



Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force Meeting

August 19, 2022



Welcome & Check-In

Child Welfare Improvement Task Force

Charge Statement

Purpose: Time-limited task force to provide legislative, policy, and practice recommendations to MDHHS on:

- Redesigning a front-end response to allegations of abuse and neglect that is free from bias and distinguishes between crisis and a need for family services and support.
- Reducing racial disparities in child welfare outcomes by:
 - Increased use of supported, safe kinship care
 - Improved access to community mental health services
 - Elimination of improper placements in residential settings





MDHHS Updates

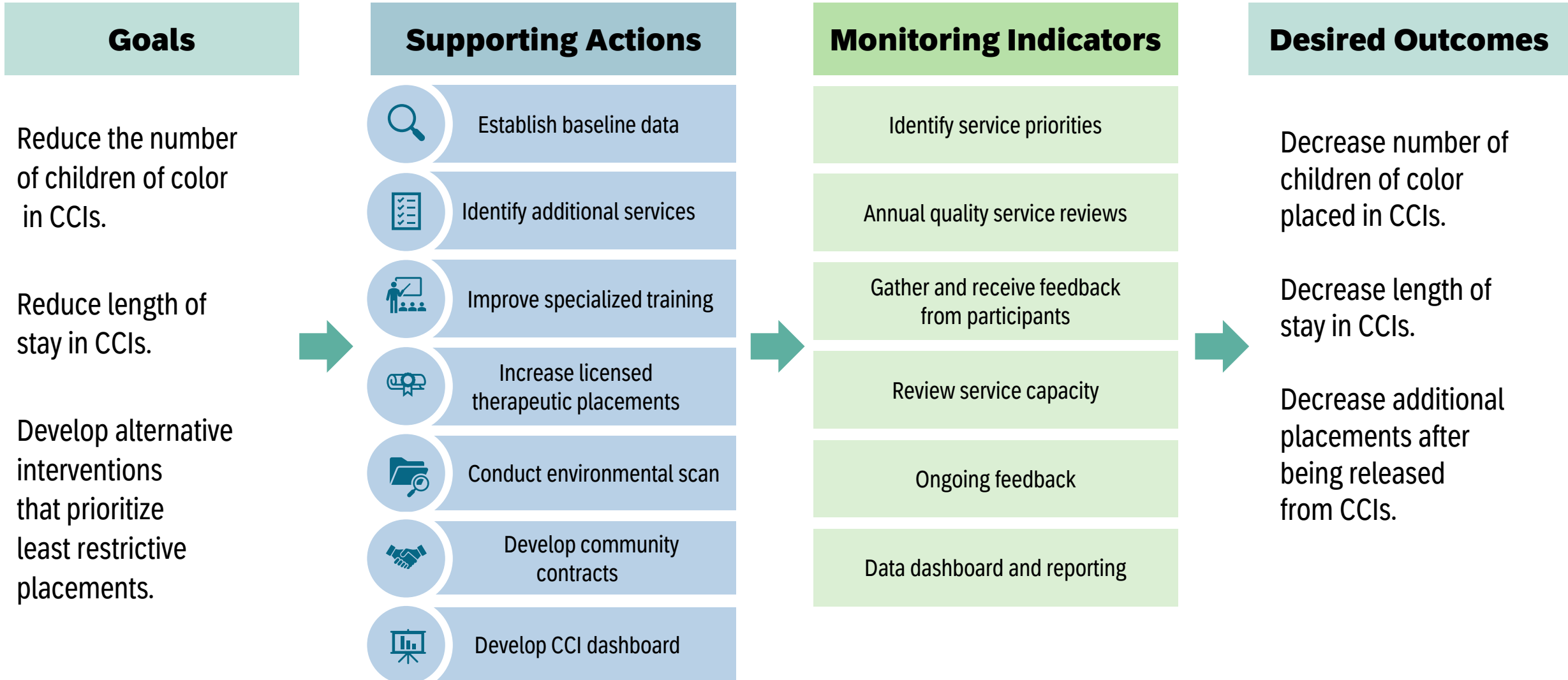
Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force Recommendations

Redesigning a front-end response to allegations of abuse and neglect that reduce bias and distinguish between crisis and a need for family services and support.

