monthly (incl. home visits) Missed two appointments without cause and notice, dropped form program	Weekly TC Community Meetings Monthly Ship meetings (participant + support team) Reciprocity (giving back/ volunteering)	Varies by program Healthy Families has weekly meetings. No progress in 6 months they are exited from program.
Completion	Participant determined – based on perception of progress	90 Day participation & either: achieve 2 goals/outcomes OR improve matrix score by at least 4 points	Can remain in TC longer than 18-months. Have to continue meeting goals and attending meetings.	Varies based on the program
Partnership types	Referrals to and from FDP Idea generation Resource/coach sharing Funding partnerships Employment Workgroups Partnerships have MOUs	Referrals to and from FDP Venue for outreach Split financial support for client	Allies – commit to 18 months minimum supporting Captain Discounted or free services (e.g., dentist, mechanic) Mental health providers Networking Referrals Programming for weekly meetings Volunteers	MOUs for referrals Community meetings (Social Concerns Group)
Gaps in Services	Personal transportation Childcare	Transportation Childcare Social Supports	Sustainable employment Healthcare Trauma-informed mental health	Can find referrals for any needs
Staffing	1 Department Director 1 Coach (cover multiple programs, including FDP)	1 Coordinator (10-15 clients) 1 Director of Community/Client Services 4 EAP Outreach Specialists (5 clients)	1 TC Coordinator 3 TC Coaches (2 are funded through grants) Allies (volunteers) AmeriCorps Members	No dedicated FDP staff. Programming is completed by staff within each program. Goal of having Resource Coordinator have a bigger FDP role
Staff Supports	Work alongside Dept. Director for two weeks during onboarding Training manual	FDP-Specific Manual Shadow FD Coordinator during on-boarding Bi-weekly meetings with FD Coordinator	Shadowing during onboarding, ongoing trainings (e.g., self-care)	No dedicated staff

Common Strengths and Challenges in Family Development

All FDP focus on movement out of poverty and to family self-sufficiency. Although approaches vary widely across the four examined CAA, the evaluation was structured around four broad areas that apply to virtually all FDP:

1. Program design
2. Partnerships
3. Program personnel
4. Family recruitment and engagement

These four topics framed evaluation conversations to draw out similarities and differences in programming, explore perceptions of strengths and challenges, and identify recommendations and lessons learned from staff responsible for implementing FDP.

Despite each program having nuanced differences in design and implementation, four themes related to strengths, as well as four themes associated with challenges, commonly applied across programs. This section provides an overview of strengths and challenges across organizations. The next section provides a more in-depth review of strengths and challenges within each broad area for each organization.

Strengths

All of the commonly identified strengths were identified by at least two of four organizations; identified strengths were present in two or more broad areas.

Mutual Benefit

This strength was identified by multiple staff in the areas of program design, partnerships, and family recruitment and engagement. For **program design**, staff identified the importance of ensuring that programs reflect the needs of participants, but also the broader needs of the community, so there is shared understanding that when participants meet their goals, there is also benefit to the larger community. In turn, staff felt this helped provide support for the program. For **partnerships**, staff shared the importance of identifying common goals

Common Strengths of FDP

Mutual Benefit
Ensuring that programming and personnel not only support participants, but also address the needs and support the broader community, as well as aligning with partners' goals.
"Both parties are getting something out of the relationship."

Individualization/Flexibility
Enhancing effective program design and staff and participant engagement by building in individualized focus; capitalizing on strengths, interests, and needs; and allowing for mid-course correction when necessary.
"I think it's arrogant for me to decide what change is important for that person."

Relationship Building
Creating strong and lasting relationships with community partners and organizations and participants, through effective communication and trust building.
"Communication...building these strong relationships so we're thriving, they're thriving."

Mentoring/Support Systems
Encouraging participant and staff engagement and retention through ongoing mentoring, coaching, and establishment of a wide network of support systems.
"Working with the families is what is successful. Staying in constant contact with them, working through obstacles...it's important to be caring."

and demonstrating the collective value of meeting these goals, especially to combat competing priorities or any sense of competition with partner organizations. For **family recruitment and engagement**, staff at some agencies identified that being part of a collective and actively participating in the community could be engaging for participants; in addition, by achieving goals, participants could then pass on their success to others in the community. This theme also includes using word-of-mouth (current or former participants recruiting others to participate based on their own successes) as a successful recruitment technique.

Individualization/Flexibility

This strength was identified across providers in the areas of program design, personnel, and family engagement. For **program design**, staff commonly indicated feeling that it was vital to recognize the individual needs of participants when setting goals and reviewing benchmarks, as well as what participants may find most important to them in their journeys. For **program personnel** (including paid staff and volunteers), program staff commonly identified the need to ensure that job responsibilities and expectations were the right fit to capitalize on their strengths and interests. For **family recruitment and engagement**, agency staff identified the individualization of goals and benchmarks and flexibility of programming as a benefit in keeping families engaged and retaining participants.

Relationship Building

This strength was identified particularly in the areas of partnerships and family recruitment and engagement. For **partnerships**, staff identified the value of strong communication, trust, and mutual respect to create lasting relationships with other organizations. For **family recruitment and engagement**, staff felt that working closely with participants to build personal relationships helped participants feel more valued and was more likely to result in participant retention.

Mentoring/Support Systems

This strength appeared in the areas of program personnel and family recruitment and engagement. For **program personnel**, staff noted that having hands-on training and mentoring support for paid and volunteer staff could help address burnout and turnover, as well as increasing expertise. For **family recruitment and engagement**, staff identified the importance of coaching in helping participants keep on track to meet their goals, as well as the value of building broad systems of support for participants on their path to success and self-sufficiency.

Six programs highlighted as exemplars by the Urban Institute's US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty (2020) implemented a wide variety of interventions but shared four characteristics:

Providing participants with tangible short-term financial and material relief to reduce stress and generate momentum on the path to economic success.

Boosting acceptance and reducing stigma through a heavy emphasis on building family-like relationships among participants and staff.

Building human capital through high-quality education, educational supports, and/or career training.

Tailoring services and supports to personal goals by allowing participants to define and pursue the outcomes of greatest importance to them.

Challenges

All common challenges were noted by at least two of four organizations. Two of the identified challenge areas were presented in two broad areas, while two were present in only one broad area each.

Capacity/Time Commitment

This challenge was identified by staff in the areas of partnerships and program personnel. For **partnerships**, staff commented that partners often have their own priorities and staffing issues that limit them from being able to engage as much as they might like. For **program personnel**, understaffing was identified as an issue, requiring existing staff to take on many responsibilities and clients. In addition to creating challenges with maintaining internal responsibilities, this sometimes led to lack of ability to engage in continuous outreach and building and maintaining partnerships.

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

This challenge was identified in the areas of program personnel and family recruitment and engagement. For **program personnel**, staff noted high expectations to engage deeply with participants may lead to burnout. For **family recruitment and engagement**, staff recognized that the expectations that they place on participants to make changes to their worlds sometimes could create barriers to bringing in new participants and retaining existing participants.

Perceived Competition

This challenge was identified specifically in the area of **partnerships**, recognizing that many organizations provide similar services; have obligations to similar funders; and may feel in (likely not actual, but perceived) competition for participants.

Communicating Outcomes

This challenge was identified in the area of **program design** and related to the fact that family development programs entail in-depth, long-term support. This creates challenges in communicating outcomes to funders and others, who may be looking for quantity of participants served versus the depth and quality of services.

Common Challenges of FDP

Capacity/Time Commitment
Recognizing and navigating the reality that programs are often understaffed and that partners also may have competing priorities for their time.
"Communication can be difficult when you are extremely busy; finding time to communicate with partners is critical."

Meeting Expectations/Burnout
Addressing potential retention issues related to participants needing to meet program expectations, as well as staff burnout around job expectations.
"…I've never known anyone that we've asked to change as much as we're asking our [participants] to change their worlds."
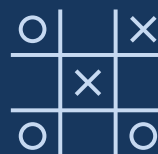
Perceived Competition
Working with partners to help realize the value of working collaboratively toward goals and that services, even when overlapping, do not need to be in competition.
"Sometimes our services overlap, and there can be fear that we'll take each other's clients."

Communicating Outcomes
Demonstrating program outcomes to a wide variety of audiences (including funders), especially from a quality over quantity standpoint.
"First and foremost, the success of a program like this…doesn't fit into the regular scenarios of how we judge success."

In addition to these four challenges, the U.S. Partnership on Economic Mobility notes that Comprehensive Personal or Family Mobility Pathways initiatives, as a group, share three challenges:

> *"The comprehensive programs are often extremely expensive. In particular, the costs associated with recruiting, training, and paying long-term coaches with manageable caseloads can be daunting. That may nonetheless make strong economic sense, even for governments, when the programs demonstrably reduce costs later, which is a particularly strong possibility for programs that reduce crime and imprisonment. More commonly, though, the diffuse benefits are hard to capture in offsets elsewhere in the system.[vi]*

> *Scale also poses a serious question. Often, as in the case of housing assistance or addiction counseling, slots are severely limited. A great coach might get her or his clients to the head of the queue, but that may crowd out others.[vii]*

> *Finally, and quite importantly, the strong focus on individuals does little to change the large institutions, networks, and neighborhoods that ultimately play such a critical role in limiting mobility and concentrating poverty.[viii] Although these approaches may recognize such factors as structural racial and economic inequities as the tide against which low-income families often must swim, their primary programmatic focus is on helping low-income people to navigate and cut through the deep waters of poverty on their own personal journeys[ix]*

> *Nevertheless, programs…argue that they are also working to change institutions like the criminal justice system through their frequent interactions with courts and police departments, and they often form critical learning relationships with both judges and police officers."[x]*

Staff from each of the evaluated FDP also reported program-specific successes and/or challenges that resulted from their individual structures, regions, organizational history, and/or other factors, detailed in the following profiles. Because interviews were semi-structured and inductive in nature, the absence of a strength or challenge in a program profile does not necessarily indicate its absence from the program; rather, it indicates it did not arise in the course of open-ended data collection.

Human Services, Inc. (HSI)
Coaching for Success
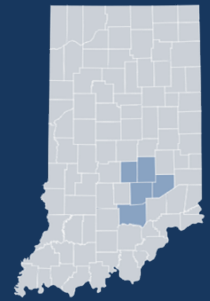
HSI serves Bartholomew, Decatur, Jackson, Johnson, and Shelby counties in Southeast-Central Indiana.

Coaching for Success "meets clients where they are now" to move them towards self-sufficiency. There is no set minimum or maximum time of participation, as long as the client continues to work towards goals and meets with HSI coaches on a regular basis. HSI staff conduct a two- to three-hour vetting and intake meeting, which includes clients visualizing where they want to be in five years, which sets the basis for client goals. Clients typically meet with coaches for an hour a week with meeting frequency varying from multiple times a week to once a month.

The primary goals of *Coaching for Success* are:

- Provide resources to clients to achieve goals
- Increase client self-sufficiency
- Teach skills so clients can overcome and eliminate barriers to sustainable self-sufficiency
- Educating individuals about generational poverty

In addition to successes and challenges that are shared with other CAA, HSI identified one **unique success** associated with partnership, **structure and stability.** HSI noted that their partnerships are more formally structured (including usually having MOUs), and include regular connections through scheduled meetings and workgroups. Staff noted, "we do a lot of workgroups… The leadership of [partner] agencies come together every Thursday and we talk about a lot of work in [those meetings]." Added the staff member, "if we're strong and structured, they're strong and structured."

