



RECENT CHANGES IN TITLE IV-B PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENTS IN POST-PERMANENCY SERVICES

In January 2025, the Supporting America's Children and Families Act made changes to Title IV-B of the Social Security Act and reauthorized it through 2029. Title IV-B is a critical—and flexible—resource for funding state, territorial, and tribal nation child welfare programs, and many jurisdictions use Title IV-B to fund post-permanency programs.



Title IV-B has two subparts:

- **Subpart 1** — The Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services (CWS) program provides funds to jurisdictions for any child welfare service, including supporting adoptive and guardianship families.
- **Subpart 2** — The MaryLee Allen Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program is used to support services in the following four areas: family support, family preservation, family reunification, and adoption support and promotion. Generally, the Department of Health and Human Services has required jurisdictions to spend 20 percent of allocated funds in each of the four categories. The program also funds the Court Improvement Program, Regional Partnership Grants, and Monthly Caseworker Visit grants.

Title IV-B includes both mandatory and discretionary funding. Under the new law, discretionary funding remained at \$325 million for CWS and \$200 million for PSSF. Mandatory funding for PSSF was increased for the first time since 2005. States, territories, and tribal nations receive funding from Title IV-B based on a formula that looks at each site's child population and per capita income.

The Supporting America's Children and Families Act made a number of changes in the Title IV-B program that could affect post-permanency services:

- **Added \$75 million in mandatory funding per year for the PSSF program** — The law increased the mandatory PSSF budget from \$345 million to \$420 million, beginning with fiscal year 2026 (October 2025–September 2026). \$55 million of the increase is designated to the formula funding that is distributed to states, territories, and tribal nations. A portion of the increase is designated for the Court Improvement Program and Regional Partnership Grants (\$10 million each).

The \$55 million increase should lead to more funding being available for adoption support and promotion activities, which include post-permanency services.

- **Increased access to funding for tribes** — The law directs 3 percent of both subpart 1 and 2 funding for tribal services and doubles tribal court improvement funding (from \$1 million to \$2 million). The 3 percent designation should result in more than \$2 million in new funds being available to tribal nations. Some of these funds could be spent on post-permanency services.

The law also has reduced financial requirements, which enable more tribal nations to be eligible. In addition, the bill will reduce the reporting burden for tribal nations that receive less than \$50,000 in IV-B funding.

- **Expanded definitions of the four PSSF categories** — Funding in all four categories can now cover digital portals that connect families to services, family resource centers, peer-to-peer support or mentoring, and short-term crisis support. The services still

need to be directed to the families covered in the category definition, so adoption promotion and support funds in these areas would need to be used to serve adoptive families.

- **Designated funding for kinship navigator programs** — The new law requires HHS to use \$10 million of PSSF discretionary funding to support kinship navigator programs. HHS will award up to 30 grants per year through a competitive process open to state, territorial, and tribal nation child welfare agencies; nonprofit agencies; and higher education institutions. Kinship navigator programs can support relative and fictive kin caregivers across the child welfare spectrum, including guardians and others who have taken permanency of children from foster care.
- **Required consultation with lived experts** — For the first time, sites are required to consult with youth who experienced foster care, foster parents, adoptive parents, and kinship caregivers as they develop their Title IV-B plans. Sites will also have detail how they have incorporated the feedback of the lived experts they consulted. These lived experts could help guide how sites serve all types of families, including adoptive and guardianship families.

- **Mandated a study of post-permanency instability** — By January 2027, HHS must issue to the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees a report on children who reenter foster care after adoption or guardianship. The report is to include:
 - » The number and characteristics of disrupted and dissolved adoptions and guardianships by jurisdiction, including whether they received pre- or post-permanency services
 - » Summaries of each site's post-permanency programs, including funding sources and whether services are evidence based or informed

The law also included the following significant changes:

- **Clarified that kinship caregivers are eligible for services** — The law adds references to “kinship families” and “kinship caregivers” in the PSSF definitions of family support and family preservation under PSSF. Language also makes it clear that family reunification services may include services for children living with kin.
- **Expanded eligibility for services to young people up to age 26** — The bill also makes it clear that family support and family preservation services can be provided to any individual up to age 26.
- **Allowed funds to be provided to families in poverty to prevent unnecessary placement in foster care** — Jurisdictions will be able to provide funding to families to cover housing, utilities, food, transportation, and other basic needs. The bill also requires sites to describe their policies related to preventing foster care placements due to poverty.
- **Strengthened Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliance** — The bill includes a number of provisions that will ensure that states will abide by ICWA. It also creates an avenue for providing technical assistance related to effective implementation of ICWA.
- **Created a grant program to support relationships among incarcerated parents and their children** — HHS will have \$35 million per year to issue grants for programs that support and evaluate efforts to enhance relationships between children and incarcerated parents.
- **Created a grant program to develop the evidence base for prevention services** — HHS will have \$5 million per year to make grants for efforts that evaluate prevention services and kinship navigator programs so that they can be considered for inclusion in the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse.
- **Ensured families are aware of the availability of legal representation** — As part of their CWS plan, sites will be required to detail the steps they will take to ensure that children and parents are informed about the fact that they have access to independent legal representation in various proceedings, including those related to dependency, termination of parental rights, adoption, and guardianship.
- **Provided grants to address workforce issues** — The law provides \$26 million per year in grant funding to help jurisdictions recruit and retain caseworkers and reduce caseloads.

More detailed information on the Supporting American's Children and Families Act is available at www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48503 and www.everycrsreport.com/files/2025-01-06_IN12424_ba304bc1fb5a826b85b8adc75cbdeb04bb15b183.pdf.

Learn about the kinship provisions at www.gu.org/app/uploads/2025/02/Kinship-Provisions-of-the-Supporting-Americas-Children-and-Families-ActFINAL.pdf.

To delve further into this topic, check out the Post-Adoption Center Resource Library: www.postadoptioncenter.org/resource-library



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