- ★ 1. Increase specialized services and supports for relative and fictive kin caregivers
- ★ 2. Implement appropriate services to reduce CCI placements and length of stay
- ★ 3. Secure funding to implement the recommendations
- 4. Implement New SDM Tools
- 5. Redefine Abuse and Neglect/Physical Neglect
- 6. Increase Access to Mental Health Services for Children and Families

DRAFT: CCI Action Plan

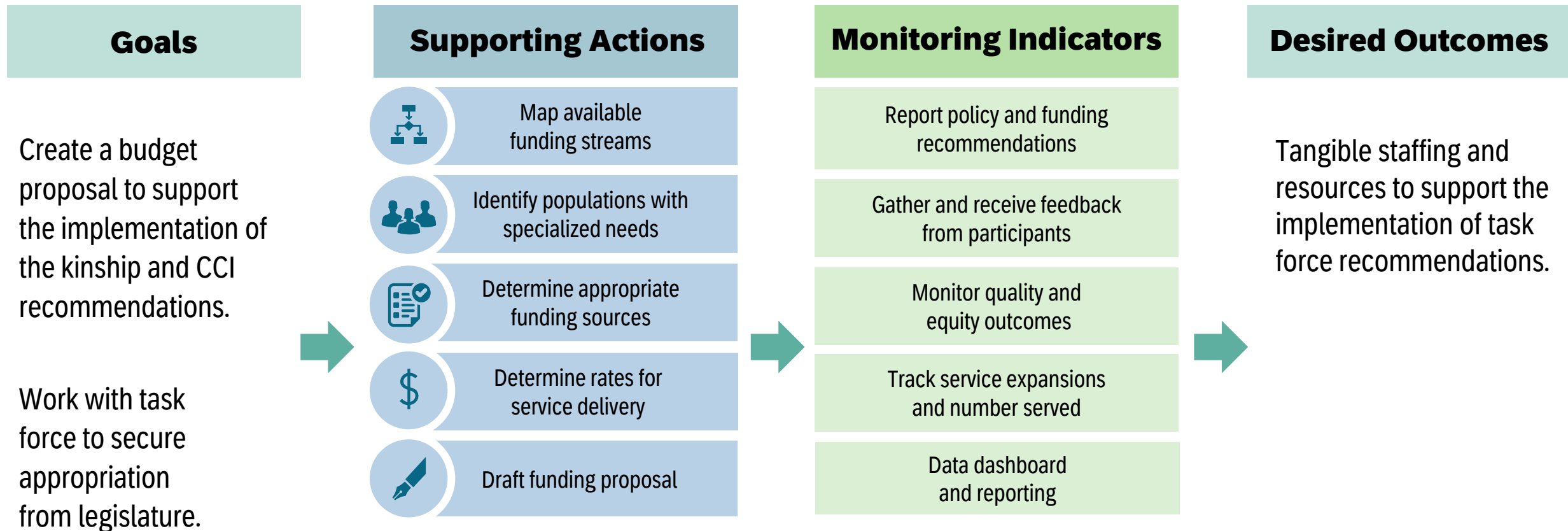
Problem Statement: Children of color are disproportionately placed in CCIs and have longer lengths of stay.
Recommendation: Implement appropriate services to reduce CCI placements and length of stay.



DRAFT: Funding Action Plan

Problem Statement: CSA's current budget does not provide adequate resources to advance these two recommendations.