Staffing
1 Department Director
Coaches, covering multiple programs including CFS

Minimum Duration
None

Intake
2- to 3-hour vetting meeting

Tools Used
Bridge

Meeting/Coaching Frequency
Typically weekly, 1-hour but can vary

Completion "Trigger"
Participant-determined based on goal achievement

Recruitment Strategies
Word of mouth
Internal & external referrals
Local advertisements and social media

Differentiating Success
Formally structured and well-functioning partnerships, including regular connections through scheduled meetings and workgroups

Shared Successes
- Mutual Benefit
- Individualization/Flexibility
- Relationship-Building
- Mentoring/Support Systems

Shared Challenges
- Capacity/Time Commitment
- Meeting Expectations/Burnout
- Perceived Competition
- Communicating Outcomes

Variations on Shared Successes | *Coaching for Success*

Mutual Benefit

Partnerships | Identifying the value of understanding the importance of working together to achieve common goals

"We had to come to the realization that we needed to play nice in the sandbox. …You don't have to fight over participants, and you don't even need to fight over funding."

Relationship-Building

Partnerships | Creating shared success with partners through strong communication and collaboration

"Communication, absolutely…building these strong relationships so we're thriving, they're thriving. If you don't have communication, it all falls away."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Creating meaningful relationships to support participants' efforts to meet their goals

"If they're building that connection and have that genuine relationship [with their coach], they're more apt to stay connected."

Individualization/Flexibility

Program Design | Ensuring flexibility in requirements, goal setting, and pacing based on participants' needs

"We talk about meeting people where they're at, so if we're going to talk the talk, we have to walk the walk. We need to make sure we're going at their own pace. We never ever want to walk too fast, or go too fast…"

Program Personnel | Playing to the strengths of staff members to support staff retention and success

"I want to find the best fit, because we want to focus on their strengths, because then they will be more successful…and participants will be more successful… Focus on those strengths and letting them do what they love."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Using built-in program flexibility to keep families engaged

"The flexibility that we offer is appealing…. It's not, you've missed one appointment, I'm sorry. It's life happens, and we know that."

Mentoring/Support Systems

Program Design | Building in multiple systems of support for participants through a "team" approach

"Having that team behind people has allowed them to say, OK…this team has my back. I feel [participants can be more successful] when [they] have that connection, and they have multiple resources to help them."

Program Personnel | Helping staff feel valued through hands-on training and mentoring

"[We play] that leadership role and [say], we are vested in you, and that's why we are taking this time."

Variations on Shared Challenges | *Coaching for Success*

Capacity/Time Commitment

Program Personnel | Time and job requirement demands (which may be exacerbated by recruitment challenges and the pandemic)

"It's very exhausting…and you feel like you're taking advantage of the good employees that you have, because they are working harder, because the need doesn't change, and it's increased this year – and so you're stretched so much thinner."

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

Program Personnel | Difficulty recruiting staff due to job expectations vying with the need for work/life balance

"There's a…thought process out there of 'what's in it for me', and you've got to be family friendly and time off friendly, [all while still meeting the demands of the job]."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Issues with family recruitment due to high expectations of the program

"This program is a hard sell. In the beginning it was, households who want to move themselves forward will [want to] do the work, but [we're not always] seeing this."

Perceived Competition

Partnerships | Finding ways to work collaboratively with partners despite a perceived sense of competition for clients

"There [needs to be] a trust factor and a mutual respect factor. That has been building over the last few years. Years ago, it was don't touch my participant because they are mine."

Communicating Outcomes

Program Design | Working toward transformational change while meeting the outcomes expectations of funders

"The challenge to [the fact that families can be with us for a long time] is funders want to see success, the outcomes [more quickly]… In theory, it makes sense to me for this to be a multiyear process, because poverty takes years and years to be in, so logically it takes years to lift yourself out."

Interlocal Community Action Program (ICAP)
Family Development Program

The Family Development Program at ICAP is a minimum of 90 days for clients with monthly coaching meetings. At intake, clients sign a Family Development Partnership Agreement that outlines the commitments and expectations of both the participants and the FDP staff. Specifically, it asks participants to check that they will be focused (meet monthly at minimum and participate for 90 days to 18 months; be reliable), understand they will be exited from the program if they miss two consecutive appointments without notice, will inform staff of material changes to their information (e.g., income, employment, contact information), and be motivated (engage meaningfully and work hard to achieve their goals). The staff member commits to being open-minded, using a strengths-based and individualized approach, problem solve and be a resource, and coordinate with any other agencies with which the participant is already working. ICAP utilizes the Family Development Matrix and Action Plans with clients, and coaches have the option to fill in a variety of other self-sufficiency and goal-making tools. The FDP Coordinator conducts a preliminary interview, an assessment interview that concludes with a participant agreement, and an action plan meeting to determine client fit and onboard clients to the program.

The FDP's main goals are:

- Increase client self-sufficiency
- Decrease generational poverty

In addition to the common successes and challenges identified above, ICAP staff also identified one **unique success** associated with program personnel – **job security**. ICAP utilizes EAP (Energy Assistance Program) outreach specialists as part of their staffing model, and staff noted that the model "allows for the outreach specialists to have work to focus on in the 'off season' of EAP, decreasing the chances that they will be laid off in summer months."

Staffing
1 FDP Coordinator
1 Director of Community/Client Services
4 EAP Outreach Specialists (small FDP caseload)

Minimum Duration
90 days

Intake
2 interviews
Action plan meeting

Tools Used
Family Development Matrix
Action Plans

Meeting/Coaching Frequency
Monthly

Completion "Trigger"
90-day participation & either:
Achieve two goals OR
Improve matrix score by at least 4pts

Recruitment Strategies
Outreach events
Partner referrals

Differentiating Success
Job security for EAP outreach specialists who take on FDP clients during EAP "off season"

Shared Successes

Mutual Benefit

Individualization/Flexibility

Relationship-Building

Mentoring/Support Systems

Shared Challenges

Capacity/Time Commitment

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

Perceived Competition

Communicating Outcomes

Variations on Shared Successes | *ICAP FDP*

Mutual Benefit

Program Design | Maximizing the impact of the program by demonstrating its value to the community
"Using the community together, joining everybody together and making sure they're aware of the benefits that we have as an agency, then those families can bring in other people as well."

Partnerships | Maintaining and engaging partners by creating reciprocity for both the organization and partner agencies
"Both parties are getting something out of the relationship…"

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Using word-of-mouth to recruit additional participants
"By opening the door to a family or an individual, they've been able to open doors to others"

Relationship-Building

Partnerships | Relying on communication and trust to ensure strong and ongoing partnerships
"I feel that outreach and communication are keys to a successful partnership… communication, honesty, [and] trust."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Creating strong connections between staff and participants to establish caring relationships
"It really comes back to rapport… You have to connect, or people won't come back, won't buy in to this process. Who wants to work with someone who doesn't care about you or your kids?"

Individualization/Flexibility

Program Design | Ensuring programming is aligned to individual participants' aims
"[My level of engagement] just depends on the family and what their goals [are]. I work with them to set the goals."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Encouraging meaningful engagement through individualized planning and support
"When we get to the part about engaging in a meaningful way, I really emphasize that. I think it makes [participants] more comfortable. I say I'll be open-minded, I'll use a strengths-based approach, we'll develop an individualized plan."

Mentoring/Support Systems

Program Design | Utilizing internal agency program offerings to connect participants with multiple services
"For the agency…it works well that we have so many different programs within the agency, so [we're] using every part of our agency and [our] programs with the clients, and that's beneficial."

Program Personnel | Supporting staff and building knowledge through hands-on training and shadowing opportunities
"Staff are provided hands-on training… Trainees are able to shadow the Family Development coordinator."

Variations on Shared Challenges | *ICAP FDP*

Capacity/Time Commitment

Partnerships | Maintaining ongoing relationships with partners while meeting internal time and job demands
"Communication can be difficult when you are extremely busy; finding time to communicate with partners is critical."

Program Personnel | Managing job expectations due to the staffing structure of the model
"One of the barriers that continually presents itself is not having staff obligated to providing family development, and only family development, services. Sharing staff who are cross-trained can create a structure that is hard to balance."

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Finding and retaining families that are committed to change and thus more likely to be successful
"Somebody shows up for the first or second meeting…and they don't come back…or if they're referred by a service provider, sometimes they're not doing it because they're motivated to change; they're doing it because someone else is telling them to change."

Perceived Competition

Partnerships | Addressing service overlap and ways in which perceptions of competition may impede partnership opportunities
"Sometimes our services overlap, and there can be a fear that we'll take each other's clients, but [in reality] there aren't enough spots, so it's important that we collaborate… [But] I could see where a lot of people wouldn't embrace that partnership if there's competition, in a way."

Communicating Outcomes

Program Design | Building shared understanding of the value and importance of collecting and maintaining data
"Culturally here, we've had to make a shift to understanding that data is important; it's how you get your grants. [In the past], culturally, a lot of people who had been here for many years were doing the right things but didn't understand why they had to go and document it in a certain way."

Thriving Connections (TC) is the Family Development Program at SCCAP, which staff describe as a community rather than a program. All TC clients are "Captains" of their "Ship," which is their support system and a metaphor for their journey to self-sufficiency. Captains commit to participating for 18 months, which consists of a 20- to 24-week training, weekly TC meetings, and monthly "Ship" meetings. All Captains are assigned 2-3 "Allies," volunteers from the community who join a Captain's Ship to support progress towards goals. During weekly TC meetings, Captains, Allies, staff, and Captains' children have dinner, and then youth have separate programming while Captains and Allies meet separately. Like Captains, Allies commit to 18 months to ensure Captains have a reliable and consistent support system. Captains also give back to the community through formal and informal volunteering efforts. Staff conduct an initial informal discussion with potential Captains to determine if they can commit to TC, followed by a formal 2-hour interview and commitment form. Captains have 6-month check-in meetings with a TC coach throughout the 18-months. The primary goals of TC are:

- Moving Captains out of generational poverty and into stability and self-sufficiency
- Creating and improving Captain support systems
- Supporting kids
- Achieving goals in education, personal growth, and sustainable employment

In addition to the common successes and challenges identified above, SCCAP staff also identified one **unique success** associated with partnerships – **participant voice**. SCCAP's program model expects participants to actively engage with the community, to address stereotypes but also to lend their voices and give back. Staff noted that this has been beneficial in engaging and maintaining partnerships. "Having the people that are experiencing a service or support be the people that are talking about it and giving input into changes…that's something [partners] have really been captured by."

