



FOOTHILLS GATEWAY FAMILY SERVICES AND SUPPORT PROGRAM
Area Plan
Fiscal Year 2020-21

FOOTHILLS GATEWAY FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM (FSSP)

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2020-21

A. How Foothills Gateway plans to spend FSSP funds in the 2020-2021 fiscal year:

1. Description of the outreach/public awareness efforts for the coming year:

Foothill Gateway case management staff will participate in the Larimer County inter-agency case management resource group that is an extension of the Larimer County Department of Human Services Community Collaboration Team grant.

Foothills Gateway FSSP staff will connect with Early Intervention and Intake staff at department meetings to revisit eligibility criteria for FSSP, and available educational tools and materials, including the “next steps” handouts, and to remind staff to screen families for eligibility at EI transitions and intake meetings.

The Foothills Gateway FSSP will encourage Case Managers to discuss the FSSP program with educators at IEP meetings, explaining FSSP program and enrollment process. The FSSP Council will utilize the FSSP Parent Facebook group to share information about the program and publicity about FSSP events.

Foothills Gateway will continue to plan and promote the Flying Pig 5K as an annual fundraiser and awareness-raising event for the Foothills Gateway FSSP program.

2. Description of anticipated special projects or activities under the Program Expense service category:

In the upcoming year, the Foothills Gateway FSSP would like to sponsor both social/networking and educational opportunities for families. These activities will be subject to physical-distancing limitations created by the covid-19 pandemic. These include:

- Monthly “Respitality” sessions in collaboration with Respite Care, Inc.
- Sensory friendly movie events
- Pool party
- Activity/funplex activity
- LifeCourse training
- Guardianship training

3. Goals with measurable outcomes for any changes to the FSSP:

- *Create a minimum of four social and educational opportunities using FSSP program funding.*
- *Assure 230 individuals enrolled each month.*
- *Utilize 100% of FSSP contract dollars by the end of FY 20-21.*
- *Meet emergency needs of individuals enrolled in FSSP and on the FSSP waiting list experiencing unexpected needs that are related to the individual or family's health and safety*
- *Improve the user experience and training for families using the FGI FSSP Portal as measured by program evaluation outcomes.*
- *Meet emergency needs of individuals enrolled in FSSP and on the FSSP waiting list experiencing unexpected needs that are related to the individual or family's health and safety*

B. How Foothills Gateway FSSP funds were spent in the 2019-2020 fiscal year:

1. The program evaluation outcomes for FY19-20:

FY 19-20 PROGRAM SATISFACTION:

Each July, Foothills Gateway sends a Family Satisfaction Survey to all family members of people enrolled in programs or on the waiting list for services in Larimer County. This survey measures satisfaction with the programs and case management provided by Foothills Gateway. Due to the timing of the annual Family Satisfaction Survey, a separate FSSP Program Evaluation survey was sent to FSSP participants in order to meet FSSP program evaluation requirements.

On June 1, 2020, Foothills Gateway mailed a survey with a postage paid return envelope to each family enrolled in the FSSP. The total number of surveys mailed was 200. A Spanish language version of the survey was sent to those families indicating Spanish as their preferred language.

A total of 48 surveys were returned. The data below summarizes the survey responses.

How easy it is for you to access the payment or reimbursement for services from the Foothills Gateway FSSP program?

Rating	Number Responding (47 total)	Percentage
Very easy	18	38%
Somewhat easy	10	21%

Neither easy nor difficult	2	4%
Somewhat difficult	8	17%
Very difficult	9	19%

Remarks: Beginning July 1, 2019, the Foothills Gateway FSSP changed the method for expense reimbursement in order to meet FSSP rule requirements. Prior to July 1, 2019, families were required to submit a quarterly expense attestation form. Starting July 1, 2019, families are required to submit a receipt or invoice for each expense reimbursed. Receipts can be hand-delivered, mailed, scanned/photographed and emailed or uploaded to the Foothills Gateway FSSP portal developed by Foothills Gateway. As reported in the comments accompanying the survey, the shift to a higher level of reimbursement documentation was not viewed as a positive change by families. It requires a more careful collection of documentation and more work to submit proof of the documentation. In order to make the process more user-friendly, Foothills Gateway made several improvements to the portal throughout the year. This gave families using the portal better information about what receipts were accepted and which were denied or required further clarification and improved the user interface.

