Research and Analysis: FINDING FUNDING

The Finance Project helps state, community and nonprofit leaders understand what federal, state, local, and/or private funding sources are available to support their programs and services; develops guides to translate information into user-friendly formats; and creates tools to help leaders determine what funding sources hold the most promise.

How can information and tools to find funding help?

Increasingly, leaders of initiatives supporting children, families, and communities need access to up-to-date information about the array of funding sources that can support their work and guidance on how to access those funding sources. As fiscal constraints increase, leaders need to think creatively about not just funding sources that are well-known, but also those that hold potential promise. The Finance Project works to help leaders:

• Identify federal, state, or private funding streams that support their goals;
• Understand how funds flow, funds available, who is eligible to apply, matching requirements, and grant approval processes;
• Consider new partnerships with schools and community-based organizations that are eligible for a different set of funding sources; and
• Determine which funding sources are “best bets” based on alignment with initiative goals, flexibility and stability of funding, the amount of funding generated, administrative requirements, and political considerations.

Services offered by The Finance Project

The Finance Project customizes its support to meet the specific needs and goals of each client.

• Data Collection and Analysis: Identify the range of funding sources that can support a specified set of services, analyze available funding sources that support initiative goals, and share findings through a written report.
• Development of Funding Guides and Databases: Develop a published or searchable web-based guide to relevant sources of funding.
• Follow-up Technical Assistance and Training: Provide online and phone support, conduct in-person meetings, and develop tailored resources and tools to support leaders’ use of funding information to develop a strategic financing plan.

Examples of Our Work

The Finance Project has experience in identifying funding sources to support a range of policy areas, including afterschool, early care, workforce development, and foster care. The Finance Project has also developed and maintains an up-to-date, online database that enables leaders to search all of The Finance Project’s federal funding guides. Recent examples of our work include:
• **Annie E. Casey Foundation Making Connections Initiative.** The Finance Project developed a guide that highlights federal, state/local, and private funding sources that are particularly relevant for early care and education services to support grantees from this national initiative. The guide includes considerations, lessons learned, and examples of how to successfully access particular types of funding, as well as a framework to help leaders assess and prioritize which funding opportunities represent the best options for their particular initiatives.

• **Asset Building.** With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and in partnership with the American Public Human Services Association’s Center for Workers with Disabilities, The Finance Project developed a guide which profiles 71 federal funding sources that can support asset-building activities and services, including financial education, savings and banking services, housing and home ownership, business ownership, tax benefits and tax preparation services, and infrastructure supports. The guide also offers tips for accessing these funds and examples of asset-building initiatives that have used creative financing strategies.

• **Child Traumatic Stress.** With support from the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, The Finance Project developed a guide describing 69 federal funding sources that can potentially support child trauma services. The guide also provides policy and program leaders with guidance on accessing federal funds, and strategies for maximizing federal funds and building partnerships.

• **Harlem Children’s Zone.** The Finance Project developed a detailed matrix of federal funding sources that could support replication of the Harlem Children’s Zone program model in other communities. Funding sources were reviewed based on a number of criteria, including alignment with components of the program model; the amount of funding available; who is eligible; how communities access funds, potential partners and support for community capacity-building.

• **Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.** The Finance Project developed a guide to federal funding sources supporting services for youth aging out of foster care to support grantees from this national initiative. The guide provides detailed descriptions of available funding sources and considerations in accessing different types of funds.

• **Out-of-School Time and Community Initiatives.** With support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Finance Project developed a guide of over 100 federal funding sources that may be used to support afterschool programming. It includes guidance on accessing federal funds and advice on strategies for incorporating federal funds into a comprehensive financing plan. The Finance Project developed an update to the guide in 2007.

• **Youth Programs.** With support from Philip Morris, USA, an Altria Company, The Finance Project developed a guide to federal funding sources that may be used to support youth programming. The guide also highlights youth initiatives that use creative financing strategies to support their programming, and offers tips for accessing funds and implementing financing strategies.

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