SCCAP also identified two **unique challenges**. The first challenge was **student turnover** and was related to leveraging college students as volunteers (which they found to be successful, but not without its challenges, because the students were, by design, engaged for only a short time). As one volunteer shared, "[you get] consistent turnover. You work on building relationships for the kids and by the end of 1 semester, 2 if we're lucky, we have a whole new set of students." The other unique challenge was related: **managing relationships**, associated with the Captain/Ally (participant/volunteer) dynamic. As

Staffing
1 TC Coordinator
3 TC Coaches
Allies
AmeriCorps Members

Minimum Duration
18 months, 20-24 week training included

Intake
Informal discussion then 2+ hour formal interview and commitment form

Tools Used
Star charts
Modified family development matrix

Meeting/Coaching Frequency
Weekly TC Community meetings
Monthly "Ship" meetings
Check-in with TC Coach every 6months

Completion "Trigger"
18-month participation; can continue in program after

Recruitment Strategies
Partner referrals
Existing SCCAP families
Word of mouth
Presentations and outreach events

Differentiating Success
Participant-driven meeting content and participant voice in all aspects of the program, including recruiting participants and partners

ISCCAP staff shared, "Because it's not based on a program with rules, and it's about creating friendships, it's messier… [There are] different interpretations of what friends are, and what a community is [between allies and captains]. Trying to blend that is challenging."

Shared Successes

Mutual Benefit

Individualization/Flexibility

Relationship-Building

Mentoring/Support Systems

Shared Challenges

Capacity/Time Commitment

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

Communicating Outcomes

Variations on Shared Successes | *Thriving Connections*

Mutual Benefit

Program Design | Engaging heavily with the community to ensure programming meets broader community needs
"We actively participate in the big community meetings; we spend that time engaging and trying to figure out what [is needed]…in the community."
Partnerships | Building reciprocity into partnerships
"We never just ask for stuff. We always offer…even if just our expertise, or come to a meeting, have dinner with us… Reciprocity is a strong part of our model."
Family Recruitment and Engagement | Creating meaningful opportunities for participants through participation in the community
"[Participants] are expected to participate in reciprocity… We do it because it's transformational to get out of your own head and help other people."

Individualization/Flexibility

Program Design | Supporting transformational change through individual choices and goal setting
"What makes [the program] transformative is years and years of setting and meeting [individualized] goals."
Program Personnel | As a program that relies heavily on volunteers, individualizing volunteer expectations to their interests and strengths
"We try to offer a…variety of volunteering… It's never, I've got this need, I want you to meet it. I'll have an ask, but it has to fit with what their heart wants to do."
Family Recruitment and Engagement | Keeping participants engaged by being comfortable with allowing them to define their own success
"When you say you are empowering people to make choices, you have to be comfortable with what those choices are."

Relationship-Building

Partnerships | Building on long-standing connections and staff and volunteer experience to maintain strong partnerships
"I've worked in [this city] for 20 years; [so has other staff]…bringing together our connections and leveraging the allies, they'll [also] give us a lead to somebody."
Family Recruitment and Engagement | Establishing connections for participants through open and respectful conversation and collaboration
"Being involved in a group of positive people, where people don't judge each other, and people listen to what's said."

Mentoring/Support Systems

Program Design | Building social support systems for participants
"[It's about] creating a social support system that they haven't had before; that's what's different about [our program]."
Program Personnel | Onboarding new staff through shadowing and collaborative opportunities
"The new coach [will] do a lot of shadowing…and then [we will] sit down and talk about how to divide [the work]."

Variations on Shared Challenges | *Thriving Connections*

Capacity/Time Commitment

Partnerships | Navigating capacity challenges both internally and externally

"I think when agencies have internal changes, and then they don't have the capacity to do what they were doing before, that affects us. And sometimes internally, we don't have the capacity to…be involved in as many things as we [would like] because of what's going on internally."

Program Personnel | Dealing with relatively small staff numbers, particularly to work with both participants and large numbers of volunteers built into the program model

"Up until now it's been two paid staff, which sounds pretty good when you only have 10-15 families, but when you're managing 250 volunteers that spend about 3,000 hours trying to really do deep dives, it's not possible."

Communicating Outcomes

Program Design | Identifying methods for demonstrating and communicating success while recognizing the long-term nature of the work

"It's all over the place, it's a long-term commitment…so measuring it is tricky… We measure things like educational goals or other goals that everyone sets, but overall I think it's just a more holistic approach to how someone changes their lives."

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

Program Personnel | Addressing potential burnout associated with the high levels of social-emotional connections built into program design

"The coach position…is a very hard position because all of the boundaries are different than in regular social service work. We have to build a personal hazmat suit and not let that get in the way of, this is my community, but this is my job, but these other things outside the boundary are not my job."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Balancing the value of participating in a community with the need to make changes and work toward goals

"[Some participants] value the sense of community, but they won't do what they say they're going to do, so we let them know they have to transition out."

TRI-CAP

FDP elements embedded in multiple programs

TRI-CAP does not currently have a formal Family Development Program but is determining how an FDP could be successful, given past challenges and the fact that many existing programs offer FDP-related services to clients. For example, Head Start has a parent coaching component and TRI-CAP operates Health Families Indiana, which is a three-year program for new and expecting parents that includes parent education and coaching. Previously, those seeking emergency fund grants had to enroll in the FDP, but once the client received the funds, they would stop participating in the program.

Based on interviews with TRI-CAP staff, it was evident that TRI-CAP is different from other providers in that it provides FDP-type services through a combination of multiple programs, including Healthy Families and Head Start, but is not a "program." One of the unique challenges associated with this design was related to **data collection**; because each program has its own database and often different goals and targets for participants, it is not currently possible to report on FDP activities in any comprehensive way. A second challenge identified was establishing **meaningful connections** (beyond just counts of MOUs) in the area of partnerships. As staff shared, "…probably 60% of our partners don't truly understand what TRI-CAP does… I know some of our referral MOUs…we've never received a referral from the partner." Finally, in the area of program personnel, a challenge was **coordination.** Unlike other providers, TRI-CAP historically has not had one or more staff member(s) dedicated to connecting participants across services. "Right now, the way we're structured, when someone comes in who needs energy assistance, the staff member who is working with [them] doesn't have a need to build a relationship with the client. Whereas, a resource navigator, a coach [would] need to build a relationship with the family."

Staffing
Staff varies by program

Minimum Duration
Healthy Families is 3 years

Intake
Healthy Families has specific scoring requirements based on the Family Development Matrix

Tools Used
Family development matrix

Meeting/Coaching Frequency
Healthy Families meets weekly

Completion "Trigger"
Varies by program

Recruitment Strategies
Word of mouth
Outreach events

Differentiating Challenge
No dedicated FDP staff or comprehensive FDP

Shared Successes

- Mutual Benefit
- Individualization/Flexibility
- Mentoring/Support Systems

Shared Challenges

- Capacity/Time Commitment
- Meeting Expectations/Burnout
- Perceived Competition
- Communicating Outcomes

Variations on Shared Successes | *TRI-CAP Elements of FDP*

Mutual Benefit

Program Design | Impacting the broader community by serving families who then share their successes

"If the family knows where to go for resources, they can help other families. If we educate one person, they can educate more people."

Partnerships | Connecting agencies by discussing common areas of concern for the community and available services

"We have what we call a Social Concerns group; [it] meets monthly and during that meeting, anybody from the community can come in and talk about what they do. It's been beneficial."

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Using word-of-mouth to recruit

"People are mostly hearing about us [via] word-of-mouth. Your friend comes to a family planning, finds out how great it is, they tell their friends, and so forth."

Individualization/Flexibility

Program Design | Setting participants up for success by allowing them to set their own, meaningful goals

"It's up to the family to set the goals. We used to set goals [based on] what we thought they should work on, and we noticed they would never really accomplish those goals, because what's important to them isn't the same."

Mentoring/Support Systems

Program Design | Meeting participant needs through wraparound services

"There is a common theme [across programs], wraparound services or connections to programs is the common theme."

Variations on Shared Challenges | *TRI-CAP Elements of FDP*

Capacity/Time Commitment

Partnerships | Limited capacity to interact with partners

"I would love to see everyone go out and have a meeting with a partner to get the MOUs signed. I don't know how…to make that happen…we're so busy, but what good is it to have that MOU if the partner doesn't understand what we do."

Program Personnel | Helping staff recognize the value of ongoing professional development, even when balancing job responsibilities

"Everyone is busy [and] comes up with an excuse why they can't [attend] a training… I need everyone to understand that it falls on all of our shoulders."

Meeting Expectations/Burnout

Family Recruitment and Engagement | Continuing to keep families engaged in programs

"Getting people to come consistently and keep their commitments [is an ongoing challenge]."

Perceived Competition

Partnerships | Addressing service overlaps and promoting collaboration over competition or duplication of effort

"The overlapping work…we get a lot of grant funding [in this county] and people just want to start all these things instead of finding out what's already going on."

Communicating Outcomes

Program Design | Identifying FDP-specific outcomes when services are embedded in other programs with their own outcomes

"Head Start has their own database, Health Families has their own…every program has their own data, it's just stopped with that program and it's not helping the agency as a whole."

2
PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

"Compelling arguments exist for many different formulations of mobility. But a natural starting point is to look for programs that significantly improve critical outcomes...."

- Creating Mobility from Poverty: An Overview of Strategies

Definitions of Success

"Scholars fight mightily over definitions and measurement of poverty and mobility,"[xi] including the merits of measuring relative mobility—a change in a family's "rank" in society—versus absolute mobility—a change in a family's economic wellbeing relative to their own previous circumstances. A secondary debate exists over which outcomes, specifically, are most important. Income is almost universally used, because it is embedded in poverty line calculations, is comparatively easy to measure, and is a logical component of economic mobility. In addition, comprehensive mobility pathways programs frequently examine other outcomes that contribute to or affect a sense of mobility, including "increased safety, better health, newly reliable housing, bankable assets, increased dignity, greater political power, a greater feeling of societal acceptance or inclusion, new pride in one's work, and value to society…" [xii]

As part of its work, the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty developed an expansive definition of mobility composed of economic success, individual power and autonomy, and belonging.[xiii] Within this definition are five key objectives:

1. **Increasing self-sufficiency** *for participants* by eliminating barriers, providing access to resources, creating strong relationships, and improving skills
2. **Changing participants' mindsets** to allow them to better proactively address and overcome challenges
3. **Meeting basic needs**, including access to food, housing, transportation, and other needs.
4. **Addressing poverty** by helping participants meet individualized goals related to education and employment
5. **Building life skills**, including financial literacy, strong family relationships, and addressing substance use disorder

CAA in Indiana described program goals and objectives in similar terms to those put forth by the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty:

Improvement in Status of Basic Needs

All three agencies tracked changes in client's basic needs (e.g., food, childcare, housing, transportation) but not by the specific need itself, as the data systems and processes at each agency does not allow for that type of reporting in a way that is not overly burdensome to staff. Instead, staff ensure goals can help move the individual and their family to self-sufficiency, and then track goal achievement. Agencies primarily get this data through self-reporting. ICAP tracks specifically the progress in the family development matrix; however, this data is also not separated by category.

Shifts in Mindsets

Each agency seeks to change clients' mindset of how barriers can be overcome, as one staff member explained getting clients to "less of a crisis mindset and more of an eliminating of barriers mindset," and two agencies work to change the mindset of the public around individuals in poverty. These changes are not currently measured by any of the agencies but are goals of the programs, overall.

Achievement of Self-Sufficiency

Client progress towards economic self-sufficiency is tracked by all three agencies and is the one basic need/goal that is measured separate from general goal achievement. Two agencies track reliance on public assistance based on client reports, with one specifically tracking 90 days with no public assistance. HSI tracks an increase in income/reduction of poverty based on the poverty guidelines.

