



Promoting Effectiveness and Sustainability of Initiatives to Improve Health and Social Outcomes: Methods that Federal Agencies Can Use to Facilitate Coordination and Integration of Funding Streams

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Programs designed to improve health and social outcomes often serve overlapping populations, and goals and initiatives to improve these outcomes involve multiple sectors. To maximize the effectiveness and sustainability of these programs, efforts should be coordinated and integrated within and across federal agencies. Agency leaders must consider creative strategies to leverage existing funding streams to ensure the success of programs within their jurisdiction. This paper outlines and provides examples of such strategies, with a focus on braiding of program funding.

Financial sustainability is key to the effective, long-term success of such multi-sector efforts. However, initiatives that involve coordinating a range of activities among multiple sectors face serious challenges in securing public and private support, such as those addressing housing and health,¹ or education and health. It is these types of multi-sector initiatives that can particularly benefit from braiding and blending of funds. *Continued on page 2*

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Braiding refers to coordinating funding and financing from several sources to support a single initiative or portfolio of interventions (usually at the community level). Braiding keeps funding/financing streams in distinguishable strands, so each funder can track resources. Blending combines different streams into one pool, under a single set of reporting and other requirements, which makes streams indistinguishable from one another as they are joined to meet needs on the ground that are unexpected or unmet by other sources.²

Federal agencies – which fund a substantial portion of initiatives designed to improve health and social outcomes – can play a key role in enabling braiding and blending to enhance health and social impact.

This brief focuses specifically on how federal agencies can facilitate *braiding* of funding streams within or across departments with a menu of options for agencies to consider. These options allow agencies to promote integration across programs even if funding streams generally retain separate accounting (and other) requirements.

It is critical that federal agencies ensure that using these options to promote coordination across programs does not result in reduction or elimination of funding or adversely affect program/service recipients. Where possible, legislation facilitating integration of funding streams and programs should require written determination that based on the best available information,

coordinating or transferring resources between agencies will not result in elimination or reduction of funding or programs or services, nor adversely affect program/service recipients. Additionally, where possible, legislation for blended programs should specifically authorize funds in order to avoid depending solely on funds diverted from existing programs.