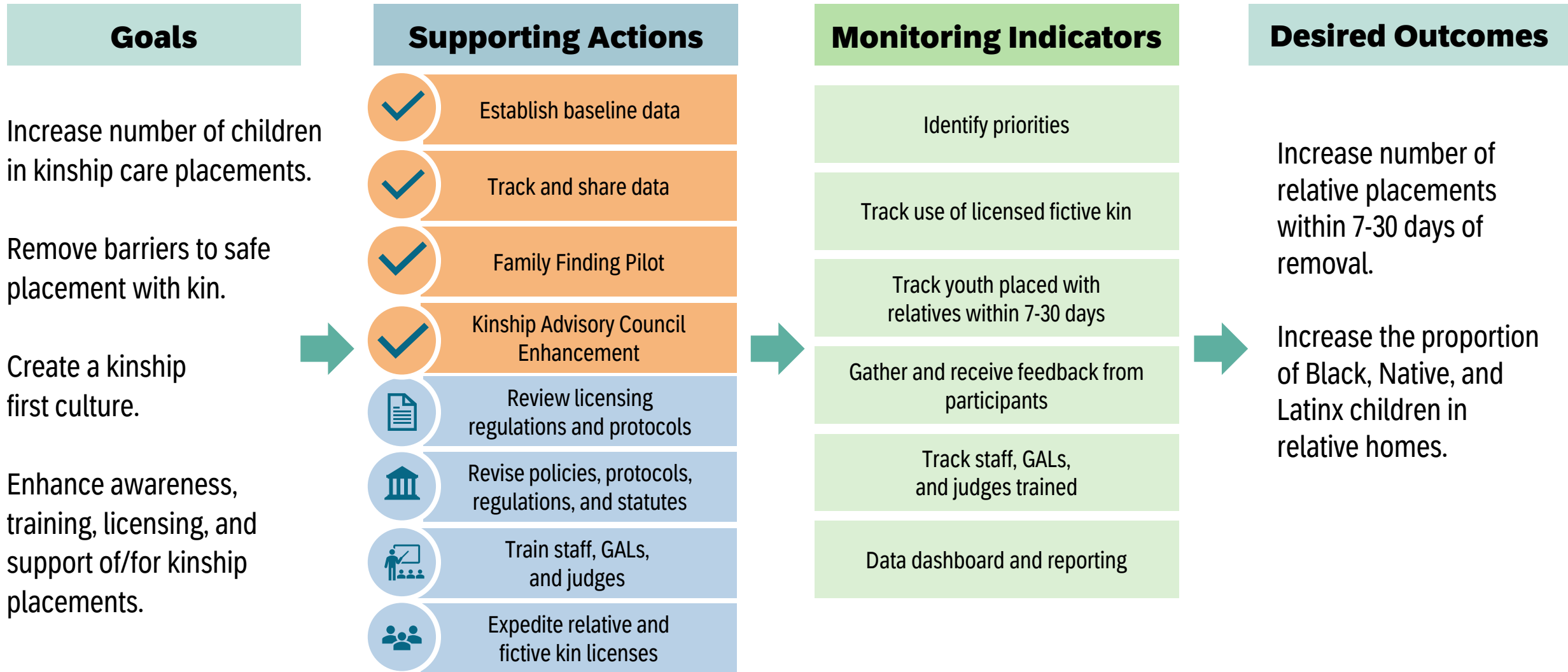
Recommendation: Secure funding to implement the recommendations.



DRAFT: Kinship Care Action Plan

Problem Statement: Children are entering foster care when they could be placed safely with relatives or fictive kin

Recommendation: Increase specialized services and supports for relative and fictive kin caregivers



Rationale for Increasing Prevalence of Kinship Care

- Kinship care: Foster care placement with relatives
- Ample research evidence demonstrates significant benefits of kinship care (over placement with strangers):
 - Enhanced placement stability
 - Positive identity formation
 - Better behavioral outcomes
 - Preservation of sibling ties
 - Higher HS graduation rates
- In addition, Kinship placements that offer a range of supports for children and kin are more likely to be stable and successful.

Barriers

Barriers

- Kin cannot care for family unless they know about imminent placements.
- Kin may believe they lack the resources and supports to take in their relative.
- Requirements are unclear; processes required can be long, burdensome, and intrusive.
- Reluctance among families of color to invite the authorities into their homes and; historical experiences with child welfare and law enforcement can lead to mistrust and fear of unintended consequences.