Measurable Achievements of Examined Programs

Just as there is no national standard or set of universally applicable metrics to assess FDP and other comprehensive mobility pathways programs, CAA in Indiana develop program-specific definitions of outputs and outcomes.

The three CAA with FDP-specific outputs and outcomes provided a total of 28 participant and programmatic metrics they use to monitor progress and achievements, which generally fell into six categories defined for this evaluation:

- Participant - Participation
- Participant - Goal Achievement
- Participant - Economic Circumstances
- Participant - Mobility Factors
- Programmatic - Operations
- Programmatic – Participation

Definitions of these outputs and outcomes vary by CAA, including what is tracked, over what time period, and for whom. For example, under *Participant – Participation*, ICAP examines the number of individuals or families who participate after 90 days, and participation becomes official when an individual returns after the intake meeting for a second meeting. SCCAP also tracks participation, used to measure *development of social capital*, but in terms of a participant's (Captain's) achievement of weekly attendance goals, monthly attendance goals, and involvement in the local community.

FDP Metrics Definitions by CAA

	HSI	ICAP	SCCAP
Programmatic Participation	▪ Households served ▪ Individuals served	▪ Households served ▪ Individuals served	▪ Households served ▪ Individuals served
Programmatic Operations	*N/A*	▪ Minimum number active households participating	▪ Increase in public awareness/participation ▪ Increase in volunteer hours
Participant Participation	*N/A*	▪ Participation for at least 90 days	▪ Weekly meeting attendance goals ▪ Meet monthly with Allies ▪ Involvement in greater Bloomington community at least 2x per year
Participant Goal Achievement	▪ Achievement of an individual/family goal ▪ Improvement in matrix score	▪ Achievement of 2+ goals or improvement in matrix score of 4+ points	▪ Achievement of an average of 4 individual/family goals, annually
Participant Economic Circumstances	▪ Increase in income/ reduction in poverty ▪ Improvement in economic circumstances	▪ Achievement of 90 days with no public assistance	▪ Improvement in education, training, employment and/or economic circumstances ▪ Reduction in reliance on public assistance
Participant Mobility Factors	▪ Elimination of a barrier ▪ Increase in employability and life skills	*N/A*	▪ Increased social supports ▪ Increased stability in at least 1: Food, Physical health, Financial, Shelter, Transportation, Work, Childcare, Integrity and Trust, Emotional, Spiritual/ Cultural

Programmatic Participation

All three agencies track the number of households and individuals served by the FDP. Individuals served by HSI and ICAP count the number of adults receiving services, while SCCAP counts the number of adults and children participating in programming. All agencies track participation by calendar year.

Households and Individuals served						
	HSI		ICAP		SCCAP	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Households	19	17	45	19	13	28
Individuals	21	18	67	32	33	82

ICAP and SCCAP track individuals and households based on those who complete the application and interview process, with ICAP counting those who return after the initial interview and SCCAP counting those who are enrolled in the captain training process. HSI and ICAP had a decrease in the number of households and individuals served from 2019 to 2020, while SCCAP had an increase.

Programmatic Operations

SCCAP collects the most robust number of operational outputs and outcomes, which focus on the increase in public awareness and participation. With TC relying heavily on community support and volunteers, it makes sense that there are more indicators tracked by TC. SCCAP tracks volunteer hours for Captains, Allies, and volunteers, as well as new volunteers, outreach events, press, and new ongoing partnerships.

SCCAP Volunteers		
	2019	2020
Number of new volunteers (Allies, service learners, volunteers)	19	88
Captain volunteering hours	145.25	115
Volunteer and Ally volunteering hours	2,944.25	2,304.75

SCCAP Outreach and Press		
	2019	2020
Number of articles and press releases shared	3	4
Number of informational meetings and outreach events	9	4
Number of new partnerships	1	1

ICAP tracks the number of monthly active cases and provided the highest recorded monthly number during each year. ICAP aims to have 50 active cases every month, which is based on a full caseload for all EAP outreach specialists and the FDP Coordinator. In 2019, the highest number of active cases in a month was 32, compared to 25 in 2020.

Participant Participation

ICAP and SCCAP track the extent to which participants continue in the program for the expected amount of time and SCCAP tracks participants going to the monthly TC meetings, Ship meetings, and volunteer events. ICAP tracks those who participate for at least 90 days, while SCCAP tracks participation for at least 6 months and those that complete the full 18-month commitment. Due to the length of the program, data for the completion of TC is only available for the cohort that was matched

with Allies in fall 2018 and reached 18 months in spring 2020. Participation at both agencies had a decrease from 2019 to 2020. **SCCAP** tracks ongoing participation and attendance by 6-month periods.

Participation Milestones			
		2019	**2020**
ICAP	90-day participation	87%	84%
SCCAP	6-month participation	100%	77% - first half of year 66% - second half of year
	18-month commitment completed	N/A	100%

Attendance at weekly meetings increased from 2019 to 2020 for **SCCAP**, while volunteer event attendance declined. Monthly Ship meeting attendance decreased slightly at the end of 2019 and then returned to normal, which is near the target of 66% attendance.

SCCAP Detailed Participation Data				
	1st half 2019	**2nd half 2019**	**1st half 2020**	**2nd half 2020**
Weekly meeting attendance	55%	52%	86%	93%
Monthly Ship meeting attendance	67%	50%	67%	63%
Volunteer event attendance	100%		80%	

Participant Achievement

Each agency tracks participant achievement of goals and/or increase in family development matrix scores. **ICAP** does not distinguish between those who achieve two or more goals and those who improve their matrix score by four or more points, as either signifies success in the program. **HSI** tracks matrix score improvement, achievement of an individual or family goal, and elimination of a barrier. **SCCAP** tracks the percent of Captains who achieve at least 4 goals each year and those who increased stability in several basic need and social-emotional wellbeing categories.[1]

Goal Achievement and Progress Towards Self-Sufficiency			
		2019	**2020**
HSI	Improvement in matrix score (current participants)	75%	70%
	Elimination of a barrier	100%	100%
	Achievement of an individual/family goal	100%	100%
ICAP	Achievement of 2+ goals or 4+ point improvement in matrix score	56%	68%
SCCAP	Annual achievement of 4 goals	100%	90%
	Increased Stability in any listed area (see footnote)	N/A	94%

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[1] Food, Physical health, Financial, Shelter, Transportation, Work, Childcare, Integrity and Trust, Emotional, Spiritual/ Cultural. Data was provided only for the two most recent sets of the Family Development Matrix due to the time commitment analyze additional time periods.

ICAP and SCCAP exceeded the target percentages for participant achievement, while HSI participants met the goals for elimination of barriers and achievement of a goal and were slightly below the goal of 80% of participants having an improvement in the matrix score. However, all participants who completed the program in each year had an improvement in their matrix score.

Participant Economic Circumstances

All three agencies track participant progress towards economic self-sufficiency. SCCAP racks a reduction on public assistance and improvement in education, training, employment and/or economic circumstances. ICAP measures participants achieving 90 days without public assistance. HSI focuses on income/poverty reduction and an improvement of economic circumstances. Data is self-reported and is tracked every six months to a year.

Improvement in Economic Circumstances

		2019		2020	
HSI	Increase in income/reduction in poverty (current participants)	65%		60%	
	Improvement in economic circumstances (current participants)	80%		75%	
ICAP	Achievement of 90 days with no public assistance (any client that participated at least 90 days)	100%		62%	
SCCCAP	Improvement in education, training, employment, and/or economic circumstances (current adult participants)	31%	38%	70%	78%
	Reduction in reliance on public assistance (households)	38%		17%	

Overall, participants in the FDP were less likely to have an improvement in economic circumstances in 2020 compared to 2019, which is expected given the global pandemic. SCCAP participants, however, were more likely to have an improvement in education, training, employment, and/or economic circumstances in 2020 (78% in the second half of the year) compared to 2019 (38% in the second half of the year). Agencies did not reach the targets in 2020 for economic circumstances, but met or exceed those targets in 2019, which could be a more accurate measure of the economic impact of the programs. Similar to Participant Achievement metrics, 100% of HSI participants who completed the program achieved an improvement in matrix scores.

Participant Mobility Factors

HSI and SCCAP measure more intangible growth for participants. SCCAP measuring the development and increase of social support and social capital of participants, which aligns with the goal of creating a community with Thriving Connections. HSI measures the increase in employability and life skills of participants.

Improvement in Skills and Capital

		2019	2020
HSI	Increase in employability and life skills (current participants)[2]	70%	65%
SCCAP	Development of social capital & increased social supports	100%	100%

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[2] Participants achieve this outcome by completing any of the following goals: obtaining HSE/GED, obtaining secondary education, eliminating transportation barriers to employment, eliminating childcare barriers, increased resume building, increased interviewing skills, increased interpersonal skills, increased specified job skills training, or increased certifications related to specific job requirements

**HSI** targets 80% of participants increasing employability and life skills, which was not achieved in the previous two years for current participants, but as with the other metrics, 100% of program completers achieved an increase. All **SCCAP** Captains had increased social capital and social supports in the previous two years.

Family Perspective

In addition to assessing outputs and outcomes, the evaluators created a family survey for each agency to distribute to current and former Family Development clients as a means of gathering client perspective on program impact. Three of the agencies distributed the survey: ICAP, SCCAP, and HSI. A total of 22 current and former clients responded to the surveys.

Overall, clients reported that they were able to achieve goals during and after the program, that the goals made a significant difference in their life and for their families, and that the program helped them achieve those goals. Clients had the strongest levels of agreement with the statements about goals making a significant difference, feeling support during the program, and being able to achieve even more goals after the program (72.2% strongly agree for each).