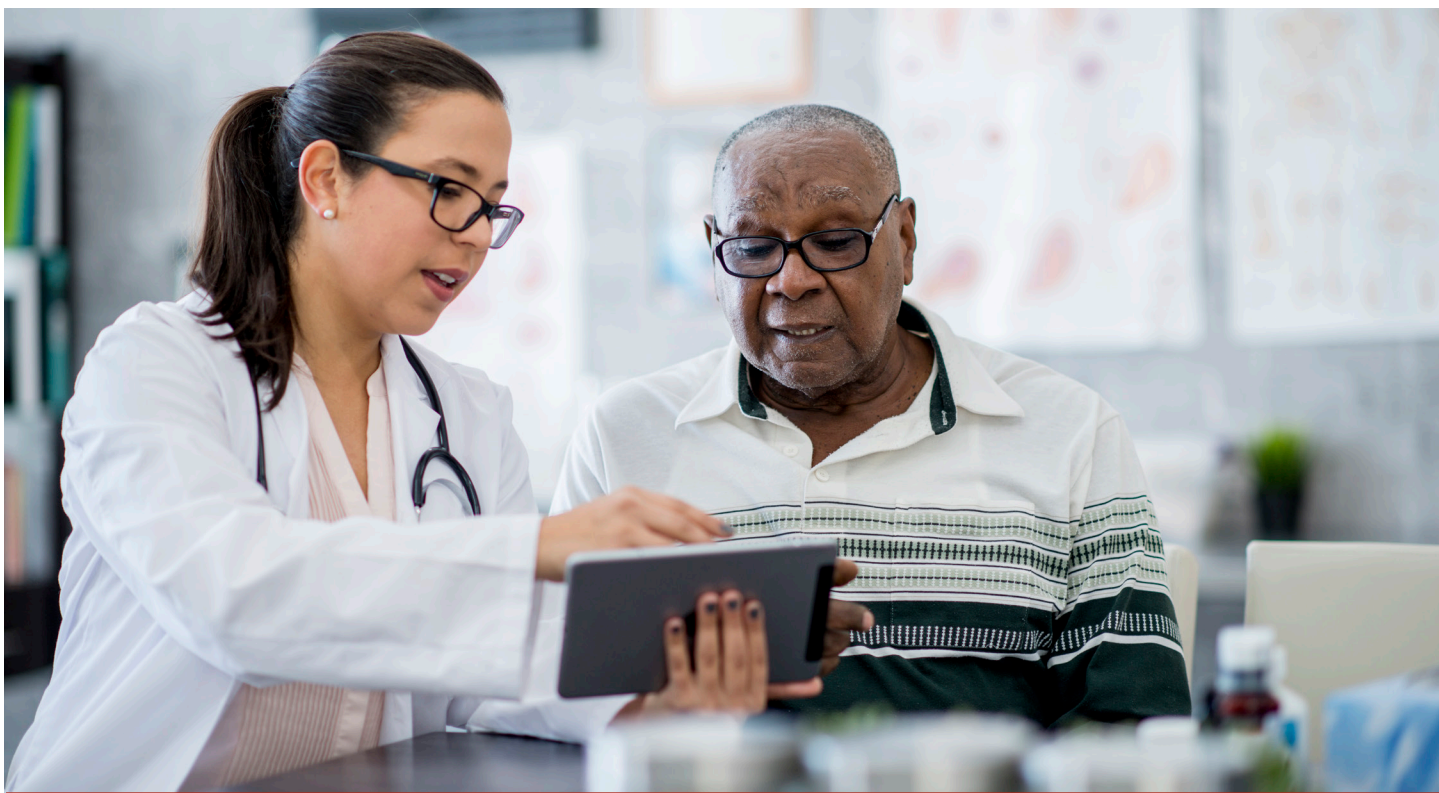
The options outlined in this brief are divided roughly into the components of a funding cycle: program design; application process; proposal requirements or preferences; planning, monitoring and reporting; technical assistance; and evaluation. Where available, examples of federal intra- or inter-agency programs that utilize each approach are included. Federal agencies considering how to promote more efficient and integrated programming by grantees or jurisdictions receiving multiple funding types can use this outline to identify methods that might be feasible and helpful toward reaching those goals.

Program Design

- Create interagency teams that work with communities to allow proposals to stem from local need, rather than siloed funding opportunities.
- ♦ The White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) linked “Community Solutions Teams” of federal employees with seven mayors around the country to offer technical assistance, increase government efficiency and build partnerships with local leaders to enact sustainable economic plans. Communities then worked to leverage federal resources from one or more agencies to implement the plan.

SC2, established in 2011, created an innovative model of federal-local partnerships to help communities rebuild and create jobs by enhancing their ability to leverage federal resources and engage in new collaborative efforts to implement economic development projects. For more information, see [here](#).³





Application Process

Create single announcement, application and grant award if requirements are closely aligned.

- The Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response's (ASPR) Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Cooperative Agreements at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Request for Application (RFA) reflected a single announcement, application and grant award, simplifying the application process for eligible states, consortia of states or political subdivisions.

ASPR's HPP and CDC's PHEP Cooperative Agreements are key elements of efforts to coordinate public health emergency

preparedness efforts. The joint announcement, released initially for FY 2012 and in subsequent fiscal years through FY 2018, seeks to align "the administrative and programmatic aspects" of ASPR's HPP and CDC's PHEP initiative. For more information, see [here](#).⁴

- Several communities that received funding from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) operated under joint grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (in the form of Sustainable Community Challenge Planning Grants) and from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) (in the form of TIGER II or Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery II planning grants). The

process to apply for these joint grants did not require applicants to complete two separate applications, potentially with different timelines and requirements. Instead the process was streamlined with one point of entry into the system to complete one application to access federal resources.