Facilitators

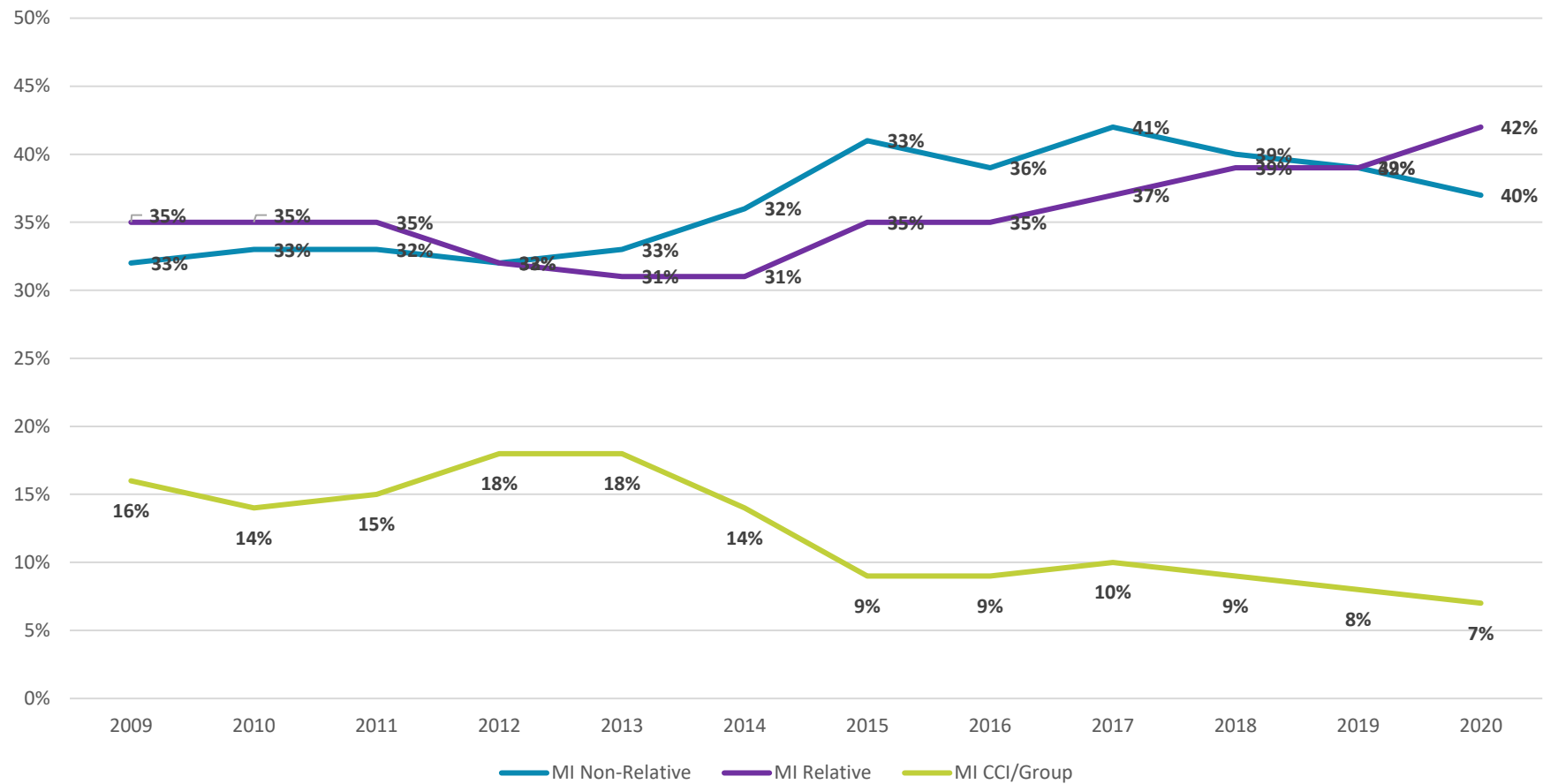
Facilitators: States with high kinship placement use a range of strategies:

- Move to kin-preference policies at the legislative, regulatory, and agency levels
- Modify practices to prioritize relative placements and reduce administrative burden to kin
- Engage in concerted efforts to locate kin and promote kinship care (technological solutions)
- Create a culture of kinship, employing family finding initiatives, and assign dedicated kinship staff

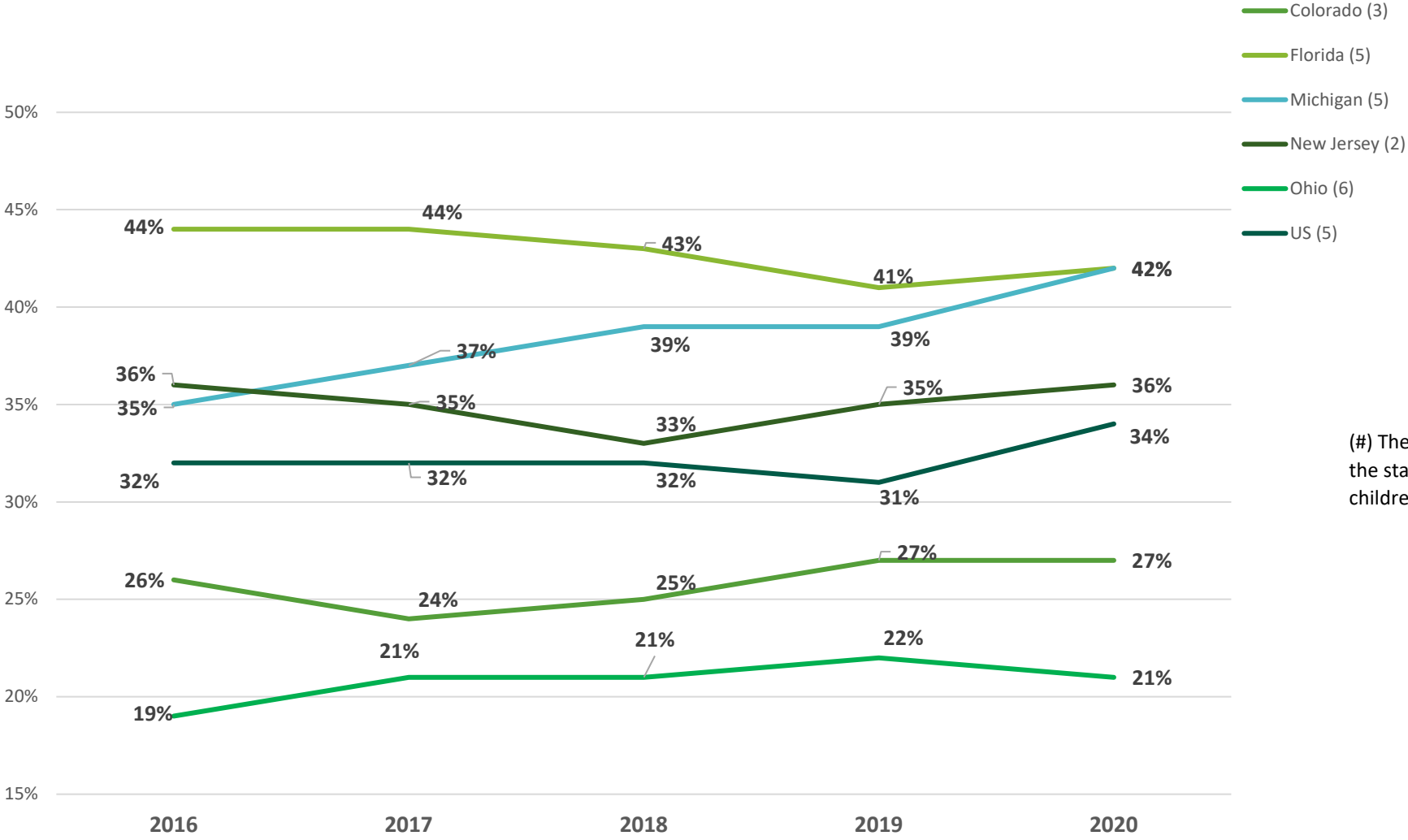
Current State: Kinship Care in Michigan

- As of January 2022: 9,991 Michigan children were in out-of-home placements (foster care), among whom 52.9% were placed with family members (kin).
- In MI's Business Service Center 3, that number is 46.5% of the total children placed and only 40.1% of Black/African American children.
- Like many states, Michigan's counties vary in the proportion of children placed with kin, and in racial/ethnic disparities in placement.

