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Community-Based Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention in Michigan

When children and youth experience trauma through abuse or neglect, the effects on their well-being are costly – according to a 2012 study by [Prevent Child Abuse America](#), the total yearly cost of each abused or neglected child in the United States is \$63,871. Extrapolating that number to our state's entire population of confirmed abuse and neglect cases – 39,552 in 2016, according to the most recent Kids Count Data Book, child abuse and neglect cost Michigan taxpayers \$2.5 billion annually. According to the most recent [Kids Count Data Book](#), more Michigan families are experiencing instability: from 2010 to 2016, the state's child abuse and neglect rate rose from 13.8% to 17.9%, a 30% increase. Because of the tremendous social and economic costs of abuse and neglect, the public has a legitimate interest in preventing situations that cause toxic stress for families.

Community-Based Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention in Michigan

Michigan employs a community-based child abuse and neglect prevention strategy, leveraging local knowledge and networks through a competitive grant process run by the Michigan Children's Trust Fund (CTF) to provide evidence-based services and service coordination that keep families strong. Public and private agencies that demonstrate local leadership receive grants to convene their county's prevention "council" to raise awareness, identify local needs relating to child abuse and neglect, and to coordinate with local stakeholders a strategy for preventing abuse and neglect.

The state also funds agencies to support individuals and families who are deemed at higher risk of abuse and neglect, including young and first-time parents, parents with substance abuse, and children with behavioral needs. These services, which include parent peer groups, parenting education classes like infant sleep safety training, respite child care, resource referral, body safety classes for children, and baby pantries, are proven by research to prevent child abuse and neglect by increasing parenting knowledge, strengthening social connections, and providing access to concrete resources during times of need. Services are located in places where families are, including at hospitals, schools, and court offices. In 2016, these programs effectively served Michigan's most challenged families— 73% of participants reported incomes of \$20,000 or less.

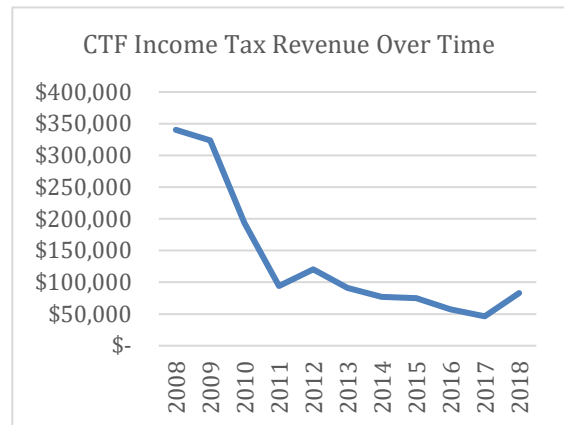
A Moderate Investment with Major Impact

The state's modest investment of about \$2.5 million, paired with about \$700,000 in federal grant funds, is going a long way. In 2016, Michigan's child abuse and neglect prevention agencies led 361 community collaborative activities, connecting 58,000 adults and 112,000 children to services. Survey results also suggest that direct service programs improved families' abilities to handle everyday stressors and recover from occasional crises; families left programs with greater access to concrete supports such as food, housing, clothing, and transportation,

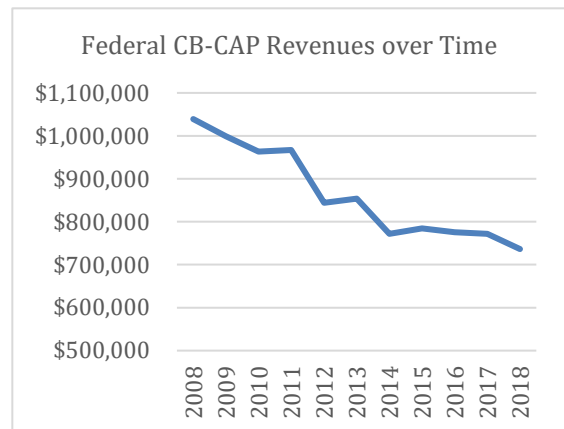
and other care needs; and parents improved their ability to provide socio-emotional support, constructive discipline, and praise for their children.

Rising Need, Declining Revenues

CTF grantees reached about half of the total number of families that were investigated for cases of abuse and neglect in 2016. These programs cost a fraction of what we pay to treat the effects of abuse and neglect, but their capacity has grown increasingly limited. With need rising, existing state and federal funding streams for community-based prevention have lost significant value in recent years. As more citizens do income taxes online and skip through optional sections, check-off donations from the state income tax form have fallen 310% between 2008 and 2018. These revenues are down from even \$938,000 in 2000. Branded CTF license plate revenues have fallen equally sharply due to the increasing numbers of specialty license plates available for purchase.



These losses have triggered further losses in federal funds over the years through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). CAPTA funding for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CB-CAP) grants, which pass through CTF to programs, has remained level for years, but the CB-CAP grant formula rewards states with higher dollar amounts when they contribute relatively more state funding to prevention programs than other states. CB-CAP grants that supported innovative tribal child abuse work have also run out. As state revenues have dried up, Michigan's CB-CAP grant has shrunk equally as other states have seen increased investment into child abuse prevention.



Michigan has an effective, community-based strategy for preventing child abuse and neglect, but the need for prevention services and coordination is rising to a level that will be impossible to reach without a recommitment of both state and federal funds. Increasing the available federal resources for CB-CAP would provide additional incentive and reward for states like Michigan to re-invest significantly into community-based child abuse prevention. Michigan's state and federal decision makers must prioritize and establish more sustainable strategies for supporting community-based child abuse and neglect prevention.