PSC began as a joint effort of HUD, DOT, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to "administer grants, programs and technical assistance available to communities to implement the principles of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities." The six "Livability Principles" of the PSC are: (1) Provide more transportation choices; (2) Promote equitable, affordable housing; (3) Enhance

economic competitiveness (e.g. through employment centers, educational investment, etc.); (4) Support existing communities (e.g. through land development and public works); (5) Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment; and (6) Value communities and neighborhoods (e.g. through investment to make neighborhoods healthier, safer and more walkable). For more information, see [here](#).⁵

Coordinate timing of grant cycles.

- ASPR's HPP and CDC's PHEP Cooperative Agreements adjusted the grant cycles from FY 2012 to FY 2018 to start and end on the same dates.
- All three agencies involved in "Now is the Time" – the U.S. Department of Education (ED), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)) – released their application solicitations in April/May and set June/July deadlines to help keep applicants on relatively aligned timelines.

"Now is the Time," a plan to reduce gun violence, make schools safer and increase access to mental health services, began in 2013. ED, SAMHSA and DOJ created three grant programs designed to work in collaboration under this umbrella. For more information, see [here](#).⁶

Require submission of grant coordination and implementation plans for review.

- Successful applicants to more than one grant in "Now is the Time" were required to provide descriptions of how they would coordinate



implementation for review by an interagency group.

Conduct joint decision-making on grant awards.

- Award decisions for the Joint Adult Drug Court Solicitation to Enhance Services, Coordination, and Treatment Competitive Grant were made jointly by the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and SAMHSA.

DOJ's BJA and SAMHSA jointly funded drug courts (i.e. "nonadversarial" court systems that work to meet the treatment and support needs of offenders with substance use disorder) through the Joint Adult Drug Court Solicitation to Enhance Services, Coordination, and Treatment Competitive Grant Announcement. The DOJ's BJA provided funding to support court and offender services, and SAMHSA funded treatment and support services. For more information, see [here](#).⁷

Recommend peer reviewers with relevant agency knowledge to review awards for other agency's programs.

- Within the coordinated efforts of the Promise/Choice Neighborhoods programs, the DOJ recommended peer reviewers with experience in public safety and neighborhood revitalization for consideration by ED for use during the Promise Neighborhoods planning grant competition review. For its part, HUD recommended peer reviewers with experience in neighborhood revitalization.

Inspired by initiatives such as the Harlem Children's Zone, ED's program, Promise Neighborhoods, supported projects that were designed to create a comprehensive continuum of education programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center, with the goal of significantly improving the educational and developmental outcomes of children from birth through college and career, in the nation's most distressed communities. For more information, see [here](#).⁸

- The Choice Neighborhoods program also draws on recommendations from ED on peer reviewers with experience in education and development, from birth through college, for

consideration by HUD for use during the Choice Neighborhoods planning and implementation grant competition review.

HUD's Choice Neighborhoods program supports efforts to transform distressed public and assisted housing into sustainable mixed-income housing that is physically and financially viable over the long term, to promote positive outcomes for families and to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into viable, mixed-income neighborhoods with access to key assets and services. For more information, see [here](#).⁹

Allow applicants to partner to meet eligibility for multiple awards if the eligibility groups differ.

- To facilitate integration of HUD and DOJ funds, FY2010 applicants for Choice Neighborhoods funding had the option to fill out an accompanying Byrne section to apply for Choice and Byrne combined

funding. Choice and Byrne eligible entities were identical, except where the Choice applicant was a for-profit entity. A for-profit Choice applicant could partner with a public entity, such as a local public housing authority or city, to apply for Byrne funding. This approach was consistent with the FY 2010 appropriations language for Choice, which required for-profit developers to partner with public entities.