How do you rate the timeliness of FSSP services or reimbursement of services/how quickly can you receive FSSP payment or reimbursement for goods or services?

Rating	Number Responding (46 total)	Percentage
Very fast	19	41%
Somewhat fast	14	30%
Neither fast nor slow	2	4%
Somewhat slow	7	15%
Very slow	4	9%

Remarks: Some comments submitted with the evaluations indicate that the reimbursement process is cumbersome and slow. Effective July 1, 2019, the Foothills Gateway FSSP change reimbursement methodology in order to meet FSSP rule requirements.

Prior to July 1, 2019, families with active FSPs and quarterly expense attestation forms would receive a FSSP check each month. The check amount was based on the family's most in need score.

Starting July 1, 2019, families are reimbursed after submitting valid receipts. If a receipt does not contain all the required information (e.g., family name or vendor name missing) the receipt is rejected by the finance department and the case manager works with the family to correct the error. The correction process slows down the reimbursement process and can require the family to resubmit receipts. It is anticipated that satisfaction in this area will improve as families become more accustomed to the reimbursement process and as Foothills Gateway continues to make improvements in the Foothills Gateway FSSP portal.

The Foothills Gateway Finance Department processes and mails reimbursement checks according to a schedule that is distributed to families and is available on the FSSP portal. Typically checks are mailed

biweekly. Exceptions to the check writing schedule can be made on an individual basis as justified by critical needs.

How effective are the Foothills Gateway FSSP services you receive in meeting your identified FSSP needs?

Rating	Number Responding (47 total)	Percentage Responding
Very effective	25	53%
Somewhat effective	14	30%
Neither effective nor ineffective	1	2%
Somewhat ineffective	2	4%
Very ineffective	5	11%

Remarks: On July 1, 2019, HCPF implemented new rules for FSSP. Foothills Gateway responded to these changes and ensured that all services included in the Foothills Gateway Family Support Plans (FSP) met HCPF FSSP service definitions. In November 2019, HCPF provided additional guidance regarding service definitions in a webinar. Following this webinar, further changes were made to FSPs in order to ensure that services listed in Foothills Gateway all FSPs complied with the additional interpretive guidance. The change and subsequent loss of services was a hardship to many families. While the overall satisfaction with the effectiveness remains high (83% families responding that the services are somewhat or very effective), many families are still discouraged by the lack of flexibility in the service categories. Foothills Gateway Case Managers continue to meet with families to discuss service options and explore how FSSP can provide valuable services.

How available are the services needed to meet your identified FSSP needs?

Rating	Number Responding (47 total)	Percentage Responding
Very available	21	45%
Somewhat available	17	36%
Neither available nor unavailable	2	4%
Somewhat unavailable	4	9%
Very unavailable	3	6%

Remarks: Based on the comments accompanying the survey, families with a negative view of the availability of services would like to receive additional support purchasing the items and services. Foothills Gateway assists families with directly purchasing items and services. Foothills Gateway is required to verify the status of the vendor and collect IRS reporting information prior to purchasing the item or service. The additional steps required can slow down the process. Additionally, due to wage and labor laws, Foothills Gateway is unable to directly pay some service providers if they are not

regularly engaged in providing that service as a business entity (e.g., paying a neighbor to provide respite). Foothills Gateway has developed processes that allow payments to be advanced to the FSSP families with the expectation that receipts will be provided once the service is provided or the item is purchased.

How responsive is the Foothills Gateway FSSP to your family's concerns?