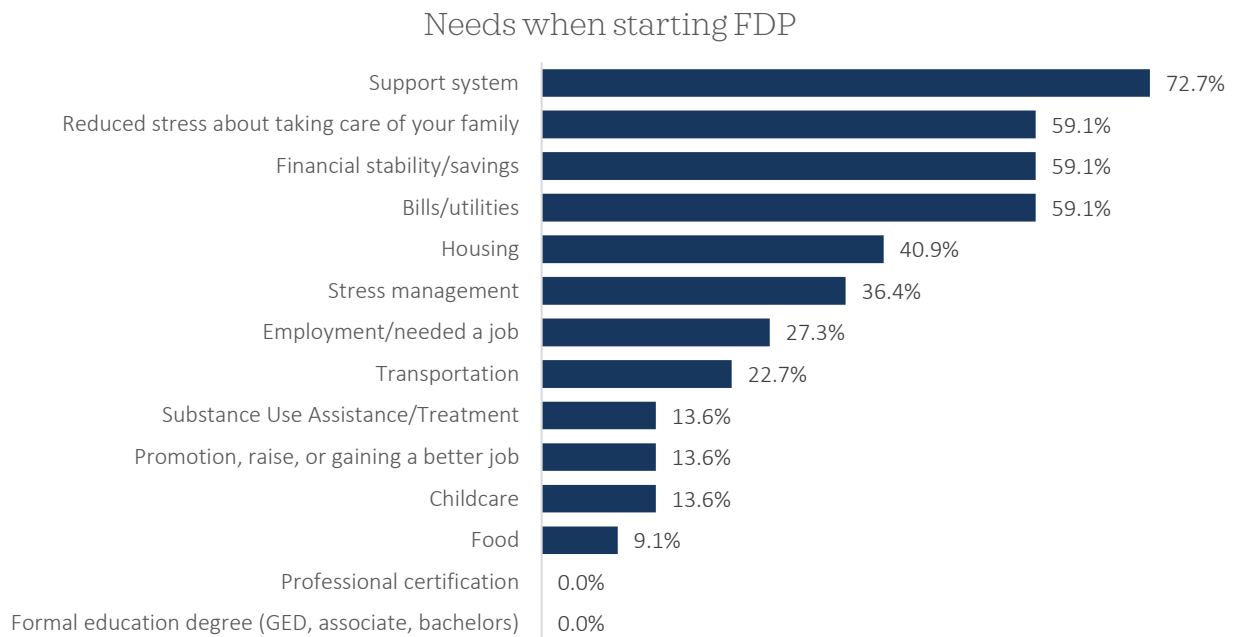**Levels of agreement with each statement**
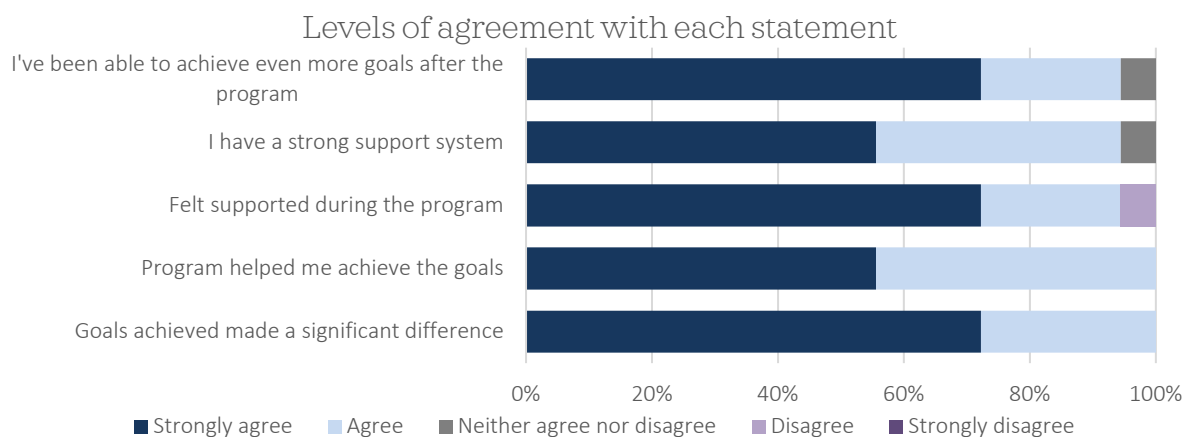
The top three reasons clients chose to join the FDP were to better support themselves and their families, to build a stronger support system, and to get connected to other resources and services, which align with the overarching objectives of FDP nationwide. Clients overall did not enroll in the FDP out of compliance with other service providers or court orders, as the 13.6% that reported complying with a provider as a reason for joining had at least one other reason for joining the program.

Reason for joining
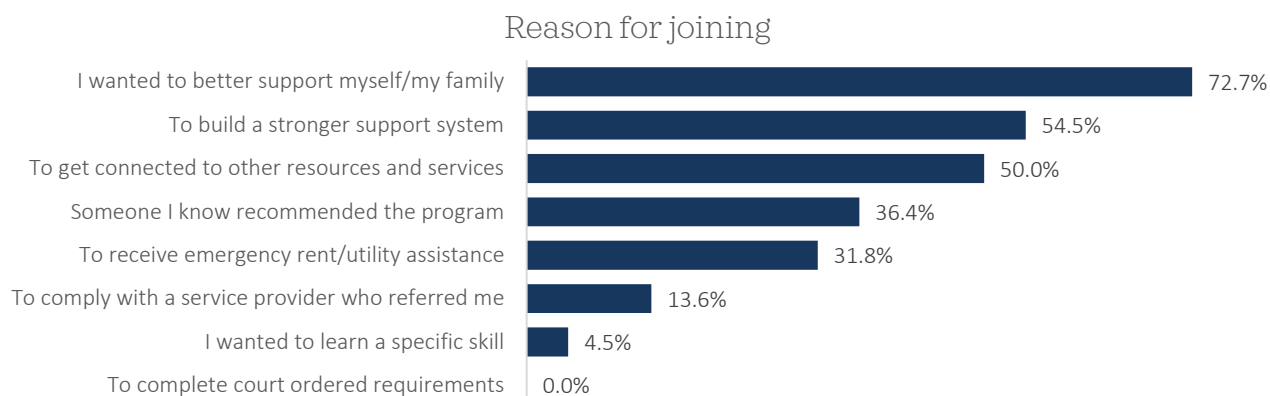
Family needs when starting the FDP varied as only four types of support were needed by more than half of clients. This aligns with research of similar programs showing that each client has their own unique set of needs, and a "one-size-fits-all" approach does not work. Nearly three-fourths of families needed a support system, or a stronger support system, when joining the FDP (72.7%). While families did report needs for financial stability & savings (59.1%), employment (27.3%), and a promotion, raise, or a better job (13.6%), no families reported a need for formal education or a professional certification.

Needs when starting FDP

Category	Percent
Support system	72.7%
Reduced stress about taking care of your family	59.1%
Financial stability/savings	59.1%
Bills/utilities	59.1%
Housing	40.9%
Stress management	36.4%
Employment/needed a job	27.3%
Transportation	22.7%
Substance Use Assistance/Treatment	13.6%
Promotion, raise, or gaining a better job	13.6%
Childcare	13.6%
Food	9.1%
Professional certification	0.0%
Formal education degree (GED, associate, bachelors)	0.0%

Clients were also asked what areas of support were no longer needed after completing the program or since enrolling in the program. Due to an error in survey development, clients could only choose one option rather than selecting multiple items for which they no longer needed support. The top three areas where families no longer needed services or supports align with the top three areas of need at the start of the program. Clients explained, when asked about what they and their family achieved during the program, that they "gained complete financial independence" while others noted that the program allowed them to "better my life and [get my] happiness back." Many clients listed a number of achievements, including:

> *"Transportation, a job, then a better job, a home, a better home, and financial stability."*
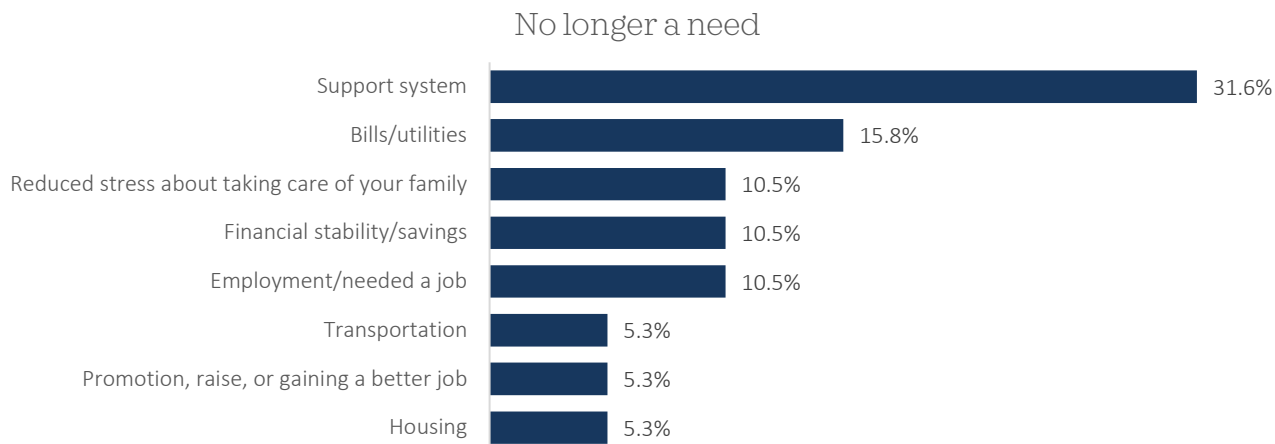>
> *"Better jobs, a secure savings account, learned how to manage money better and budget, bought a house."*
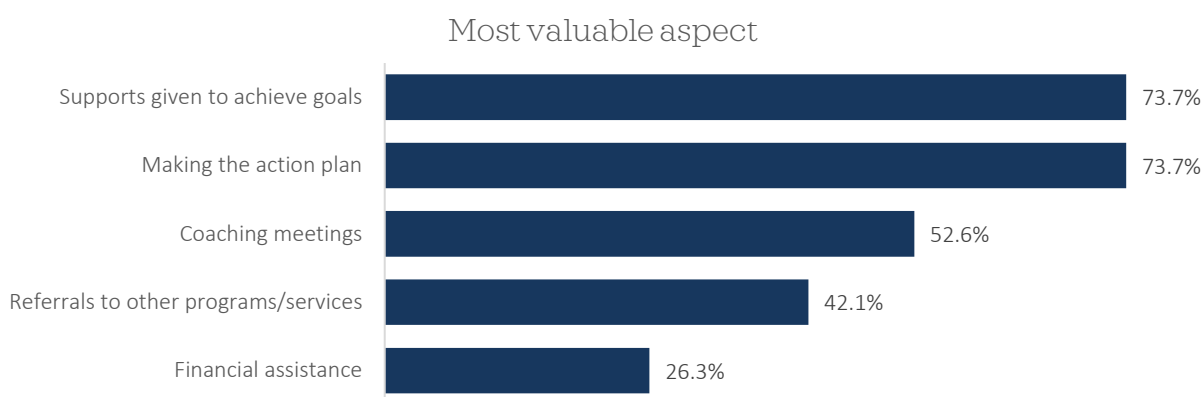>
> *"Financial stability and communication".*
>
> *"My husband got a better paying job and our family got a better vehicle."*

No longer a need

Category	Percentage
Support system	31.6%
Bills/utilities	15.8%
Reduced stress about taking care of your family	10.5%
Financial stability/savings	10.5%
Employment/needed a job	10.5%
Transportation	5.3%
Promotion, raise, or gaining a better job	5.3%
Housing	5.3%

The two aspects of the FDP that clients reported were the most valuable were making an action plan and the supports given by the agency to achieve those goals. While nearly one-third of respondents reported that they joined the program for emergency rent or utility assistance (31.8%), only one-fourth of clients reported it was the most valuable part of the program (26.3%).