DOJ's Innovations in Community Based Crime Reduction Program (formerly known as the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program) is a community-based strategy that aims to control and prevent violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in designated high crime neighborhoods across the country, providing funding to support partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations that balance targeted enforcement with prevention, intervention and neighborhood restoration services.

For more information, see [here](#).¹⁰

Give notice in the field of related funding opportunities to seed partnerships.

- Through Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC), HUD, DOT and EPA released advance notice of and requirements for future funding opportunities within its program. This afforded potential applicants sufficient time to develop plans and diverse community partnerships that integrated housing, economic and workforce development, transportation and/or infrastructure investments that they would otherwise not have had if they only became privy to grant opportunities once they were posted on Grants.gov.
- Agencies can also make applicants and recipients aware of other opportunities for community-level funding. For example, to retain their tax status, nonprofit hospitals are required to conduct community health needs assessments (CHNAs) and report on the activities they conduct or fund to promote community health ("community benefit"). Any agency making grants related to community health could encourage or require applicants to identify nonprofit hospitals in their service area and determine if the community benefit process could be integrated with their own health-related efforts. For more information, see [here](#).¹¹



Proposal Requirements or Preferences

Require applicants to apply for grants from each of the funding agencies involved in braiding efforts.

- In “Now is the Time,” SAMHSA applicants were required to also apply for ED grants to be eligible.

Only allow applicants from communities/jurisdictions that are already receiving the other grant(s) from agencies involved in braiding efforts.

- Within the “Now is the Time” program, DOJ Local School Justice Collaboration grants could only be awarded to applicants in a community that received an ED grant.

Require proof of partnership with an entity that applied to the other grant(s).

- To receive funding from “Now is the Time,” DOJ Local School Justice Collaboration applicants were required to provide proof of a partnership with a Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) that applied for the ED and SAMHSA grants.

Within an initiative, all participating agencies give priority to designated applicants within relevant grant programs.

- Communities designated as Promise Zones Communities received preferential access to many federal government programs from various agencies including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Commerce, Corporation for National and Community Service, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Labor, National Endowment for the Arts, Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Promise Zones began in 2013 as an effort to designate high-poverty rural, suburban and urban communities as Promise Zones. The federal government partnered with the Promise Zones to make a variety of improvements in specific geographic areas. For more information, see [here](#).¹²

Invest in capacity building.

- Within PSC’s Capacity Building Program, EPA and HUD identified Capacity Building Intermediaries (CBIs) with the ability to provide additional technical assistance and support for PSC grantees. Such assistance included one-on-one meetings, workshops, webinars and information sharing with the intent of developing leadership networks among PSC grantees to circulate successful ideas, strategies and tools to attain program goals. For more information, see [here](#)¹³ and [here](#).¹⁴



Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

Permit or require one planning process.

- In 2015, CDC and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced the Integrated HIV Prevention Care Plan with the goal of reducing redundancy and reporting burden.

CDC and HRSA require jurisdictions that receive funding for HIV prevention and care, through CDC's Comprehensive Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Prevention Programs for Health Departments Funding Opportunity Announcement, or through Part B of HRSA's Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, to submit a joint plan. For more information, see [here](#).¹⁵

Conduct integrated data development, auditing, monitoring and improvement efforts.

- ASPR's Hospital Preparedness Program and CDC's Public Health Emergency Preparedness initiative established integrated technical assistance, site visits and conferences. It also created aligned data systems, drew on co-development of some performance measures and shifted to coordinated budgetary requirements.

Align reporting requirements.

- Agencies can align reporting requirements (including required elements, formats, and due dates) as well as permit one joint report, in order to ease reporting burden.

Create joint evaluation criteria or metrics for success to cross-incentivize on a common set of results.

- Within the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, HUD, DOT, and EPA jointly researched and evaluated housing and transportation initiatives to assure they were effective at meeting cooperatively developed criteria and consistent with identified best practices.

Require applicants to measure and track cross-program outcomes and interim indicators.

