



Consulting

June 16, 2022

Colorado Home Visiting Financing Options

A project of Start Early Consulting



Who we are

For nearly 40 years, Start Early has brought expertise in program delivery, research and evaluation, professional development and policy and advocacy, in partnership with communities and other experts, to drive systemic change so that millions more children, families and educators can thrive.

Start Early consulting supports our partners to ensure that prenatal to five systems are high-quality and integrated, are resourced to be sustainable, and are designed to serve children and families from historically marginalized communities.

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Overview

- Context and process
- TANF overview
- State profiles & lessons learned: TANF
- ESSA overview
- State profiles & lessons learned: ESSA
- Recommendations and considerations for accessing TANF and ESSA
- Discussion

Context, Scope of Work, and Process

Context:

- Creation of the CO Department of Early Childhood
- Home Visiting Investment Task Force Finance Workgroup explored federal funding streams leveraged by other state systems to expand existing capacity by 20% over the five fiscal years (by June 30, 2026)
- Deep-dive into 1-2 federal funding streams that show promise for expansion of the CO HV system

Scope of work: Review current funding policies and recommend how to maximize federal funding (including blending/braiding funding) to increase access to HV

Process:

Broad exploration of funding streams →

Narrowing to TANF and ESSA based on criteria and Finance Work Group interest →

Building profiles on TANF and ESSA to identify opportunities for HV →

Interviewing state and CO experts →

Developing recommendations for CO informed by lessons from other states and districts

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- Local administration by County Departments of Social/Human Services of formula allocation
- \$167M in federal spending + \$285M in MOE = **\$452M federal, county, and state funds**
- Children and households with children or pregnant women who meet income eligibility requirements
- Can be used to pay food, shelter, childcare and other non-medical expenses job readiness training, job skills training, vocational training
- Newly passed HB22-1259 will increase basic cash assistance payments to TANF enrolled families, expand eligibility, and minimize first sanctions
 - Will tap county and state TANF reserves (which currently total \$87.5M) to pay for new costs
- Clear guidance that TANF can fund HV, comprehensively
- Communities using significant TANF funds for HV:
 - Adams County: \$591,279
 - Summit County: \$68,133
 - Logan County: \$26,795

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Home Visiting Program

Background:

- Initial \$158.5M multi-year set-aside of TANF funding from 2018-19 budget plus additional \$90.3M in TANF and state general funds
- County welfare departments apply for funds and administer or subcontract to HV providers
- Models are generally HomVEE approved, but with local flexibility
- Counties may serve families outside of TANF-enrolled population
- Evaluation shows improvements in physical and mental health for clients; participants report improved parent-child relationships and capacity to support their child's development.
- \$500 can support misc. family expenses

Lessons learned:

- Scale-up of existing programs with TANF funds is easier than launching new programs
- The voluntary nature of services must be clearly communicated to families
- Coordination across TANF and HV can improve participant experiences, but HV and TANF providers must confront bias against families accessing benefits and mistrust by families of state systems

Minnesota Family Investment Program

Background:

- \$8.56M in federal TANF funds supports MN home visiting
- “State led, County run” system: Community Health Boards (CBHs), Tribal Governments, and non-profits submit plans to MN Dept. of Health which administers TANF and other HV funds based on a **formula**
- All but two counties that use TANF funding to support home visiting fund evidence-based programs, although evidence-based programming is not a requirement of TANF
- **Federal** TANF/MFIP recipients are automatically eligible for HV, state-funded beneficiaries are not
- County social service agency and the local public health department may mutually agree to utilize home visitors as MFIP employment and training service providers
- Must bill Medicaid first before accessing TANF funds

Lessons learned:

- Tribal Governments determine cost/family upfront and grant TANF funds accordingly
- Cost coverage issues require agencies to consider % of caseloads eligible for TANF to avoid deficits
- Braiding across fee-for-service reimbursement (Medicaid) versus other grants requires robust infrastructure that is more challenging for smaller counties

Washington WorkFirst program and HV partnership

Background:

- Braiding HV funds (MIECHV, TANF, general state funds, Dedicated Marijuana Act) in HV Services Account (HVSA)
- HV is on a menu of supports offered to TANF participating families. While voluntary, participation can meet WorkFirst participation requirements.
- Referrals typically flow from TANF case managers to HV
- Shared client database encourages communication

Lessons learned:

- Joint PD for HV and TANF staff has helped build shared understanding and mitigate the impact of staff turnover on the partnership
- TANF-enrolled families may have elevated risk factors or needs that may make this population more work-intensive to serve and retain, but enhanced support through HV has produced strong outcomes in line with TANF program goals

