

SUPPORTING TWO-GENERATION STRATEGIES

Suggestions for Policymakers and Funders

In “Advancing Two-Generation Approaches: Funding to Help Families Succeed,” several organizations pursuing two-generation strategies highlighted funding challenges they often encounter in trying to address parent and child needs at the same time. Here, we highlight their suggestions for how policymakers and funders can better support the adoption and growth of two-generation approaches, which take the entire family into account, equipping parents and children with the tools and skills necessary for both to succeed.

Align Outcomes and Data

Policymakers and funders could coordinate funding sources to encourage greater alignment and collaboration across agencies and programs. Promoting collaboration and shared outcomes across funding sources and partners could help foster a unified vision and joint accountability — resulting in a more effective use of funds. Recent federal initiatives have begun to implement some of these strategies. For example, the Affordable Care Act encouraged states to streamline eligibility applications across multiple federal funding sources. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education’s Promise Neighborhoods initiative focuses on how children are faring from cradle to career and supports developing the infrastructure necessary to build connections across schools, families and community organizations. With this broader lens, the initiative incentivizes communities to maximize complementary federal funds to create a cohesive program strategy for child and youth development.

Other funding models, such the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants or the U.S. Department of Labor’s Strengthening Working Families Initiative, require applicants to include specific plans for building partnerships in their proposals to foster collaboration across programs and funding sources.

Tap Into Other Funding Streams

State policymakers and agency leaders could further promote two-generation approaches by taking advantage of several existing sources of flexible funding.

Medicaid. The recent expansion of health insurance for millions of Americans — though under debate — provides an unprecedented opportunity for states to better meet the needs of families, and several have included low-income parents among individuals now eligible for Medicaid.¹ Additionally, some states, including Colorado and South Carolina, use Medicaid funding to help pay for services delivered through home-visiting programs.² And in 2016, federal administrators released guidance that now incorporates screening for parental depression into care for

children who qualify for Medicaid, as well as any treatment needs that involve parent and child, such as family therapy, and directly benefit the latter.³ This means doctors can screen a mother or father for depression and bill under a child’s Medicaid coverage. If parents require any separate treatment, however, they must use their own insurance — which many more parents can do because of the Medicaid expansion. This guidance is an important step forward in recognizing that children’s health and well-being are inextricably linked to their parents’.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Federal policymakers could shape Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) into a two-generation program. A 2016 information memorandum from the Department of Health and Human Services underscores this point, highlighting the ways in which states can use TANF’s flexibility to address the needs of “a broader group” of low-income parents and their children, beyond the families already receiving financial support through the program.⁴ Indeed, state TANF directors could work with organizations serving eligible families to coordinate and align programs for low-income parents and their children. Utah and Connecticut are among states creating innovative TANF models to that end.⁵

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training. Another promising policy area for two-generation approaches is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), which provides funding for states to plan and operate education and training programs, job-retention services (up to 90 days) and other support for SNAP-eligible individuals who do not receive TANF.⁶ The federal government also provides a 50/50 match for private or state dollars that cover expenses directly related to participation in a state’s E&T program. This match has no limit or spending restrictions, incentivizing states to support SNAP E&T participants with a broader array of services that they have significant flexibility in defining. For example, state administrators could team up with training or educational partners, such as community-based job-training providers, to

offer programs for earning short-term credentials or training in high-wage sectors. SNAP E&T funding could pay for expenses such as child care and transportation assistance, as well as other items (school uniforms, books and materials) that would enable participants to engage in the employment or training activities.⁷ Policymakers could create specific two-generation programs for families who qualify for SNAP, including young people who are parents and not in school or working (more than 1 million youths and young adults).⁸

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows states and communities greater flexibility to create a more coordinated set of employment, training and adult education programs. It also strengthens connections with such programs as TANF to develop comprehensive and aligned services and support. The legislation clearly directs states to target people most in need and facing barriers to employment — i.e., single parents, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, youth and young adults ages 16–24 not in school or working, veterans and individuals who lack basic skills (such as language or literacy) — and focuses on addressing gaps in support, such as covering the cost of transportation, child care or housing, that can present obstacles to employment and training.⁹ Finally, governors have the discretion to funnel up to 15 percent of the funding for adults, youth and laid-off workers into employment and training programs. They could, for example, direct those discretionary funds toward particular groups, including parents younger than 24, English language learners or, more broadly, low-income single parents with children. Using these funds to test new partnerships and models gives states another unique funding opportunity to support two-generation approaches.¹⁰

Increase Grant Flexibility

Organizations noted an overall need for public and private funders to increase incentives for cross-agency collaboration and braiding of funds. Aligning public and private funding would help support collaborative two-generation approaches, allowing community organizations to more effectively address the interconnected issues that families and neighborhoods face. The Performance Partnership Pilots (P3) offer a recent example of this approach. Launched in 2014, this innovative funding strategy — geared toward youth who are not in school or working — allowed states, regions, localities and federally recognized tribal jurisdictions to submit proposals for pooling some of their federal funding sources and tracking results across programs. While P3 funding is no longer available, it could serve as a model or roadmap for policymakers for pooling funds to support two-generation efforts in select communities.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For a list of states opting to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, visit http://bit.ly/aca_medicaid
- 2 For more information on billing Medicaid for home-visiting services, visit www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/CIB-03-02-16.pdf
- 3 For more information on billing Medicaid for parental depression screening and services, visit www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib051116.pdf
- 4 Office of Family Assistance. (2016, April). *Strengthening TANF outcomes by developing two-generation approaches to build economic security* (TANF-ACF-IM-2016-03). Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-acf-im-2016-03
- 5 For more information on Utah's Next Generation Kids project, visit <http://utahchildren.org/election/item/554-a-two-generation-approach>. And, for more information on Connecticut's two-generation demonstration, visit <https://ctcwcs.com/two-generational>
- 6 Lower-Basch, E. (2014, March). *SNAP E&T*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved from www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/SNAP-ET-Overview.pdf
- 7 Food and Nutrition Services. (2013). *Employment and Training toolkit: A toolkit to help states create, implement and manage dynamic E&T programs*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ET_Toolkit_2013.pdf
- 8 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012). *Youth and work: Restoring teen and young adult connections to opportunity*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from www.aecf.org/resources/youth-and-work
- 9 Fischer, D. J., & Twomey, J. (2015, Summer). Implementing WIOA: State policy choices to assist low-income working families. *The Working Poor Families Project Policy Brief*. Retrieved from www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WFPF-Summer-2015-Brief.pdf. And, Bird, K., Foster, M., & Ganzglass, E. (2014, September). *New opportunities to improve economic and career success for low-income youth and adults: Key provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved from www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/KeyProvisionsofWIOA-Final.pdf
- 10 For more information on using the Governor's Reserve fund, visit https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/Final_Rules_Resources.cfm