Most valuable aspect

Category	Percentage
Supports given to achieve goals	73.7%
Making the action plan	73.7%
Coaching meetings	52.6%
Referrals to other programs/services	42.1%
Financial assistance	26.3%

Overall, clients did not have suggestions for changes or improvements of the programs, noting that it worked for them. Additionally, all clients said they would recommend the program to friends or family members, with one noting that the person must be willing to put in the hard work to make changes. When asked what they would say to families and friends to convince them to join the program, some responses included:

> *"They helped me, they can help you too. You're not alone in your journey"*
>
> *"I would say choose yourself. If you have an issue with disciplining yourself or staying focused, this will definitely help you."*
>
> *"They will change your life for the good"*
>
> *"It's an amazing program. [It] will get you where you need to be in life"*

Cost Analysis

Two agencies, **ICAP** and **SCCAP** provided the FDP operating costs for Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020, which align with the years of outcome data provided. **HSI** provided the operating costs for Fiscal Year 2020 only. Utilizing this data, cost per participant and cost per select outcomes were calculated. **ICAP** spent less money on FDP during FY 2020, which aligns with staff reports about the impact of COVID-19 on capacity to serve clients. When comparing the costs for each program, it is important to note the differences in each agency's FDP. **ICAP's** FDP consists of a minimum of 90 day participation and monthly meetings with **ICAP** staff. **SCCAP's** FDP (Thriving Connections) is an 18-month program with weekly meetings with all TC Captains and weekly to monthly Ship meetings. **HSI's** FDP (Coaching for Success) does not have a set minimum participation and meetings are based on the needs of each individual served.

FDP Expenditures

	FY 2019	FY 2020
HSI	N/A	$ 74,600.70
ICAP	$ 77,498.83	$ 59,602.34
SCCAP	$ 162,899.94	$ 184,391.49

ICAP's and **HSI's** cost per individual served is most comparable to **SCCAP's** cost per household, as **SCCAP** includes any children served through TC as an individual served. This data indicates that **SCCAP** spends significantly more per individual or household served by FDP than **ICAP** and **HSI**. **SCCAP's** program is, by design, more time intensive than **ICAP's** program and fewer individuals are served by **SCCAP** overall to ensure that each individual can complete the 18-month commitment.

Cost per Participant

		FY 2019	FY 2020
HSI	Cost per individual served	N/A	$ 4,144.48 n=17
	Cost per household served		$ 4,388.28 n=18
ICAP	Cost per Individual Served	$ 1,156.70 n=67	$ 1,862.57 n=32
	Cost per Monthly Active Cases (month with most active cases)	$ 2,421.84 n=32	$ 2,384.09 n=25
SCCAP	Cost per Household	$ 12,530.76 n=13	$ 6,585.41 n=28
	Cost per Individual (includes youth)	$ 4,936.36 n=33	$ 2,248.68 n=82

ICAP's primary outcome is the percent of individuals that participate for at least 90 days and achieve two or more goals and/or improve the FDP matrix score by at least four points. **SCCAP** measures the achievement of four family/individual goals annually. **HSI** measures the improvement in participant matrix score.

Cost per Minimum Goal Completion		FY 2019	FY 2020
HSI	Cost per improvement in matrix score	N/A	$ 5,738.52 n=13
ICAP	Cost of 90 day participation & 2 goals or +4 matrix score	$ 3,099.95 n=25	$ 4,584.80 n=13
SCCAP	Cost per achieve 4 goals	$ 12,530.76 n=13	$ 7,375.66 n=25

ICAP FDP participants are more likely to report 90 days without public assistance. **SCCAP** measures TC Captains with reduced public assistance. TC Captains are overall less likely to have a reduction in public assistance in a year, resulting in a larger gap between the cost per individual for reduced public assistance, compared to the cost per minimum goal completion. **HSI** measures the increase in participant income which is also considered a reduction in poverty.

Cost per Individuals with Reduced Public Assistance or Reduction in Poverty		FY 2019	FY 2020
HSI	Cost per individual with a reduction in poverty	N/A	$ 6,781.88 n=11
ICAP	Cost of 90 days with no public assistance	$ 3,099.95 n=25	$ 7,450.29 n=8
SCCAP	Cost per household w/ reduced pub assistance	$ 32,579.99 n=5	$ 36,878.30 n=5

Data from the three agencies suggest that the more intensive the FDP, the higher the costs, which aligns with national research. Additionally, the cost for substantial changes in self-sufficiency is significant.

3
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FDP share a unifying objective—movement out of poverty and to family self-sufficiency—but they vary in their design and duration.

The coach-based FDP included in this evaluation are implementing many of the recommended approaches from experts such as those who participated in the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty; one of the group's specific recommendations, for example, is to support coach-navigator interventions, especially those based on brain science, that used goals-based tools and processes to help families work toward outcomes across multiple domains of economic and social mobility.[xiv]

All coaching-based programs described their models as individualized, resource- and time-intensive, and based on the ability to attract and retain skilled staff as well as families who are ready to commit to participation. Despite differences in structure, duration, location, and staffing, they share many of the same successes and challenges related to family and staff recruitment and retention and the development and maintenance of partnerships.

The elements-based FDP (TRI-CAP) is considering the possibility of bringing FDP components of other "building blocks" programs into a standalone FDP. Based on the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty framework, this would be the next step in moving families beyond the individual fundamentals that lead toward mobility and into a comprehensive program with the objective of reaching family self-sufficiency. However, comprehensive mobility pathways programs can be expensive to operate and difficult to scale; CAA leaders must determine the right balance of high-touch coach engagement, which could lead to more profound transformation for a family, versus program capacity, when resources are limited and there is a perception that some funders want to see breadth of impact over depth.

Recommendations

As CAA consider starting, modifying, and/or changing programs, and as IHCDA seeks to support the outcomes associated with FDP, the following recommendations emerged from the evaluation:

Recommendations for any CAA Starting or Implementing FDP

Program design, budgeting, and assessment

Anticipate high resource and time commitments to achieve results

Staff at all four agencies explained that FDP is time-intensive based on the number of meetings with families and the informal conversations that occur between meetings to help families meet their goals. Staff also noted that while the raw numbers in any given output or outcome might appear to be small, the amount of growth that is required to achieve many goals is significant and it is difficult to fully capture that effort. Costs associated with goal achievement are significant for shorter and longer-term programs. Agencies spent more than $3,000, and up to $12,531 per individual that achieved the minimum goal completion or matrix score improvement. Given that agencies would be limited in the number of individuals served in a year, due to the required time commitment needed to serve each individual, a high cost per individual and per outcome should be expected.

Track and measure progress tailored to family goals.

Because FDP are intentionally individualized, it can seem difficult to set program metrics that apply to all participants. The agencies included in the evaluation measure family progress on a goal-specific basis, documenting steps taken towards goals and overall change in specific self-sufficiency categories (e.g., transportation, housing, financial stability, social supports) but report outcomes based on general goal achievement or family development matrix scores. This allows an agency to

speak to the general types of goals families set while still reporting one or two key metrics. A long-term goal for any CAA implementing FDP would be to develop a system (e.g., spreadsheet or category in a larger database) to track the goals achieved in the key domains of self-sufficiency. Ideally, the agency could then report more definitively the types of needs families have at the onset and the percent of goals within each domain that are achieved. This would allow staff to have more comprehensive data for continuous improvement and for funders.

Consider how programs can build both economic and social mobility.

The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty recommends dual approach, with outcomes that include positive social support and social network; increases in personal efficacy; increases in peer-to-peer knowledge and resource sharing; positive changes in beliefs and expectations about life prospects.[xv] One analytical framework suggests social and economic wellbeing is only possible with high degrees of both institutional functionality and social ties that cut across social groups;[xvi] good programs with good staff are not enough. CAA can foster social capital development through cohort models, through the incorporation of volunteers from other social groups in FDP activities, and through individual goals around the development of social capital within a person's life.

Use Brain Science for program development and staff training.

Brain science has shown that living in poverty and the associated stress affect how brains develop, which impacts problem solving skills and approaches to achieving goals. This means that being in poverty "compromises the very brain-based skills and behaviors most necessary for people to stand a chance of lifting themselves out."[xvii] Staff should be trained on brain science and strategies that foster a growth in problem-solving skills and behaviors to ensure that clients are building the tools to move out of and stay out of poverty. These strategies and techniques can improve client outcomes and increase the likelihood of upward mobility.

Staffing

Provide ongoing professional and emotional-wellness support for staff; watch for burnout.

All four CAA, in addition to the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty, discussed the challenges, intensity, and specialization required for work in economic and social mobility programs. Some CAA, especially those in more rural areas, reported significant difficulty attracting and retaining staff who have the training, disposition, and skills necessary for FDP work—work which staff report can be as frustrating and disappointing as it is inspiring and motivating. Staff from all agencies reported that staff burnout is a persistent threat, since FDP require balancing relationship building with boundary setting in the midst of many uncontrollable environmental factors. In addition to staff development and training on topics such as trauma and case management, staff recommend CAA support coaches and other FDP staff through check-ins, reflection, and support of their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Although the model comes with significant coordination requirements, consider the benefits of the Thriving Connections "Ship" model that relies on networks of human capital beyond CAA staff.

TC, perhaps more than any other FDP evaluated, relies on the recruitment and involvement of a community network of volunteers, including university students and members of community and faith-based organizations. While staff have significant operational, programming, and facilitation roles, much of the coaching and navigation work is done with the Captain and their Allies on their

Ship—the fellow community members who support them in their journey toward self-sufficiency. As a result, the number of people involved in TC—staff, Captains, Allies, and other volunteers—appears to be much greater than for other program models. The benefits of such a design, as expressed by interviewed Allies, are that it engages more community members in the work of community building, and it diffuses that work across more people (in other words, it does not rely solely on the capacity and capabilities of CAA staff). A risk of this model, however, is that it relies on continued recruitment and engagement of volunteers *in addition* to participants, which may be a challenge in low-population counties, for CAA starting up such a program without robust volunteer networks, and/or in places where community culture is not primed for such a model.

Family recruitment and engagement

Anticipate the need to attract and recruit families and individuals.

Staff from all four agencies noted the difficulties and ongoing work required to recruit participating individuals and families. Programs require a certain level of readiness and time commitment, and staff noted that some families are simply not in a place in their lives to begin an FDP with the level of intensity and commitment that is required for sustainable movement out of poverty. In programs with rolling intake, staff cited the need to educate families about the differences (and, specifically, the expectations) of FDP compared with other CAA programs that offer short-term financial relief or other services. For cohort-based programs, timing can be difficult when new families express interest before there are enough families to start a new cohort. In those cases, staff maintain communication with families until a new cohort can begin, but FDP-related programming is not available in the interim.

Emphasize relationship-building and connectivity for all staff within the CAA, and for families within their communities.

Evaluated programs range in their levels of relationship- and community-building; however, staff from all three coaching-based programs emphasized the importance of getting to know families on a personal level. Some staff even reported attending life events, like baby showers and graduation parties, that were significant to current and former families. FDP staff also noted the importance of a relationship and customer service mindset for staff throughout the CAA, both to identify and refer families who may be ready to participate in FDP as well as to remove silos and connect families to internal and external resources. Finally, relationship- and community-building also takes the form of asking participants to give back to their communities, to strengthen social ties and participants' sense of self-worth and contribution to others.

Establish and implement a family agreement with clear and reasonable expectations for both CAA staff and participating individuals and families.

The ICAP FDP agreement, for example, asks participants to agree to be focused, reliable, and motivated, with six specific behaviors associated with those three things. The agreement includes checkboxes for the participant to specifically commit to those expectations. It also lists eight behaviors FDP staff commit to doing, listed in the box at the right.

Be flexible and adaptive with families while maintaining expectations and boundaries.