- Applicants to the Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) program were required to propose cross-program outcome measures and interim indicators relevant to the various programs from which they could receive money. All applications were required to include at least one educational measure and at least one employment measure, but applicants could include additional measures in the domains of criminal justice, physical/mental health and/or housing.

P3 brought together the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Corporation for National Community Service, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and other related agencies to provide opportunities for communities to test innovative ways of

improving outcomes for disconnected youth. The primary focus of the program was to achieve significant improvement in educational and employment outcomes, but pilot programs could focus on other key outcomes as well. Because of statutory authority granted to the agencies for this program, some P3 pilot programs could also blend funding from various federal programs, and the agencies could waive certain intra-program requirements. For more information, see [here](#).¹⁶

Technical Assistance

Fund coordinated national training and technical assistance providers.

- In “Now is the Time,” a single national training and technical assistance provider supported implementation and sustainability of the ED, SAMHSA and DOJ grantees and developed other tools and resources, including for ED-funded sites not selected for DOJ grants.

Hold integrated grantee meetings/conferences.

- ASPR’s Hospital Preparedness Program and CDC’s Public Health Emergency Preparedness initiative held joint conferences.
- Recipients of Joint Adult Drug Court Solicitation to Enhance Services, Coordination, and Treatment Competitive Grants (DOJ and SAMHSA) attended a combined grantee meeting.

Issue guidance on best practices for coordinating braided funding based on specific programmatic knowledge.

- In 2013, the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) and HRSA issued a “Joint Informational Bulletin” – a form of sub-regulatory guidance – on coordination between the Medicaid and Ryan White programs. The bulletin clarified how the Ryan White program’s “payer of last resort” requirement intersects with Medicaid, and described permissible and impermissible ways of using Ryan White funds to support the care of people living with HIV who are enrolled in Medicaid. HRSA has also issued further guidance clarifying the permissible uses of Ryan White

funds to help Medicaid enrollees with premium and cost-sharing expenses.

HRSA administers the Ryan White Care Act, a program that provides care and treatment for people living with HIV. CMCS administers Medicaid. Many people who receive Ryan White services are also eligible for Medicaid.

- In 2015 CMCS issued an informational bulletin on housing and service integration that used programs like Money Follows the Person (MFP) and Real Choice System Change grants to demonstrate effective practices in coordinating funding between Medicaid and state and local housing organizations.¹⁷

Conduct or fund evaluations on the impact of programs funded by one agency that impact the goals of a different agency.

- HUD’s Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program includes evaluation of the programmatic impact on Medicare costs for elderly individuals living in Section 202 housing. Researchers have developed a detailed dataset that can be used moving forward to measure the impact of the Section 202 program and other HUD initiatives on CMS programs and goals.¹⁸

HUD’s Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program, authorized, in part, under Section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959, provides funding to develop and maintain housing for very low-income elderly individuals. This includes financing construction, rehabilitation, and/or acquisition of structures for this population as well as

subsidies to enable low-income elderly individuals to afford private housing. For more information, see [here](#).¹⁹

- Researchers investigated a number of outcomes in families who participated in HUD’s Moving to Opportunity Demonstration housing assistance program, including rates of mental health disorders,²⁰ obesity and diabetes.²¹ These results are directly applicable to the goals of federal agencies like SAMHSA, CMS and CDC.

HUD’s Moving to Opportunity Demonstration sought to understand the short-term impact of alternative housing assistance on Section 8 households as well as its long-term effects on housing, employment, and educational attainment. Between 1994 and 1998, HUD enrolled and randomized 4,604 volunteer families from public housing communities in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York. Demonstration participants received either vouchers to move to low-poverty neighborhoods along with enhanced mobility counseling; traditional, geographically unrestricted vouchers but no counseling or other services; or neither vouchers nor services. Researchers followed-up with families in the different arms to evaluate the impact of the interventions provided. For more information, see [here](#).²²

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