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# Aligning Policies and Funding to Support Youth Programs

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The Finance Project

Ready by 21

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# About The Finance Project

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- The Finance Project is a specialized non-profit research and consulting firm for public and private sector leaders nationwide.
- The Finance Project helps leaders finance and sustain initiatives that lead to better futures for children, families, and communities.



# Introduction

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- Finding adequate funding to support programs and services for youth is an on-going challenge
- Variety of financing options
  - Making better use of existing resources
  - Maximizing federal and state revenue
  - Creating more flexibility in existing resources
  - Building public-private partnerships
  - Creating new dedicated revenue streams



# Introduction

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- In an era of tight budgets, many leaders are looking for ways to make better use of all resources in the system
- This presentation will explore creative ways to leverage, blend and braid funding to support strong programs and systems.

# Increasing Flexibility in Funding Streams

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- Differences in funding streams create strong disincentives/barriers to coordinate or combine resources:
  - Philosophical and cultural differences
  - Eligibility requirements
  - Program regulations
  - Funding flow and administration

# Three General Approaches

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- Coordination
  - Program or intermediary, or community level strategy; least complex
- Pooling
  - State or county level strategy; more complex
- Decategorization
  - State or county level strategy; most complex

# Strategy 1: Coordination

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- Entails using multiple funding sources together to support seamless services (“braiding”)
- A program, intermediary or community level strategy
- Requires significant organization and record keeping (e.g. planning, MIS, cost-accounting for tracking expenditures by funding source)
- Federal, state, and community leaders can support efforts through coordinating structures and functions, as well as technical assistance and training

# Strategy 1: Coordination

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- Examples
  - Lincoln, Nebraska: school-community partnerships use 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and CCDF funds in tandem
  - In South Dakota and Montana, state child care resource and referral agencies provide TA to all OST programs on various funding source rules and regulations

## Strategy 2: Pooling

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- Combining monies from several agencies or programs into a single unified funding stream
  - Pooling state general funds and federal block grants, and handing them down to counties and communities as local “block grants”
  - Replacing a number of separate contracts from state or county agencies with one “master contract”
- Opportunities for greater local decision making and use of funds according to local needs and priorities
- Typically requires state agency approval and cooperations

## Strategy 2: Pooling

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- Example
  - The state of Michigan pools funding from the state share of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Juvenile Justice Programs, and Title V grants together to create a \$5.5 million grant program to fund before and after school programs.

## Strategy 3: Decategorization

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- Removing, reducing, or aligning requirements and regulations for relevant state and federal funding streams
- Typically requires either state legislative or state agency approval

## Strategy 3: Decategorization

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- Kansas City streamlined application processes for school meals and child care subsidies
- Several states have exempted school-based programs from CCDF licensing requirements

# Questions to Consider

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- Are there opportunities to use resources already in the system better by coordinating, pooling, or decategorizing funds?
- Who are the relevant decision-makers, and how can you engage them?

# Lessons Learned

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- Financing strategies are a means of achieving desired ends
- Most effective when developed within the context of a larger planning process
  - Develop a clear vision and results orientation
  - Establish collaborative planning processes and structures
  - Understand resource options and allocate funds strategically
  - Develop needed infrastructure

# Resources

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## Finding Funding:

[http://www.financeproject.org/fedfund\\_search.cfm](http://www.financeproject.org/fedfund_search.cfm)

## Blending and Braiding Resources:

[http://www.financeproject.org/publications/FPBlendingFunds1\\_24.pdf](http://www.financeproject.org/publications/FPBlendingFunds1_24.pdf)

## Financing Youth Programs:

[http://www.financeproject.org/publications/ThinkingBroadly\\_PM.pdf](http://www.financeproject.org/publications/ThinkingBroadly_PM.pdf)

# Contacting Us

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