Staff across programs highlighted the importance—and occasional difficulty—of "meeting people where they are" and of adapting to participants' needs and changing life circumstances. At the same time, staff emphasized that relationship-based programs only work when there is mutual commitment and recommended enforcing healthy boundaries and the expectations set forth with families at the beginning of the program. Staff reported having to make difficult decisions to move participants out of the program when they were no longer able to fulfill participation requirements, but they did so only after multiple missed meetings and several attempts to reengage participants. Most agencies allow participants to return to the program even if they once had to exit the program.

Expect a wide variety of participation commitments, including attrition.

The three CAA with coaching models all discussed difficulties with participant retention, due to the intensive nature of the interventions and the life circumstances that frequently arise as individuals and families work toward their goals. Despite attempts to work with participants, staff in even the most high-functioning programs know that not all families will complete the program. One CAA changed their intake policies to consider someone a "participant" only after they completed the intake process and attended the next meeting; they expected they would lose some participants during, or shortly after, intake, once the program design and expectations were fully communicated. Some CAAs also build in shorter-term benchmarks and/or begin with attainable goals that provide early "wins" that can motivate continued participation.

Gather and celebrate stories of impact.

FDP staff recommended that IHCDA support storytelling, but story collection and communication can happen at the CAA level as well. Stories can accompany more representative data to communicate impact to funders, can buoy and motivate staff as they reflect on the results of often-difficult work, and can demonstrate possibilities to other individuals and families.

Partnerships

Assess agency capacity to address all 13 building blocks to help families move out of poverty.

Many of these building blocks may already be found within the CAA; even in that case, however, capacity challenges may warrant the building of additional partnerships within the community. The 13 building blocks include: family formation and stability, parenting skills, high-quality child care and early learning, elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, employment and

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Staff Commitments in the ICAP FDP Agreement

Participants agree to be focused, reliable, and motivated, with 6 specific behaviors associated with those three characteristics.

In the agreement, staff commit that they will:

- Be open-minded to the challenges participants face
- Use a strengths-based approach
- Meet at least once a month to work on goals
- Develop an individual driven plan and steps to reach the goal
- Problem solve to remove barriers to reaching goals
- Be a sources and support to the individual
- Discuss opportunities available through the community to help achieve the goal
- Coordinate pre-existing plans or goals with other agencies

Both the participant and the staff member sign and date the agreement to formalize the process.

training, wage and work supports, financial safety nets, asset formation and access to capital, health and mental health, criminal justice and safety, housing, and community building and social capital.[xviii]

Dedicate the time to participate in community workgroups to build reciprocal relationships, maintain referral resources, and build interconnected networks of support that can respond to individual and family needs.

Several CAA staff found that the maintenance and nurturing of community partner relationships is valuable to break down a sense of resource competition that can naturally arise in resource-constrained communities, to stay apprised of developments in complementary organizations, and to ensure referral and resource connections are available when a family needs them.

Recommendations for IHCDA

Help other CAA implement coach-based FDP, recognizing the work is naturally difficult, resource-intensive, individualized, and naturally long-term.

As one staff member said, "[I]t makes sense to me for this to be a multi-year process, because poverty takes years and years to be in, so logically it takes years to lift yourself out." IHCDA should consider multi-year funding for FDP that allow agencies to provide more intensive coaching services for a longer period. Staff retention could be improved with longer-term funding as agencies would be less reliant on outside funding sources or year-by-year staffing adjustments. Additionally, anticipated outcomes would be easier to track and report in a long-term grant period, as agencies would be able to show both the progress towards goals and the longer-term goal achievement. As IHCDA continues to examine and evaluate FDP across the state, providing supports for capacity-building and program development could allow the coach-based FDP model to be implemented state-wide.

Create additional FDP resources and supports; explore the potential for a workgroup or roundtables on practices and approaches as well as a state manual on CSBG funding and FDP interventions. If possible, reinstitute the certified and/or provide training dollars for new staff, especially family coaches.

The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty recommends case-management approaches enhanced by brain science, including training for coaches and case managers to use techniques that promote program engagement and "mitigate the challenges to self-regulation that poverty crates."[xix] Coaches would likely benefit from peer-to-peer and expert training on how to build relationships with clients and the value of relationship building to move families out of poverty.

Support CAA in gathering stories of impact and of lessons learned from the families participating in FDP around the state.

Roundtables, if implemented, or future evaluation studies could use a technique called Most Significant Change (MSC)[xx] to gather and assess stories of change from families and from field-level FDP staff. MSC is a bottom-up participatory monitoring and evaluation approach that provides qualitative data on the impact programs are having on individual participants, to illustrate a program's value, values, and potential. It encourages staff to focus on program impact, to capture successes as they occur, and to use these stories for learning and growth. Some programs are already celebrating family milestones; MSC would combine staff requests for professional development around impact-storytelling with the benefits of ongoing evaluation for learning.

"They helped me,
they can help you too.
You're not alone in your journey.

- FDP Participant

APPENDIX A
ACRONYMS

CAA   Community Action Agenc(y/ies)

FDP   Family Development Program(s)

HSI   Human Services, Inc.

ICAP   Interlocal Community Action Program

IHCDA   Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

MOU   Memorand(um/a) of Understanding

SCCAP   South-Central Community Action Program

TC   Thriving Connections

APPENDIX B
METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Methodology

The evaluation of Family Development Programs (FDP) in Indiana sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences in program design and implementation across four agencies?
2. What, if any, outcomes are being achieved by families participating in these programs?
3. What has been effective, and what has not been effective, in increasing family self-sufficiency through these programs?
4. To what extent have these Family development programs interacted or integrated with other agencies or programs of community partners?

IHCDA recruited four CAA to voluntarily participate in the evaluation. Staff agreed to participate in a series of in-depth interviews, connect evaluators to partners for partner interviews, consider assisting with the dissemination of a family survey (optional), and provide output, outcome and cost data as available.

Data collection sources and methods included:

1. **A series of in-depth interviews** with core FDP staff used a semi-structured process focused on various aspects of program design and implementation, as well as **one-time interviews** with other CAA staff and partners to provide additional perspective.

2. **Document review** of project files and records as useful and contributory to the evaluation.

3. An **online survey** of participants and families.

4. **Output, outcome, and cost data** provided by CAA staff for the previous two years, where available.

5. **National policies and practices review** to incorporate ideas, best practices, recommendations, or other relevant information that may strengthen the analysis and provoke thought for IHCDA and CAA implementing FDP.

Semi-structured interviews

Evaluators used predesigned interview protocols to conduct semi-structured interviews that explored design, strengths, challenges, modifications, and lessons learned, separated into the following topics: program goals, outputs, outcomes, and major activities; program personnel, including paid staff and volunteers; program partners and networks; and family recruitment, engagement, and retention. The evaluation team created interview questions designed to help answer overarching evaluation questions, which were used with each CAA during the same time period (e.g., program partner and networks-related interviews with all four agencies occurred within the same month). Interview questions were provided to participating CAA staff in advance of each interview, and CAA leadership identified the most appropriate staff to participate in each interview (although CAA were given the option to vary participation by topic, the same set of FDP-connected staff typically participated in each interview). Due to COVID-19, all interviews were conducted via videoconference.

In addition, following the conclusion of the third semi-structured interview, CAA provided the evaluation team with contact information for additional staff and/or partners for individual and small-group interviews related to partner perceptions of the strengths, challenges, and impacts of FDP. At least one interview for each CAA was conducted, and results were incorporated into the qualitative data set.

Near-verbatim transcripts were recorded from each interview in real-time by members of the evaluation team.

Document review

The evaluation team reviewed relevant documentation CAA staff provided on various topics, including intake forms, family partnership agreements, staffing structures, impact/annual reports, and other files and forms that staff and/or the evaluation team felt would contribute to the contextual understanding of program operations and/or could serve as sample practices other CAAs may consider adopting.

Online family/participant surveys

The evaluation team used a combination of grantee participant survey example and findings from semi-structured interviews regarding program goals and objectives to develop one family or participant survey for each CAA. Surveys were identical in concept but used custom language (e.g., different program names and terms) for the purpose of clarity and ease of interpretation on the part of program participants. The evaluation team reviewed the draft survey with each CAA and incorporated appropriate revisions to maximize relevance. Per the guidance of IHCDA, CAA staff were encouraged but not required to distribute the survey, if doing so would place an unnecessary burden on participants or conflicted with CAA policies and priorities. Three CAA opted to distribute the survey, and a total of 22 current and former clients provided responses. Survey results by CAA are provided in Appendix C.

Output, Outcome, and Cost Data

Based on the results of semi-structured interviews, the evaluation team crated a data collection tool designed to consider the variety of ways CAA measure results while attempting to categorize and group results into themes. The evaluation team held a data collection design meeting with each CAA to review a draft collection tool and process and made adjustments for ease and appropriateness based on CAA feedback. For one CAA, evaluators and staff determined collaboratively that it was not feasible to collect FDP-specific data, since no standalone FDP had been established. Staff from the other three CAA provided output and outcome titles, data definitions, and results data for the prior two years. Staff also provided total cost data and related participant figures to enable the calculation of per-participant costs.

National Practices and Policies Research

The evaluation team initially intended for the secondary research of published academic and grey literature to focus on best practices. The evaluation team deployed a progressive spidering process that used the citations contained within one source, to identify additional, potential sources, it was evident there have been an insufficient number of comprehensive evaluations of FDP to conduct a thorough literature review or thematic meta-analysis. Instead, available literature focused on the foundational concepts of poverty-mobility programs, to provide a framework for considering design and intent; on additional types of evaluation that may be beneficial to building the FDP knowledge base in Indiana; and on other FDP-adjacent topics that the evaluators determined may provide valuable information, insight, or third-party recommendations for IHCDA and CAA to consider.

Data Analysis and Reporting Methods

Qualitative data components collected through document review and interviews were analyzed using a general inductive approach, which is particularly useful in drawing clear links between research questions and objectives and data collection results. The evaluation team created a qualitative thematic analysis matrix from interview transcripts and data. The team reviewed sentiments, keywords, phrases, and quotes from each dataset to identify themes of design, strengths, challenges, and lessons and recommendations.

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, using crosstabs and disaggregation as necessary and useful.

To identify overall (collective) project performance, the evaluation team totaled numbers reported for each target output and outcome and each actual output and outcome. Results were defined and measured at the CAA level; because FDP vary substantially in design, and there is no standard set of outputs and outcomes against which CAA must measure results, the evaluation grouped outputs and outcomes by unit of analysis (e.g., participant, program) and did not attempt to impose a standard set of measures on CAAs as a group.

National literature was analyzed for its content and its applicability to the themes and findings uncovered through the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of Indiana FDP data.

Limitations

As with any evaluation relying heavily on qualitative data collection and analysis methods, this evaluation has several limitations that should be considered when reading and applying this report. Limitations are as follows:

Partial and biased findings

Qualitative and perceptual research and analysis methods are, by nature, partial and biased. To attempt to address this limitation, the evaluation triangulated data collected through multiple sources, including additional staff and partners, as well as through post-interview discussions within the evaluation team and with IHCDA staff. Where partners were interviewed along with grantees themselves, the evaluation team triangulated information collected from these partners against information collected from the grantees.

