Funding Programs for Young Parents & Families

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Research highlights the effectiveness of targeted programming to support young families, families with parents younger than 25 and children under the age of five. Young parents jointly navigating adulthood and parenthood commonly face obstacles such as disruption in education, unemployment, financial instability, lack of access to child care, and lack of parenting experience or familial supports. However, despite these obstacles, they also possess a unique capacity to learn and a strong desire to see their children and family thrive. This presents an opportunity for human service organizations to employ a targeted approach to disrupt intergenerational poverty via a strong grasp on the needs and perspectives of young families as they may be served across multiple systems. Given these unique circumstances, there is an opportunity to evaluate where these families are served and create comprehensive programming to meet the needs of both parents and children. Funding to support young families with children spans federal, state, and local agencies, and each funding stream comes with distinct statutory and regulatory requirements. System transformation that knits services across program areas requires careful planning, building political will and navigating the administrative barriers and boundaries. Below is a summary of potential federal funding sources and programs that can be used to support programs specifically targeted towards young families. While this list is not exhaustive, it highlights major sources that can serve as a starting point for braiding and blending of funding to create comprehensive programming to serve young families.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

There are many examples of TANF programs specifically designed for young parents and families. For example, the Young Parents Program in MA provides education, career preparation and family support services to young families. Because TANF is a flexible block grant and programs supporting young parents are a natural fit within TANFs four purposes, TANF is a noteworthy funding stream.

**Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)**

SSBG is a flexible funding for essential social services within specific categories, including “Pregnancy and Parenting Services for Young Parents.” Additionally, TANF funds can be passed through to SSBG for programs supporting families to help young families become self-sufficient.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

In addition to providing for basic food assistance, SNAP also provides employment and training (E&T) services, including access to supportive services such as child care and transportation. SNAP E&T could be beneficial to young parents and families who are not TANF eligible. Moreover, many youth aging out of foster care are already connected to SNAP. SNAP E&T programs could provide services aimed at young families and coordinated efforts with TANF programs to support young families transitioning between services due to becoming TANF ineligible.

**John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee)**

The Chafee program provides funding to prepare current and former foster youth ages 14-25, including those who are pregnant and parenting, to successfully transition to adulthood. This Children’s Bureau tip sheet explains how funds can be used specifically
to support pregnant and parenting youth, particularly by coordinating with Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP) programs.

**Family First Prevention Services Act Prevention Funds (FFPSA)**

FFPSA allows Title IV-E funds under the Social Security Act to be used for preventative services such as mental health and substance use prevention and treatment services as well as in-home parent skill training programs for pregnant and parenting youth. Under FFPSA an array of services may be used to target young parents and families, such as Parents as Teachers, a home visiting program that uses peer support to educate first-time parents on child development and parenting, can be expanded or created.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I**

WIOA Title I can be used to support programing for out of school youth who are pregnant and parenting. Many WIOA state plans specifically call out young parents, for example OR’s plan provides for summer youth employment and on-the-job training for TANF young parents. In Baltimore, MD there is intentional partnering between workforce programs and the TANF funded Center for Family Success (formerly the Young Parent Support Center). Additionally, the past Department of Labor Young Parent Demonstration pilot can be a source of inspiration for potential WIOA programs, particularly those with an emphasis on intensive mentoring services.

**Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Grants**

States receive CBCAP funds for community-based efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. Several exemplary programs target the needs of families with young children, but only a few programs target young families. In Everett, WA the Housing Hope Teen and Young Families program supports mothers aged 16-24 with case management, housing, and specially tailored college courses. Other CBCAP programs could follow Washington’s example in developing programs or practices tailored to young parents and families.

**Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC)**

Municipalities using CoC funds can include young parents and families in their requisite community plans as a special population, identifying specific needs, services gaps, and benchmarks for the population. For example, both Seattle/King County, WA and Santa Cruz County, CA’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Coordinated Community Plan identify young parents as a special population. Jurisdictions that do so hold themselves accountable for serving young parents and families in addition to creating a clear pathway for providers to serve the population.

are a valuable resource for young parent programing because they are well known for leveraging multiple programs to support families within communities, such as operating Head Start centers and SNAP E&T Programs.
HUD Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) »

Pregnant and Parenting youth between the ages of 18-24 who have left or are transitioning from the foster care system are eligible for Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) in the form of Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) as a part of the FYI initiative, a partnership between Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and Public Child Welfare Agencies (PCWAs). In Alameda County, CA, Rising Oaks is a transitional housing program that leverages the FYI initiative to provides young families with services including case management, housing, life skills training, therapy, and education and career supports.

Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) »

FYSB is comprised of three individual programs, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program, and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, that can support innovative services for young families. One such initiative is the Starting Out Right for Homeless Parenting Youth Program (SOR HPYP), a community and volunteer-based program in AZ where a host caregiver provides a home to pregnant and/or parenting youth and their children.

Head Start / Early Head Start »

Head Start and Early Head Start services are available to pregnant women and children ages birth to five and their families. Programs supporting young families can utilize Head Start/Early Head Start programs to establish quality childcare resources for young parents. For example, during the 2015 Rural Impact Demonstration project ME’s Family Futures Downeast (FFD) cohort provided high-quality child care through Head Start centers while parents were in class, and the family received coaching. While FFD did not specifically target young families, a similar model could be used by programs that do.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) »

Home visiting programs by design focus on both the caregiver and their children, making them an ideal support for young families, providing the skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy. As of 2016 55% of parents served were young parents, however some programs exclusively focus on young families as their target population, such as the IL Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Care Home Visiting (I-PPYC-HV) Pilot Project. With such programs, there is an opportunity to coordinate services benefiting young families, as well as establishing program practices and policies that support young families.

Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) »

Similar to Head Start, CCDBG can be a meaningful resource to provide young families with quality child care. CCDBG funds provide states with child care subsidy payments for low-income families. Collaboration is encouraged between state TANF offices and the offices overseeing CCDBG. States like VT and NC, where TANF caseworkers may determine eligibility for child care subsidies and share this information with community child care support agencies, could prioritize identifying young parents and assessing for referral.

Medicaid / Children’s Health Insurance Program (MCD/CHIP) »

Medicaid and CHIP are two Federal-State health insurance and services programs serving low-income children, youth, and families. CO, IL, MI, ND, and VA have designed innovative two generation approaches to health coverage to mitigate the impact of maternal depression on childhood development. Replicating such programs to particularly serve young families can ensure that health and wellness are prioritize for young parents and children.
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