



Women and Families Innovation Initiative: Demonstration, Pilot, Fund

Today, women make up more than half of the U.S. population and constitute almost half of the workforce. While women have made progress in their economic security and health care coverage over the past few years, women still face a number of significant and unique challenges; and these challenges are often dual-generational, impacting children in multiple ways. For example:

Female Veterans¹:

- *Though Veteran homelessness has been dropping since 2010, female veterans are overrepresented within the homeless population despite coordinated efforts between the Veteran's Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.*
- *Female veterans are also disproportionately experiencing joblessness, addiction, and depression during the period of their reintegration.*

Girls and Women in School and in the Workforce:

- *Despite progress in academic achievement, access, and school support, girls -- particularly girls of color -- continue to face barriers in educational achievement. Black girls' suspension rate is six times higher than that of their white female counterparts, and over 30 percent of African-American girls do not graduate from high school on time according to recent figures.²*
- *Almost 5 million college students are raising children, and women represent over 70% of that population.³*
- *15 million women work in low-wage jobs, making up 2/3 of the low-wage workforce,⁴ and 75 percent of women with school-age children work.⁵*

Incarcerated Women:

- *More than 2.5 million children in the U.S. have an incarcerated parent and approximately 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration at some point in their lives.⁶*
- *Of women incarcerated, it is estimated that over 60 percent have children under the age of 18 and 50 percent are the sole or primary caregivers.⁷*

Female Victims of Violence⁸:

- *1 in 3 women have been victims of some form of physical violence by an intimate partner within their lifetime; 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year.*
- *Physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive adverse health effects, along with economic impacts, have been linked with intimate partner violence.*

¹ <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/ahar-2013-part1.pdf>

² <http://www.colorlines.com/articles/new-report-details-barriers-black-girls-success>

³ file:///Users/nicolettruhe/Downloads/C424_Student%20Parents_final.pdf

⁴ <https://nwlc.org/resources/chartbook-womens-overrepresentation-low-wage-jobs/>

⁵ https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/30090826/working9to5_1016.pdf

⁶ <https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/files/nrccfi-fact-sheet-2014.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201401/when-mom-prison-supporting-incarcerated-women-and-their-children-28324>

⁸ <http://ncadv.org/learn-more/statistics>

At the same time, current government decision-making about policies and funding allocations is too often focused on inputs and outputs rather than results; it is constrained by the fact that resources are often siloed and locked into specific providers or programs; and it is impeded by limited availability of, and access to, data.

In order to make more effective decisions about how best to serve women and their children, and address the challenges identified above, the government should emphasize data and results in the allocation of federal funding through the development of a three part **Women and Families Innovation Initiative**.

Policy Proposals:

I.IMMEDIATE ACTION: DEMONSTRATION

Targeted Federal Funding for Women and Families

The next President could designate the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as the lead Federal administering agency responsible for facilitating, through memoranda of understanding (MOU) among federal agencies, the pooling of discretionary resources that will be used for an **Innovation for Women and Families Demonstration**.

- Under the MOU, designated federal agencies would be required to allocate 5% of particular discretionary funding streams for pooling into this demonstration fund.
- Grants from the pooled funding would be made to existing, proven intermediaries who will then subgrant to innovative, evidence-based community organizations.
- OMB would designate a lead agency to receive and administer the pooled funding and to make and administer grants to such intermediaries.
- Appropriate, reliable, and objective outcome-measurement methodology would be required, including a tiered-evidence framework for allocating the funds, so that the Federal government can ensure achievement of specified outcomes.

II. REVISED FISCAL YEAR 17 BUDGET REQUEST: PILOTS

Cross Agency Innovation Pilots

The next President could include in the February 2017 revised budget request for Fiscal Year 2017 a new authority for **Women and Families Innovation Pilots** that seeks to identify, through demonstration pilots and appropriate waiver authorities, cost-effective strategies for providing services to women and families at the State, regional, or local level. These pilots could involve two or more Federal programs (administered by one or more Federal agencies) and have related policy goals to achieve better results for women and families through making better use of federal grant resources.

- A lead Federal administering agency for the cross agency innovation pilots would be designated in appropriations bill language which would additionally provide broad waiver authority with respect to certain discretionary grant accounts associated with the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- The lead agency would solicit on behalf of the federal agencies applications from states and localities wishing to utilize the authority provided in the appropriations bill language to waive existing program laws and regulations and to allow such applicants to pool federal funding they already receive via

formula and discretionary grants in order to sponsor more coherent, targeted, and successful strategies for serving the needs of women and their families.

- The bill language would provide authority for the lead agency to engage other agencies and apply the waiver authority as state and local governments identify in their applications other desirable grant funds not administered by these specifically named Departments.
- The pilots will be focused on improving the education, social, economic, and health care challenges facing women and their families.
- Appropriate, reliable, and objective outcome-measurement methodology would be required, including a tiered-evidence framework⁹ for allocating the funds, so that the Federal government and a participating community can ensure achievement of the specified outcomes that the cross agency innovation pilots are designed to achieve.
- Pilots will be approved based on identified criteria in the appropriations bill language, to include additional points for programs/interventions headed or created by women or that involve a dual or multi-generational approach.
- Lessons from the pilots would be incorporated by the new administration as it later proposes broader changes to federal social welfare legislation and policy.

III. FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET REQUEST: FUND

Federal Agency Innovation Fund

The next President could designate the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as the lead Federal administering agency (another agency could be designated) responsible for a newly appropriated fund: the **Women and Families Innovation Fund**.

- In the Fiscal Year 2018 Presidential budget, a new fund could be requested at an amount totaling \$50 Million for a Women and Families Innovation Fund.
- Grants from newly appropriated funding would be made to existing, proven intermediaries who will then subgrant to innovative, community-based organizations.
- OMB would designate a lead agency to receive and administer the new fund and to make and administer grants to such intermediaries.
- The fund would be focused on priority areas: economic security, educational achievement, healthy lives, and dual or multi-generational opportunities.
- Appropriate, reliable, and objective outcome-measurement methodology would be required, including a tiered-evidence framework for allocating the funds, so that the Federal government can ensure achievement of specified outcomes.
- Match funding will be required of successful grant applicants at a 2:1 ratio shared between the intermediary and subgrantees. Match funding will not be subject to federal requirements regarding allowable use of funds. Exceptions/waivers will be available for rural programs, programs headed or created by women, and programs that involve a dual or multi-generational approach.

⁹ Tiered-evidence is defined as categories of evidence based on the strength of the evidence (strong, moderate, promising and under evaluation) associated with a program or intervention. The tiered-evidence definition included in the Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95) would be the suggested language to use.