Selection bias

Selection bias is common in any form of design that does not involve random sampling or random assignment. Participation in the FDP evaluation was voluntary, and CAA recruitment was intended to capture examples of FDP and not necessarily a representative sample of FDP designs. To try to mitigate this, the evaluation team informed interview participants that their feedback would be confidential in the case of discussing challenges (while challenges may be associated with specific FDP, comments would not be associated with individual interview participants) or anonymized in the case of feedback about IHCDA and partners. Neutral, negative, and sometimes critical feedback from a wide variety of staff and partners supports the notion that interview subjects felt comfortable to share their experiences, both positive and negative.

Convenience sampling in the family survey

The family survey used convenience sampling, where a unique link was distributed to each CAA and the organizations could elect to participate. As such, survey results included in this report represent only the perspectives of those responding to the survey and may not be generalizable to all FDP participants.

Researcher interview bias

Although a semi-structured interview protocol was used for each interview, it is possible that an individual researcher's methods for asking initial or follow-up questions may have inadvertently introduced bias into responses. To attempt to mitigate this issue, the same protocol was used for all interviews. Three evaluation team members, in pairs, covered all interviews and shared notes in a common system. Where necessary, evaluation team members met to discuss any issues associated with carrying out the interview protocol and adjust interviewing techniques as needed. In addition, evaluation team members reviewed findings and interpretations collaboratively, as discussed in the next section on researcher extrapolation bias.

Researcher extrapolation bias

Analysis conducted within an interpretative analytical framework is threatened by the fact that researcher interpretation is personal and may go beyond what is present in and supported by actual data. As described in the Data Analysis and Reporting Methods section of this Appendix, indeed the evaluation team employed its own interpretations of data collected through multiple methods, including using FDP-specific findings coupled with findings and experiences of evaluations previously conducted by the team. To mitigate researcher extrapolation limitations, the evaluation team individually reviewed and analyzed raw data collected through interviews; identified themes were collaboratively discussed and refined as a team; and evaluators introduced and discussed any contradictory evidence for themes as it arose. However, recommendations and lessons learned that were identified through this evaluation may not be suitable for all CAA or all FDP.

APPENDIX C
FAMILY SURVEY RESULTS BY AGENCY

HSI *Coaching for Success*

Five current and three former Coaching for Success participants responded to the survey, with one current and one former participant only answering half of the questions. Most of the current participants have been in the program for 4-6 months, one having less time and one having more than a year in the program. Former participants ranged from exiting the program within the last six months to more than a year ago.

Primary reasons for enrolling:

- I wanted to better support myself/my family (n=6)
- To build a stronger support system (n=5)
- To get connected to other resources and services (n=3)
- To comply with a service provider who made a referral (n=3)
- To receive emergency rent/utility assistance (n=3)

Most reported needs when starting the program:

- Support system (n=8)
- Financial stability/savings (n=6)
- Housing (n=5)
- Reduced stress about taking care of family (n=5)
- Bills/utilities (n=5)

Most valuable part of FDP:

- Financial assistance (n=2)
- Referrals to other programs (n=2)
- Supports given to achieve goals (n=2)
- Making the action plan (n=2)

Respondents all reported a different need that they no longer had a result of the program: bills/utilities, financial stability/savings, housing, reduced stress, a support system, and promotion, raise, or getting a better job.

Participants had overall positive feedback on Coaching for Success
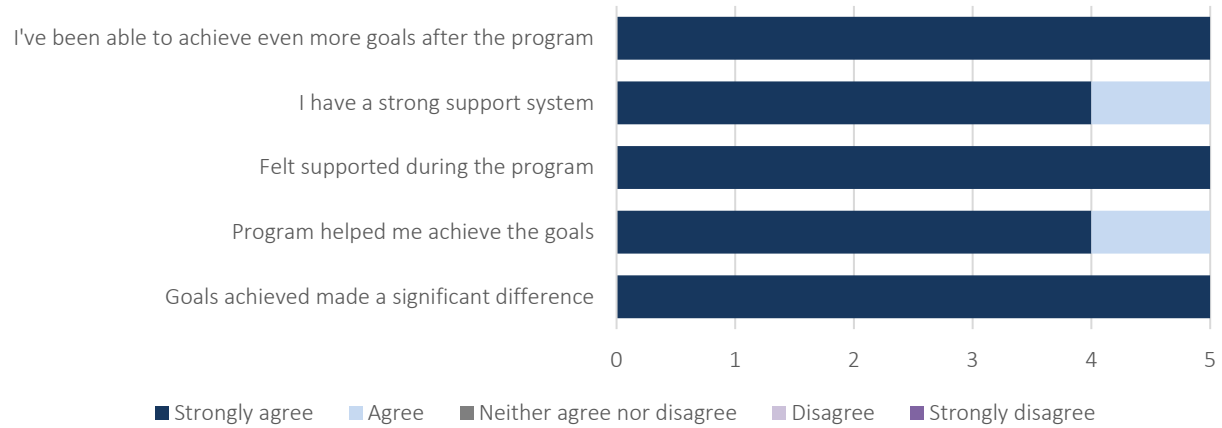
All six respondents would recommend the program to friends or family, stating that Coaching for Success "will get you were [sic] you need to be in life," and that "it will change your life for the better," and "it was the best decision I ever made. I wouldn't be anywhere close to where I am today without coaching." When asked about what was achieved during coaching for success, one participant responded "I gained complete financial independence. I now have a fulltime career and permanent housing. I learned how to set goals and take actionable steps to meet them that made them seem more attainable."

ICAP *Family Development Program*

Three current and two former ICAP FDP participants responded to the survey with one of the former participants exiting the survey after the third question. The current participants have been in the program for 1 – 18 months and the former participants exited six months to more than a year ago.

Primary reasons for enrolling:

- I wanted to better support myself/my family (n=4)
- To receive emergency rent/utility assistance (n=4)
- To get connected to other resources and services (n=3)

Most reported needs when starting the program:

- Bills/utilities (n=4)
- Housing (n=3)

Most valuable part of FDP:

- Financial assistance (n=2)
- Referrals to other programs (n=2)
- Supports given to achieve goals (n=2)
- Making the action plan (n=2)

Two individuals no longer need support with bills and utilities and another no longer needed support related to transportation.

Participants had overall positive feedback on ICAP's FDP
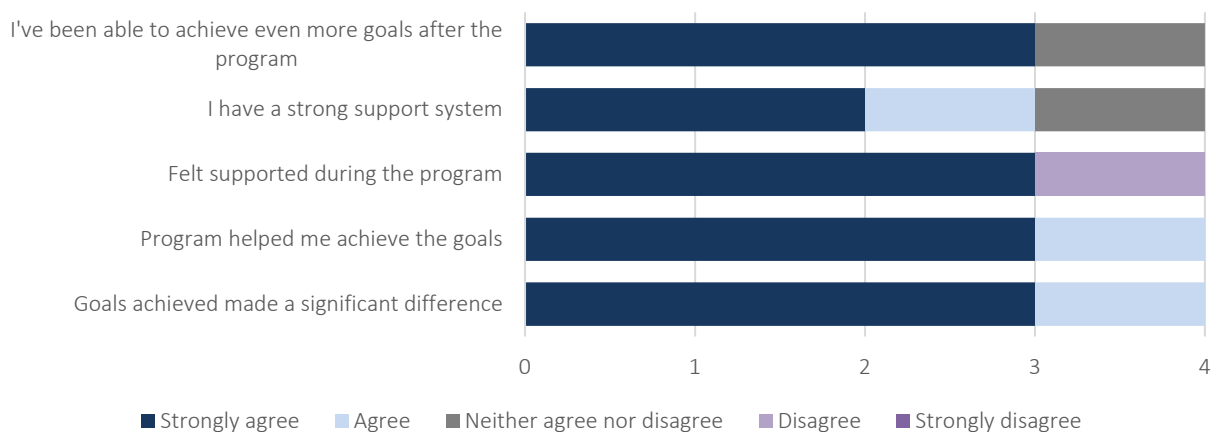
All four respondents said they would recommend the program to friends and family, explaining that it does help make a difference. One participant reported that "my husband got a better paying job and our family got a better vehicle" while another was able to get "transportation, a job, then a better job, a home, a better home, and financial stability" because of the FDP. One respondent noted that rent assistance payments take time to process through ICAP's system, so while their landlord knew assistance was coming, the client almost got evicted due to the delay and suggested that other clients continue to make some amount of payments until the funding clears through ICAP's system.

SCCAP *Thriving Connections*

Nine current Thriving Connections Captains responded to the survey and only two have been with the TC for less than 18 months (the minimum participation amount).

Reasons for enrolling:

- I wanted to better support myself/my family (n=6)
- To build a stronger support system (n=6)
- To get connected to other resources and services (n=5)
- Someone I know recommended the program (n=5)

Most reported needs when starting the program:

- Reduced stress about taking care of family (n=8)
- Support system (n=7)
- Financial stability/savings (n=6)
- Stress management (n=5)

Most valuable part of TC:

- Relationships with other Captains (n=9)
- Weekly meetings (n=7)
- Support from TC staff (n=7)
- Relationships with allies (n=7)
- Goal setting process (n=7)

Participants were most likely to report that they no longer needed to grow a support system after the program. Two participants reported that they no longer needed employment/a job.

Captains had overall positive feedback on TC

Legend: Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree
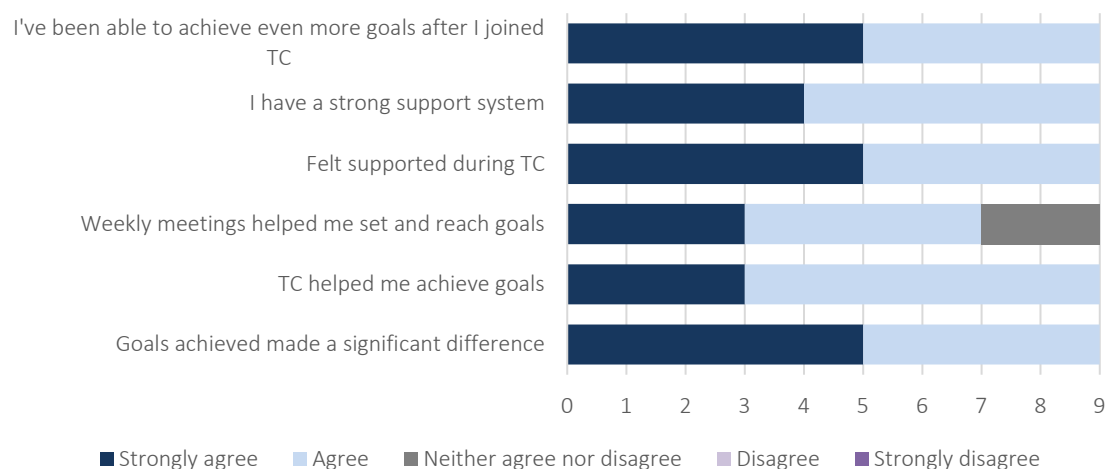
All respondents would recommend TC to friends and family, explaining that "TC is an awesome way to build a community that supports you on a journey to reach your goal" and "if you have an issue with disciplining yourself or staying focused, this will definitely help you. If you feel alone like you don't have

anyone around to really support your goals and dreams, definitely choose TC." Captains shared stories of setting goals "I had support, I aimed high, and now I am proud of myself for my accomplishments," and about how the community helped them to grow and helped make sure their children are better off than they were.

APPENDIX D
END NOTES AND SOURCES

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