



Translating Ideas Into Action: Reflecting On Our 2025 Progress

In early 2025, CSSP released our strategic plan, [Translating Ideas Into Action](#). Since that time, our work has taken on heightened importance. Millions of children and families face mounting barriers to the programs and services they rely on and increasing attacks on their rights and safety. As we reflect on the first year of progress toward our strategic goals, CSSP is more focused than ever on advancing economic security and justice, health justice, and family autonomy. We do this with a commitment to racial justice, which is core to all of our work.

Our North Star

CSSP's work is focused on achieving what we call our North Star. These are big goals we are working toward for families — economic justice, health justice, and family autonomy.



Every family should have the resources they need. Our economic security and justice work strives to ensure that all children, youth, and families have the economic resources to afford the necessities, spend time with their families and loved ones, fully participate in their communities, and achieve their visions for their futures.

Every family should have opportunities for good health. Our health justice work strives to ensure that all children, youth, and families have access to options for high-quality, culturally affirming services that support their health and well-being. We also support communities in creating conditions that promote and prioritize health.

Every family should have the rights, agency, and resources needed to make decisions for themselves. Our family autonomy and justice work strives to ensure that people can thrive in their families and communities, and that every child is surrounded by and supported by loving, nurturing adults.

To accomplish this, we know it is important to take an anti-racist approach, which we do in all of our work. This ensures we are reimagining what is possible for families through policies and systems and redressing the harm created by current policies and systems. Without this explicit focus, the impact of racism continues to harm families, sometimes compounding without explicit intent.

Sharing Progress on our Goals

In 2025, CSSP made significant progress on our strategic goals. This isn't just an exercise; it's critically important to achieving our North Star. CSSP teams worked collaboratively to support partners in centering anti-racism, advanced policies to expand program eligibility for families, helped partner organizations work more strategically by supporting equitable strategic planning, conducted research and analysis, and built parent and local leader capacity. We also collaborated across the organization in new ways, began developing new systems and approaches to support our staff, and built new relationships and deepened CSSP's credibility among partners. We were also thrilled to welcome [two new members](#) to our Board of Directors.

Throughout 2025, we approached our mission with deepened commitment, knowing that when systems fail families, we have to show up stronger and in more supportive ways. That is what families deserve, and what we owe our communities. Below are a few examples showcasing some of our work in 2025 to improve the health, happiness, and success of every child and their family through more effective and responsive policies and systems:

- **Ensuring Families Have What They Need by Eliminating Work Reporting:** [Our research](#) to support the elimination of work requirements and other barriers to critical programs continues to impact policy and practice. It has informed efforts at USDA to ensure that any employment and training offered to recipients of food assistance or SNAP is voluntary and not a prerequisite for receiving assistance.
- **Partnering to Advance Equitable Strategies in Los Angeles:** We supported the Office of Equity Division at the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services on the development of their strategic direction. This work positions the Department to advance equitable practices, outcomes, and a culture of safety, equity, community, and belonging.
- **Preventing Instability for Children in Foster Care in South Carolina:** In Richland County, South Carolina, CSSP supported the Department of Social Services in launching a task force to increase the availability of mental health services, shift practices to create individually tailored placements and services, prevent unnecessary removals of children and youth to foster care, and support those experiencing placement instability.
- **Supporting Economic Security for Immigrant Families:** Over several months in 2025, the CSSP team worked diligently to educate lawmakers on how changes to the Child Tax Credit proposed in H.R.1 would harm immigrant families. Ultimately, these efforts directly contributed to the final law not requiring married filers to file jointly to receive the tax credit, which would have excluded even more children with immigrant parents.
- **Supporting Caregivers and Caregiving:** As part of our policy work on caregiving, CSSP helped organize a conference in Philadelphia, [Our Right to Care](#), to discuss strategies to better support care work in the United States and abroad, [including through direct cash](#).
- **Promoting New Ways to Support Youth:** As a part of our work with young people to develop and advocate policy solutions that respond to what they want and need for their future, in 2025 CSSP held a CARES Movement Makers Summit. This provided young people in our CARES Initiative with the opportunity to engage with each other, with policy experts and advocates, and with members of Congress and their staff on the ideas and issues that matter most to them.
- **Partnering with Community to Support Advocacy for Young Children:** In 2025, we brought parents of young children from across the country together in parent leadership and advocacy cohorts. We worked together in these cohorts to build skills in early childhood advocacy and organizing, with participants describing the experience as empowering and transformative for their leadership. These cohorts will continue to work together to design, lead, and implement community projects that translate their learning into action.

- **Promoting Culture in Health and Healing:** As part of our work with communities to ensure culture is central to program development and service provision, we convened representatives from diverse community-based organizations, state and Tribal system leaders, researchers, and experts to develop strategies to advance culturally-responsive family services and to respect community voice as evidence in identifying what works. These convenings set the course for developing case studies for key recommendations, identifying core principles and standards for “community-defined evidence”, and working with communities to implement solutions.

While our work in 2025 moves us closer to our North Star, the stakes for young people and families right now are incredibly high, and we cannot do this important work alone. It requires the support and engagement of everyone who shares our steadfast commitment to families – to ensure that, when times are difficult, we think creatively and collaboratively to keep children, youth, and families at the center of policy decisions that impact their lives.

As our team, partners, champions, and friends, please join us.



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