

PROJECT HOPE

Blueprint for Early Childhood Federal Policy

Purpose of the Blueprint

Federal policies designed to benefit young children and communities are pursued through the implementation of regulations and funding streams. Many consider the policies to be a safety net in times when families are unable to care for themselves economically. Some policies are designed to protect children while others are considered a market correction for families who do not earn wages which allow them to support the prevailing costs of caring for their children.

This tool is designed to review the intent of the federal policy, map state discretion, and build a bigger picture of the resources designed to support young children, their families, and communities. This analysis provides an accountability lens for all parties to determine whether the full advantage of the policy language is being taken and the intent of the policies is being met.

The term “early childhood systems” promotes the alignment of policies, programs, services, and initiatives designed to benefit individual children and families. The early childhood system is designed to challenge the institutional policies promulgated by any one system and support cross- systems planning, strategies, and implementation in the best interest of children and their families. At their best, early childhood systems address the structural issues that are barriers to the well-being of children, their families, and communities.

List of Federal Funding Streams with Benefit to Young Children

Fourteen specific funding streams have been selected for review with a primary benefit based on individual eligibility; however, other policies, which are also designed to benefit young children, families, and communities could be reviewed at a later date

Education and Development

1. Part B of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Early Childhood Special Education
2. Part C of IDEA, Early Intervention
3. Preschool Development Grants (PDG)

Nutrition and Food Security

4. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
5. Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
6. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Health/Health Care and Development

7. Medicaid and CHIP
8. Title V Maternal and Child Health
9. Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems
10. Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

PROJECT HOPE

Economic Supports

11. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
12. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
13. Workforce Investment Boards, Workforce Investment Act

Child Protection

14. Title IV-E Foster Care

Other

15. State Policy, e.g., state-funded preschool or home visiting

Portfolio Assignment

1. **Identify** where you found child and family well-being disparities in outcomes as listed above: Education and Development; Nutrition and Food Security; Health/Health Care and Development; Economic Supports; and Child Protection.
2. **Select two federal funding streams to explore.** You may select a section of a funding stream and explore a single program or policy. For instance, if you select CCDF under Economic Supports, you could choose to focus on subsidy program or quality initiatives.
3. **Analyze your selected federal policy funding streams, considering the following questions.**

Federal Policy

- What is the most recent authorization of the funds and what federal department is responsible?
- What are the basic requirements created by the federal government?
- Are measurable outcomes monitored related to the funding?

Funding Guidance

- Does the federal funding require the submission of a state plan? Frequency?
- Does the federal funding require a match from the state to provide the services?

Public Engagement

- Does the state plan require public comment?
- Does the state agency responsible for the program have a process that includes engagement of those beneficiaries with lived experience?

State Government Authority

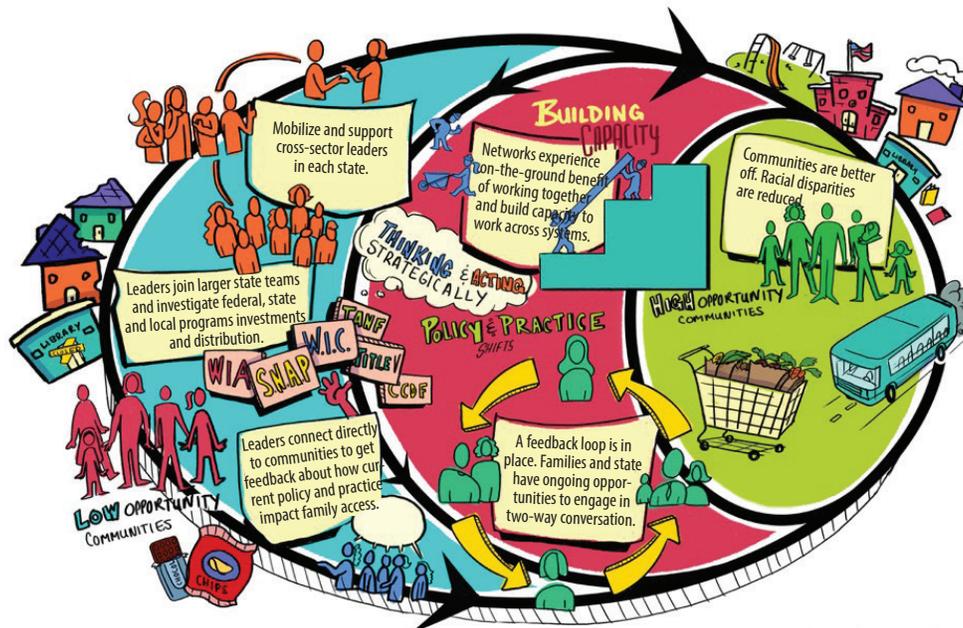
- What state department is responsible?
- What are specific policies that your state has the discretion to implement? For example, rates, eligibility, definitions such as medical necessity or developmental delay, etc.
- How is the funding distributed?
- What are the state eligibility requirements? For example, income, residency, employment, job search, job training, citizenship, age, household size, pre- or in-service workshops, screenings, background checks, housing/ permanent address, etc.
- Does the state have program implementation requirements? For example, co-pays, limits on service duration, eligible activities or expenses, eligible populations, targets for special populations, restricted network of providers, etc.

Beneficiary

- Has data on outcomes been disaggregated by race and geography for analysis?
 - Who is benefiting from current methods of implementation?

PROJECT HOPE

- o Who is not benefiting? This should include populations that have difficulty remaining eligible.
 - How many people in the state are eligible for the federal program versus served?
 - What documentation is used to determine eligibility?
 - How is notice of the program or service availability distributed?
4. **Submit your team's answers** to the following five questions by survey to complete this component of the portfolio:
- a. Does the state have rules in place that, if removed, would increase access to the funding or programming for the targeted population?
 - b. Are the targeted beneficiaries aware of the federal programs and the process of engagement?
 - c. Do the beneficiaries present needs that match the current design of the state program implementation? If not, what would need to be altered?
 - d. Does modifying or expanding the current state program create new costs for the state?
 - e. Did you discover a gap between intentions of the federal policy and funding and programming with the implementation of state policy and program?



ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS FRISCH OF ILLUSTRATING PROGRESS