CO Tri-County Health Department Nurse Support Program

**Information was recently added to the most updated version of the memo*

- Nurse home visiting model based off NFP serving Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties since 1998
- TANF funds for 3 FTE nurse home visitors plus administrative costs
- Referrals from TANF caseworkers and occasional community referrals
- Families must be TANF eligible and have a child under 6 months of age at enrollment. Services continue up to child's first birthday.
- Supplemental Brief Parenting Program supports TANF caseworkers in cases where the caregiver or child has medical or behavioral concern that may be barrier to the caregiver's employment

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Federal K-12 education law with a broad focus on school readiness, literacy, and academic achievement outcomes
- Title I, Part A of the ESSA allows LEAs to provide programs to improve educational outcomes for eligible children from birth to the age at which the LEA provides a free public elementary education
- Formula grant and local decision making
 - Colorado Dept. Of Education distributes to local education agencies, who detail proposed use of funds in Consolidated Application covering ESSA Title I, II, III IV and V funds
- Title I (targeted and schoolwide programs) and Title III (Supplemental Supports for English Learners) are most commonly leveraged for HV
 - Targeted: children identified as failing or at risk of failing to meet academic standards
 - Schoolwide: school with a poverty percentage of 40% or more
 - English learner specific programs under Title III
 - Family engagement and kindergarten readiness

CDE data scan & UPK implications

- Keyword scan by CDE of Consolidated Applications across school years 2018-19 through 2021-22.
 - Considerable caveats but data offers a starting point to learn from districts already exploring HV and ECE funding under ESSA
- 25 LEAs report budgeting for some activity related to “home visits”
- 18 districts report budgeting for preschool
 - Could expansion of universal preschool or future federal increases for preschool free up more Title I funds for HV?
- Potential next step: identify and build relationships with LEAs to understand current and possible use of Title I funds

Texas PAT & ESSA

Background:

- Several Texas LEAs fund PAT HV. Northwest ISD:
 - Pairing Title I with other dedicated funds that support teen parents
 - Funding core HV salaries through Title I, with recent cuts as the district re-prioritized ESSA funds
 - Must demonstrate they are working to enroll low-income families but are not limited to enrolling based on income-eligibility

Lessons learned:

- Funding variability across districts and year-to-year make it complicated to scale with intention and coordination
- Longitudinal linked student data and surveys of kindergarten teachers have been helpful to show school readiness and developmental gains associated with HV
- Programs described “flying under the radar” of LEA leadership who may not understand HV

Colorado Springs D11

Background:

- PAT HV offered to participants in Family Literacy Program (Adult Basic Education programming)
- 20-25 families enrolled in a given school-year
- Requires braided funding to support non-personnel costs (private grants)

Lessons learned:

- Minimal barriers or added requirements associated with Title I
- Serving highly mobile families may be difficult if they leave the district
- Co-location of the Family Literacy Program and PAT HV builds trust, facilitates enrollment, and boosts peer engagement
- Paying HV staff on an hourly basis (versus salaried) creates additional administrative burdens in drawing down and braiding other funding streams to cover gaps in Title I funds

Recommendations for Accessing TANF

Stakeholder education and awareness building

- Identify tables for coordination and cross-county communication in the absence of a top-down system of administration for TANF funding
- Build relationships with the Colorado Works Allocation Committee and the TANF Coalition (lead by the Colorado Children's Campaign) focusing on shared outcomes
- Explore use of guidance for TANF use from CDHS, or example MOUs from counties already leveraging funds

Local planning

- Consider how TANF funds could support scale-up and access to Title IV-E dollars

Administration

- Consider cost adequacy and compensation in structuring contracts between county TANF programs and HV
- Invest early in messaging, defining roles and responsibilities, and evaluation of any existing partnerships before larger efforts to scale

Recommendations for Accessing ESSA

Stakeholder education and awareness building

- Consider avenues to convene and educate LEA leadership about home visiting
- Messaging strategies: kindergarten readiness outcomes, family engagement, ability of home visitors to support Child Find obligations

Local planning

- Consider where Title I funds could support expansion in an *existing* HV program that serves students in that district
- Define priority populations: Title I schoolwide programs are not tied to specific student eligibility criteria, which requires local planning and clarity on who will be served and what other services exist in the community
- Discuss how expansion of UPK in Colorado could increase the availability of resources prior held by LEAs for services for preschoolers to support HV expansion

Administration

- Explore avenues to co-locate services within existing family-facing LEA resources
- Prioritize ESSA for models with documented school readiness outcomes

Considerations for next steps & discussion questions

- Research into funding adequacy (cost modeling)
- Prioritization of expansion: geography and population
- Building local awareness of HV at tables for decision makers on TANF, ESSA
- Investing in family and community engagement

Discuss:

- What are the next steps to operationalize the recommendations in the memo?
- How can the Task Force support *coordination* across models and counties as intermediaries consider building relationships and requests at the local level on TANF and ESSA funding?
- What questions or areas for further research and discussion are coming up for you?



Every child has equitable opportunity to reach their full potential to thrive in school and in life.

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Please send additional feedback or questions to Kayla Goldfarb
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