Percent of Children in Relative, Non-Relative, Group/CCI Placement, Michigan 2009-2020



Percent of Children in Relative Foster Care, Selected States and Nationally, 2016-2020



(#) The number in parentheses after the state name indicates the rate of children in foster care per 1,000.

How can Michigan increase prevalence of kinship care, along with enhancing support, stability, & outcomes for children placed with kin?

The Request

Total 1 Year Funding Request: \$606,240

The Michigan Child Welfare Improvement Task Force (MCWITF) has reviewed MDHHS efforts and its plans to address this.

We believe that strategic investment in two projects (Family Finding Pilot, Kinship Advisory Council) can significantly increase the number of children placed with kin.

Combined with kinship supports, these efforts may increase the number of children placed with kin along with their stability and outcomes. These efforts are particularly important for families who identify as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, or Multi-racial.

Family Finding Pilot

MDHHS will pilot a **Family Finding Pilot** in Muskegon County.

This approach centers around a concerted family search effort and engagement process.

Muskegon will serve as the first MI site in which staff are trained in the effort; monitoring will determine whether the effort is associated with an increase in the proportion of kinship placements.

Annual Budget	
Two full time family finding staff	246,000
One supervisor dedicating 40% of their time to supervising two family finding staff	\$61,600
Seneca Family Search Service	\$5,640
Total Annual Budget	\$313,240

Kinship Advisory Council (KAC)

The KAC advises the MDHHS on issues related to kinship, including identification, licensing, and the needs of kinship caregivers and children in their care. We recommend the following support for the KAC:

Annual Budget	
One full time Kinship Advisory Council Coordinator	\$140,000
Kinship Awareness Conference	\$50,000
Kinship Awareness Month Activities	\$23,000
Consult with National Experts	\$20,000
Conduct a Kinship Service Gap Analysis	\$60,000
Total Annual Budget	\$293,000

- A dedicated, full-time position to staff the KAC to assist in developing plans and means for decision making, data analysis, and related efforts to inform and monitor related initiatives.
- Consult with national experts and conduct a kinship service gap analysis.
- Outreach and education events (conference, public awareness campaign) to raise awareness of kinship care statewide.

Expected Outcomes

Family Finding Pilot	Kinship Advisory Council
Output #1: Increased in the number prospective family members identified per child	Output #1: Increased statewide participation in kinship advisory council (# members participating)
Output #2: Develop strategy to reliably measure well-being.	Output #2: Kinship service gap analysis (report)
Outcome #1: Increase in # and % of kinship placements, overall and within racial subgroups (Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Multi-racial Families)	Output #3: Products of public awareness campaign to increase awareness of/opportunity for kinship care
Outcome #2: Higher placement stability will occur among children placed with kin.	Outcome #1: Increased public awareness of kinship as an option.
Outcome #3: Sustained kinship placements will result in higher child well-being.	Outcome #2: Increased access to tailored supports among kinship providers (in response to gap analysis)



Kinship Awareness Summit

September 7, 2022, 10:00AM-3:30PM

Radisson Hotel Lansing at the Capital

Join MDHHS to learn, connect, and share about the issues and service gaps caregivers often face. The purpose of this summit is to bring about tangible, positive changes to better serve Michigan's 54,000 kinship caregivers.

The summit will feature national kinship experts Dr. Joseph Crumbly and Dr. Sharon McDaniel, a panel of Michigan kinship caregivers, and opportunities to collaborate on current kinship topics.

To register: <https://forms.office.com/g/wNeqekagnx>



<https://michigancwtf.org/>

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INTRODUCTION

A Task Force was convened in Fall 2020, headed by Demetrius Starling, executive director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Services Agency (MDHHS CSA), to address the over-representation of children of color in the foster care system in Michigan. Children of color enter foster care at higher rates, and stay in care longer, than their white peers.

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2023 Task Force Timeline