Rating	Number Responding (47 total)	Percentage Responding
Very responsive	28	58%
Somewhat responsive	11	23%
Neither responsive nor unresponsive	2	4%
Somewhat unresponsive	5	10%
Very unresponsive	2	4%

Remarks: The comments accompanying the survey reflect that some families are frustrated with the process of submitting receipts and having to make corrections when the receipts do not include required information or are do not clearly identify an eligible FSSP service.

During the year, Foothills Gateway has made several improvements to the reconciliation process and continues to work on systems designed to make the process of submitting and correcting receipts easier and more family friendly. Foothills Gateway has created user guides and redesigned to the user interface on the FSSP portal to make the process more error proof.

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Foothills Gateway FSSP.

Rating	Number Responding (47 total)	Percentage Responding
Very satisfied	25	53%
Somewhat satisfied	13	28%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	2	4%
Somewhat unsatisfied	5	11%
Very unsatisfied	2	4%

Remarks: Many of the comments that accompanied the survey praised both the program and the support offered by the case manager. As noted above, many of the comments expressing dissatisfaction with the program focused on the changes required by the rules that simultaneously removed some of the flexibility around the types of services and items funded while increasing the work required to access funding through the program. Foothills Gateway continues to educate families about these changes through both group communication and personalized communication from the case manager.

2. The total amount of funds expended within each service category during FY19-20:

Service Category	Total expended per category	Number of purchases
Assistive Technology	\$17,873.69	236
Environmental Engineering	\$37,834.57	39
Medical/Dental	\$26,891.72	333
Other: Consultation/Advocate	\$510	2
Other: Recreation	\$11,029.63	71
Assistive Technology	\$14,541.47	106
Other: Specialized Services (includes Covid-19 related supports)	\$55,681.67	926
Parent Services/Sibling Support	\$20,540.37	199
Professional	\$3,359.25	9
Professional Services	\$41,143.21	236
Respite	\$128,737.56	236
Transportation	\$8,392	847
Total:	\$3,351,834.57	

- ***Total number of individuals with Family Support Plan during FY19-20:*** 282
- ***Total number of families receiving reimbursement during FY19-20:*** 198
- ***The total number of new individuals enrolled in FSSP during FY 19-20:*** 55
- ***The total number of individuals on the FSSP waiting list:*** 147

1. Detailed information for the Program Expense service category:

- a. **The total number of families that utilized services under the Program Expense category:**

During FY 19-20 the Foothills Gateway FSSP used Program Expenses for two activities. One activity was a social activity that was attended by 20 families. The second was a group respite event that was attended by 6 families.

Throughout the year, other events were funded through Foothills Gateway Family Support Council fundraised dollars including monthly respite, pool party and a funplex activity.

- b. The specific services provided (resource library, special projects, training events, social events, or respite coordinator):**

Foothills Gateway sponsored a sensory-friendly movie event in conjunction with the Foothills Gateway Family Support Council. Program also sponsored a "Respitality" event for families in conjunction with Respite Care, Inc. In prior years, this monthly event was paid with dollars raised by the Foothills Gateway Family Support Council fundraised dollars. However, the decision was made to use program expense dollars to fund this ongoing.

Due to the covid pandemic, several programs were cancelled including a training on the LifeCourse Curriculum.

- c. How these services enhanced the lives of families in the community and the total number of families who participated in each project:**

The program dollars were useful in giving families a chance to network and provided the attendees to enjoy a sensory-friendly movie experience. The respite event gave families the opportunity for respite in a trusted environment while the children enjoyed the programming created by Respite Care, Inc.

- d. The total number of staff, total of staff cost, and other costs associated with the Program Expense service category:**

There were no staff costs associated with the program expenses.

2. How the Foothills Gateway FSSP Annual Plan will be distributed to eligible families:

The Foothills Gateway FSSP Program Evaluation and Annual Report will be emailed to families enrolled in the Foothills Gateway FSSP and posted on the Foothills Gateway, Inc. website.

Signature of FSSP Coordinator:



Signature of the Chief Executive Officer:



Signature of Family Support Council (FSC) members:

