ECONOMIC STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES TOOLKIT: WORK AND WORK SUPPORTS FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES

OVERVIEW

Women in Government is a national, non-profit, non-partisan organization of women state legislators. We work to connect women state legislators with resources, networking and leadership opportunities, expert forums, and events throughout the country so they can create informed and sound policy on a variety of topics, including health care, education, the environment, energy, and more.

This new policy toolkit reflects WIG’s decade-long work with policy makers on how to promote economic stability for families and children. We know that strong states are made up of strong neighborhoods and thriving families. Last year with the support of a bipartisan task force of legislators, WIG produced a comprehensive compendium to help policy makers be change makers, especially for vulnerable families. This toolkit has been developed to hone in on best practices and resources to mobilize policy makers around work and work supports to help families get work and keep work.

Despite a strong economy with low unemployment, we have a subset of the population that is not thriving. The child poverty rate in the United States still remains 17.5% despite economic gains. In order to allow all to access the strong economy and overcome barriers, work supports are needed so that people can prepare for work and keep work. We must create an employment and training system that includes a focus on low skilled workers. and values the investment in work supports. Getting parents into jobs that pay a living wage and assuring that children are in safe, quality settings continues to be our priorities for our constituents. Investments in work supports help families be self-sufficient, which is the most important aspect of child wellbeing.
WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS:
For those who have been left behind by the booming economy, workforce supports are necessary resources to ensure that people are able to be prepared for and keep work. If we are to match the needs of our economy with the reality of our workforce we must invest in employment and training initiatives that include industry at the table to identify needs and to commit to investing in the education and training necessary to address our skills gap and to put folks on a career path.

When workers are prepared, they find it easier to learn new skills, excel at their jobs, and consider new job offers. Comprehensive jobs training programs and vocational training programs, which may be run through community colleges, provide individuals with the skills they need to successfully enter the workforce.

The Urban Institute has conducted numerous studies on workforce development and has found that employment and earnings results improve when job training is closely matched to real jobs and job requirements. Work-related training may include on-the-job training, sectoral training, career pathways, and apprenticeship programs.³

STATE BEST PRACTICE: OREGON
Jobs PLUS is Oregon’s comprehensive jobs training and workforce development program that is hailed as one of the best in the country. It emphasizes providing participants with interview skills, resume-building techniques, and job-hunting practices, while still providing them with the full amount of benefits they are eligible for.²

Participating employers are reimbursed at the Oregon minimum wage, plus payroll taxes and workers compensation costs, for the first month of the six month JOBS Plus period, and minimum wage minus one dollar for the remaining five months. The extra dollar per hour deducted starting the second month is put into an Individual Education Account for the JOBS Plus participant to use for continuing education after finishing the JOBS Plus experience.

When a cost benefit study was run on the JOBS Plus program, it showed that participants not only were able to receive valuable employment experience but that they had high rates of getting hired following program completion, with a substantial number moving off Oregon’s TANF and SNAP programs. In addition, upon completion of the program participants’ average hourly salaries increased by $1.56 in 2015 and by $1.74 in 2016.⁴

National Participation in Postsecondary Programs Offering Workforce Credentials in 2016 ⁵
- Coding Boot Camps - 18,000
- Workforce System Training - 161,000
- Apprenticeships - 505,000
- Community College - 7,200,000

Tennessee Promise
The first component of the Drive to 55 Program launched in 2015, offering high school graduates two years of community or technical college tuition-free.

Results: Enrollment grew 13% in just one year.⁷

Tennessee Reconnect:
Tennessee Reconnect is the second component of the Drive to 55 Program, and it provides grants for students 25 and older to earn an associate degree or technical certificate free of tuition or fees.

Results: Expectations had been that 8,000 to 10,000 adults would apply for this program in its first year starting August 2018, but almost 31,000 adults have applied for the program.⁸

Workforce Preparedness: Community Colleges
Community colleges are a key tool to meeting workforce development needs. Many offer certifications in career sectors including applied health, automotive technology, public safety, and accounting. Despite their relative affordability in comparison to college, with the average cost for a full-time student in 2016–2017 being $3,520 annually, community college remains unaffordable for sectors of the U.S. population.⁵

Tennessee’s Drive to 55 Program is an initiative to increase the Tennessee population with a college education to 55% by 2025. It is unique, as it’s the first of its kind to offer community college to both high school graduates and adults.⁶

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BEST STATE BASED PRACTICE: IOWA

In 2014, Iowa passed the “Iowa Apprenticeship Act.” With an annual appropriation of $3 million, Iowa supports grants to subsidize the cost of apprenticeship programs. Eligible items for grant requests include classroom instruction, purchasing new equipment, and establishing new locations to expand apprenticeship training. As of 2015, 67 employers had submitted applications to receive grant funds. Those who participate in Iowa apprenticeship programs have been able to access jobs that pay well above the minimum wage; in fact, the average wage for a fully proficient worker who completes a Registered Apprenticeship in Iowa is about $60,820 annually.

The apprenticeship program in Iowa has seen valuable results beyond training for workers. Grant recipients surveyed annually have reported improved trust, transparency, and better relationships among the business community, trade organizations and public agencies in Iowa.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

Apprenticeships are an important workforce support to help people prepare for and keep work. Apprenticeships can provide opportunities for a diverse range of populations including women, veterans, and those with disabilities.

Apprentices are typically trained by experienced workers in the industry of choice, starting off earning a half salary and having their pay increased as their training progresses. Apprenticeships can be financially lucrative; according to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, salaries for the top occupations with apprenticeship programs exceeded the $37,040 median annual wage in all occupations in 2016. In addition to boosting the salaries of workers, there is a considerable return on investments from the public and private sectors. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor on workforce training programs in Washington state found that apprenticeships not only increased workers’ earnings but also that for every dollar of public funding spent the rate of return for taxpayers was $23.

MEASURES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE STATES:

1. Convening public-private partnerships to develop high-quality, effective programs that address the workforce needs of the state.
2. Building a talent pipeline through pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship
3. Establishing a comprehensive plan to integrate apprenticeship as part of a state’s broader workforce strategy.
4. Establish a dedicated funding stream to support labor management workforce intermediaries, meaning a third party arbiter, in order to meet current need and future training needs.
5. Provide access to wraparound services, such as child care, transportation assistance, and other resources that make it easier for workers to enter into and successfully complete training programs.
6. Programs with a strong connection to industry and sufficient services to help workers complete the program is helpful to seeing higher success.
7. Directing state funds to establish new and grow existing programs.
EARNED INCOME TAX CREDITS (EITCs)

The Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC or EIC) is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. The EITC provides a credit equal to a percentage of workers’ earnings up to a maximum credit, with larger credits available to families with more children. After the credit reaches the maximum amount, it stays the same until earnings reach the phaseout point, at which point the credit declines with each additional dollar of worker income until no credit is available.\textsuperscript{13}

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, EITCs are “the single most effective antipoverty program for working age people;” as of 2016 it has lifted 6.5 million people out of poverty, including 3.3 million children.\textsuperscript{14} EITCs enjoy broad bipartisan support because they encourage and reward work, and increased earnings allow parents to better meet the needs of their children.

Federal EITCs are provided through legislation passed by Congress. To qualify, individuals must meet certain requirements (such as work requirements and earning within a certain income bracket) and file a tax return with the IRS, even if the individual does not owe any tax or is not required to file. The federal EITC reduces the amount of federal taxes owed, which may provide or increase a tax refund for workers and working families with a low to moderate income.\textsuperscript{15}

State EITCs are passed individually by states and are separate from the federal EITC. Most of the state EITCs have some basis on the federal EITC as they use federal EITC eligibility rules, and the amount is a specific percentage of the federal EITC. Of the twenty-nine states with a state EITC, twenty-three states and Washington, D.C. have a fully refundable state EITC in order to offset state and local taxes.\textsuperscript{10} Having a refundable state EITC allows families keep more of what they earn, which can allow them to stay at work despite low wages. State EITCs are an effective work support for low-income workers that do not strain state budgets; in fact, in states with income taxes cost less than 1 percent of state tax revenues annually.\textsuperscript{16}

STATE BEST PRACTICES: CALIFORNIA

It is incumbent upon states to proactively assess their state EITCs and make changes as necessary. When California’s EITC launched in 2015, it helped lift more than a quarter-million people out of deep poverty. However, the income eligibility threshold was set so low in 2015 that a single mother of two, working a minimum-wage job, would have earned too much to qualify for the EITC. Self-reported, freelancing income—the fastest-growing kind of income—was also ineligible for the EITC.

In 2017, California chose to modify its state EITC, increasing the number of qualifying families from 600,000 to 1.7 million. This was done by increasing the income eligibility from $14,600 to $22,300 while also including freelancing and self-reported income. This kind of income, which represents nearly all income growth in California, is earned disproportionately by women and people of color.\textsuperscript{17}

California’s success should encourage other states to not just implement their own programs, but expand them as well, so they are up-to-date and can help the most people possible.
Family Medical Leave Act

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allow up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year, unless otherwise noted by state law. Employees may take FMLA to care for a new child, to care for a newly placed child for adoption or foster care, to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, or to take medical leave due to personal health condition.

17 states and Washington, D.C. have expanded the benefits of FMLA. These expansions include extending the length or reasons for leave and the benefits included during leave.

The states that have expanded FMLA include California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. Most states that have expanded FMLA have broadened the definition of family to include domestic partnerships and civil unions. The Department of Labor amended FMLA in 2015 to expand the definition of “spouse” to include same-sex couples.

Approximately 20 million people take unpaid FMLA leave each year, with 21% using it for the birth or adoption of a child, 55% using it for their own medical conditions, and 18% using it to care for a child, spouse, or parent.

FAMILY LEAVE

Paid Family Leave

Paid Family Leave (PFL) is a work support where employees are paid by employers for a period of time to recover from a serious health issue, take care of an ill family member, or take time to bond with a new child, allowing them to take leave and keep their jobs without suffering a loss of income. PFL is a benefit that employers in the United States may choose, but are not required, to provide to their employees.

Six states - California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington - and Washington, D.C. have passed PFL legislation that will go into effect at the start of 2020. PFL length ranges four to twelve weeks, depending on the state. Additionally, PFL in most states will pay the employee up to 50% of his or her average weekly wages, although some states offer higher compensation. For example, New York’s compensation increases incrementally until 2020 when the legislation is fully enacted. Washington state also offers up to 90% of weekly wages to employees on PFL. Some states have expanded PFL to include taking time off to care for family of a service member deployed on active duty.

There is a considerable gap between access to paid leave and unpaid leave. According to a survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016, 14% of civilian workers had access to paid leave while 88% had access to unpaid leave, largely due to FMLA.

STATE BEST PRACTICES: RHODE ISLAND

The Rhode Island Temporary Caregiver Insurance program provides 4 weeks of paid leave for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a new child or to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Up to 30 weeks of paid leave is provided for a worker’s own disability. The program is funded by employee payroll taxes and administered through the state’s temporary disability program. This program provides a minimum benefit of $7 and maximum of $752 per week.

NOTE: There are several federal initiatives currently in the works to update the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FAMILY Act would give workers 66% of their normal wages during paid leave and has bipartisan support. Additionally, there is some support for expanding FMLA to include six weeks of PFL.

EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE: Between 89 percent and 99 percent of California employers say PFL has had no effect or a positive effect on productivity, profitability, turnover and morale, according to a report by Ms. Milkman and Eileen Appelbaum, economists at the Center for Economic and Policy Research. Eighty-seven percent say it has not increased costs. Nine percent say they saved money, because of decreased turnover or benefit payments.

Further, it is high tech companies that traditionally offer some of the richest parental leave programs. Generally, tech companies cite immense benefits of paid family leave programs, such as: attracting and retraining top talent; creating policies that align with their company’s social values; and creating a more equitable work environment. Overall, when partnering with businesses, PFL can be a policy that benefits both employee and employer.

EMPLOYER EXAMPLE: Amy Fields from Deloitte, the professional services network, reported benefits as a result of their ample family leave: “Our expanded PFL program... helps us retain talent, reduce absenteeism, and keep our professionals engaged and productive.”
CHILD CARE:

Access to affordable child care allows workers to find and keep their jobs. Child care costs for an infant, depending on the state, can range anywhere from $4,822 to $22,631 annually. As a percentage of minimum-wage earnings, child care costs 31.8% to 103.6% of minimum-wage earnings at a full-time job. The high cost of child care can lead to families choosing less than optimal child care options that may not be best for the child or can lead to at least one parent exiting the workforce because wages earned are a negative-sum when compared to the cost of child care.

Federal tax credits that are available to help defray child care costs include the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA), and Dependent Care Assistance Programs.

STATE MODEL: RHODE ISLAND

2015 S1021 sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Crowley gave the Rhode Island Department of Human Services a mandate to create a tiered reimbursement system for licensed child care centers and family care providers that are recognized as “higher quality” to receive higher reimbursement rates from the government. Under the new tiered reimbursement system that resulted, BrightStars, 1-star schools receive $198.48, while 5-star schools receive $257.54.

Results: In the first annual report in December 2016 on the BrightStars system, directors and teachers expressed generally positive views about BrightStars, with few offering ideas for changes. About 70 percent of the directors in this evaluation rated BrightStars positively or extremely positively. Directors and teachers appreciated the support and focus on quality.

An evaluation of the BrightStars Child Care Center and Preschool Quality Framework conducted in 2018 found that BrightStars ratings effectively differentiate quality and are linked to improved child outcomes. The researchers found that CLASS scores (an independent measure of program quality) increase as BrightStars ratings increase. They also found positive, meaningful relationships between BrightStars standards and preschoolers’ social-emotional competence and between the curriculum standard and children’s math skills.

TIERED REIMBURSEMENT SYSTEM FOR CHILD CARE

The tiered-reimbursement strategy is so popular because:

- At least twenty-two states use a tiered subsidy reimbursement system that links the child care subsidy reimbursement rate to specific standards of quality.
- Many states using this system have indicated that tiered reimbursement has been a factor in increasing the number of children enrolled in quality programs and for encouraging providers to pursue higher levels of quality care.
- For example, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are both experiencing levels of success with their tiered reimbursement systems. Approximately 67% of children receiving child care subsidies in Pennsylvania are in a Keystone STARS program. In Wisconsin, 72% of the children in the Young Star program are in child care programs with a star rating of 3 or above, with 5 stars being the highest quality rating.

Note: States are responsible for setting their own child care assistance policies around the following areas:

- Income eligibility for child care assistance
- Waiting lists for child care assistance
- Copayments from parents receiving child care assistance
- Payment rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance
- Eligibility for child care assistance for parents searching for a job
CLIFF EFFECT

When incomes increase, this may result in a loss of work supports around child care and subsidized nutrition, which has a substantially negative impact on household earnings. This loss of eligibility for public assistance programs once a family’s income surpasses a certain threshold is known as the cliff effect. Families may face a tough choice: “Should I accept this promotion / wage increase, but lose the benefits that currently aid me and my family?” States are responsible for setting their own income eligibility requirements for child care and subsidized nutrition programs, and if income ceilings are too low this can result in parents not qualifying for child care assistance but unable to afford the cost of child care on their own.

QUICK FACT: A 2010 study by the Women’s Foundation of Colorado showed that 1 in 3 families did not accept income increases to remain eligible for child care tuition subsidy.

See figure showing an example graph showing how family resources and expenses change as earnings increase, per the National Center for Children in Poverty.

STATE MODEL: COLORADO CLIFF EFFECT PILOT PROGRAM (CEPP):

This program was authorized in 2012 and updated in 2014 and 2016 with goal of turning the “cliff” into a “slope.” This program, which as been implemented in 15 counties across Colorado, passed with bipartisan support from (R) Senator Beth Martinez Humenik and (D) Representative Brittany Pettersen.

CEPP helps families whose incomes have increased above the eligibility limit, sometimes by very small amounts, by slowly increasing their child care payments instead of abruptly stopping all subsidized payments at once. Counties are encouraged to collaborate with community partners, early childhood education experts, and families to develop a revenue neutral approach for each family as income rises.

RECEPTION: The Bell Policy Center analyzed Colorado’s policy and found it enabled some people to achieve greater economic mobility. About 70% of the surveyed families enrolled in CEPP said the program has been helpful for them and their families. It also showed reducing worry about the cliff effect could spur positive action toward increasing income by working more hours, taking a new job, or accepting a promotion. However, The Bell Policy Center found that the CEPP was not well understood, contributing to implementation challenges and not all families taking advantage of the policy.

* Learn more about Bell Policy Center’s analysis here **
STATE BEST PRACTICES: CLIFF EFFECT, CONTINUED

VERMONT:

Vermont’s state-level TANF program, Reach Up aims to help families achieve self sufficiency, cultivate job skills, seek out work opportunities, and provide cash assistance for basic needs. A family’s eligibility for Reach Up is calculated using their household income, which is adjusted to include several income disregards. Vermont raised its income disregard in 2014 to broaden qualifications and ease transitions off of TANF assistance.

Approximately 1,172 participants are employed through Reach Up each month. Vermont provides an example for how programs can benefit constituents, however, the majority of workers are employed in the service and retail industry, indicating that more specialized training can help put workers into higher-paying jobs.

Results: The percentage of participants in Reach Up making at least $12 per hour increased from 20% in 2016 to 25% in 2017. According to a 2018 Department of Children and Families report to the Governor, since the program’s inception in 2013, caseloads for workers overseeing the Reach Up program have steadily declined each year. While they acknowledge the role of the strong economy, the Department strongly credits case managers who support parents with their Family Development Plans.

Additionally, a study was conducted over a four year period of families participating in the Reach Up program, and significant increases in child well-being indicators were reported. 83% of the families were found to have improved in at least one of the five following child well-being self-sufficiency ratings:

- Child Availability- reliable, affordable child care and school enrollment and attendance
- Family Parenting - support from and safety among family and friends
- Health Availability - affordable medical care insurance and effects of disabilities
- Shelter Stability - housing that is affordable, adequate and safe
- Social - substance abuse and mental health of parents

Legislator Highlight: Rep. Sarah Copeland-Hanzas (D-2)

In 2017, she was a co-sponsor on H326, an act relating to eligibility and calculation of grant or subsidy amount for Reach Up, Reach Ahead, and Child Care Services program. She is Vice Chair of the Legislative Council Committee. She also is a supporter of paid leave, pay equity for women, and workforce development.

QUICK RESOURCES FOR REDUCING THE CLIFF EFFECT:

Much of the confusion surrounding the cliff effect comes from a lack of understanding. A clear, accessible, online calculator makes it easier for families to understand at what point they will lose benefits, to do a strong cost/benefit analysis, and ultimately make an informed decision about their wages.

The ideal Cliff Effects calculator would allow clients to enter various income levels to show the benefits that a household may receive in all the programs available. The calculator would also provide a benefit Cliff Effects schedule for the household so they could predict when benefits will be lost due to income increases.

Check out a sample calculator created by the Urban Institute here!
INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACHES

Intergenerational approaches to poverty is the latest thinking in terms of policies to break the poverty cycle. Investing in early learning and work supports concurrently makes this a more effective approach for vulnerable families and is a strategy hailed by experts.43 A two-generation approach aims to create opportunities for families by simultaneously equipping parents and kids with the tools they need to thrive while removing the obstacles in their way.

STATE BEST PRACTICES: INTERGENERATIONAL APPROACHES

OKLAHOMA:44 CAP Tulsa features early childhood centers for low-income families. Coupled with the statewide universal pre-K, the centers help parents participate in GED and parenting classes at the same time. The nationally accredited centers are designed so children can easily transition into elementary school. The 13 centers are funded by state and federal sources and private donations.

Partnerships with local colleges and universities have helped some parents earn various levels of nursing certifications at reduced to no cost for tuition and supplies. Parents go through the courses together, and classes may be flexible to accommodate their busy schedules.

A study conducted by the Aspen Institute with a control group found that after one year, 61% of CAP Tulsa participants earned a career certificate in the healthcare sector compared to 3% of parents in the matched control group, and 49% of CAP Tulsa parents were employed in the healthcare sector at year end compared to 31% of the matched control group.45

GEORGIA: Utilizes the Dunbar Learning Complex, a learning center in Atlanta provides children with access to high-quality, early-childhood education while helping parents get better jobs and build stronger families. Children receive free schooling, from infancy to pre-K, when their parents register with a career-development center to begin improving their job skills.42

Results from the Dunbar Learning Complex: 55 percent of incoming kindergarten students at the elementary school were reading at or above grade level, up from 6 percent in 2010. The percentage of children below the thirtieth percentile on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test dropped by 23 percentage points the first year alone, while the percentage of those scoring above the 50th percentile increased 12 points.46 Conclusion: these learning centers foster great results for young students!

TAKING A DEEPER LOOK: THE DUNBAR LEARNING COMPLEX

The Dunbar Learning Center, based in Atlanta, Georgia placed 1,800 people in jobs within its first year of opening.

The average cost per child is around $14,000 a student annually. The cost is seen as preventative—investing in children early helps eliminate achievement gaps, as opposed to paying to remediate disparities later in life, which can be more costly. Funding is provided by federal and state resources as well as through private foundations.

When parents arrive at the Dunbar Learning Complex, a counselor screens them to determine their eligibility for benefits. Those who qualify can enroll in an intensive job-readiness boot camp to help prepare them for job interviews.

Parents of students can also be paired with a counselor who will help them navigate the labor market and the complicated network of grants and education programs available to them.

QUICK RESOURCE: Check out the National Conference of State Legislatures Two-Generation Strategies Toolkit here to learn more!
Questions To Ask For Coordination Efforts:

- Which department(s) in your state administers federal benefits programs? As an example, the SNAP program can be administered by the Department of Human Services at the state or the county level.
- Who vets state plans before they are submitted to the federal government? State legislatures and local grassroots organizations may provide critical information about underserved populations and the best ways to deliver services effectively and efficiently.
- Does your state supplement, prioritize or otherwise modify federal programs? How?
- Does your state conduct pilot programs to test innovative approaches?

FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND STATE COORDINATION

Cliff Effect
Determining eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is complex, and states have the ability to alter the requirements, which can have positive or negative impacts on low-income families. To calculate a household’s SNAP benefits, a defined list of expenses set by the federal government is subtracted from a household’s gross income, and one-third of the what is left is determined to be the household budget for food. If this amount is less than the maximum SNAP benefit for the household size, the household receives the difference between the maximum SNAP benefit and the household’s food budget. While theoretically this is supposed to provide a smooth transition out of the program, the reduction in funding may be abrupt and result in a reduced access to healthy foods, which can adversely impact the health of the household. This is where states can come in and change eligibility requirements, which can provide an improved safety net for households.

Intergenerational Approaches
Federal legislation passed in February and March 2018 increased funding for programs intended to assist parents and children in low-income families, including the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Visiting Program (MIECV). CCAMPIS provides campus-based child care for low-income parents so that they can have access to post-secondary education programs. MIECV provides at-risk pregnant women and families with support services and resources to improve maternal health and child health outcomes. States are responsible for applying for grants through the federal government and for implementing these federal programs. It is the state's role to increase public awareness and outreach so that constituents who are eligible for these programs are able to sign up for them.

Child Care
Child Care Development Block Grants received a substantial boost from federal legislation in 2018 with a $2.37 billion increase in annual funding. This federal grant program allocates money to states to provide low-income families with financial resources to help them access quality child care. However, in order to access this funding, states are mandated to show improved overall child care program quality, which can be done by implementing or improving Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. Legislation may be needed to create commissions to collect the data necessary to implement this system or to provide pathways for improvement. States are responsible for allocating the resources provided by these grants to agencies or partnerships who will implement the programs.
Questions To Ask For Coordination Efforts:

- Where can state plans submitted to the federal government and feedback on state plans from the federal government be accessed?
- What are the best channels to use to increase public awareness of available services and benefits?
  - Social media
  - Radio ads
  - Television ads
  - In-person events such as town halls and briefings
  - Mailers
  - Flyers at schools, hospitals, libraries, and other public buildings

For more information about Earned Income Tax Credits eligibility, please take a look at the IRS page here.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND STATE COORDINATION (CONTINUED)

Workforce Development

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a created a national network of federal, state, regional, and local agencies and organizations to provide employment, education, training, and related services and supports to job-seekers. This program has a dual goal of not only ensuring that workers find good jobs but also so that businesses have access to skilled workers.

In order to access grant funds, states were required to submit WIOA State Plans for Federal review and approval in early 2016. The Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Agriculture were required to provide feedback and final approval of each state plan by June 30, 2018. Feedback from the federal government will be critical to grant reporting and ensuring continued access to the grant funds. States are responsible for implementing workforce development programs in partnership with agencies and private sector partners.

Earned Income Tax Credits

Federal Earned Income Tax Credits were implemented from 2012-2017, and Congress will decide whether to provide these going forward. EITC refunds, by permanent federal law, may not be counted as income or resources for 12 months after receipt when applying for benefits or assistance under any federal program or state program financed entirely or partially with federal funds. States must be aware of this when projecting tax revenues and determining what federal grant funds it would like to access. It is up to states to determine whether to implement Earned Income Tax Credits for state taxes and to set eligibility standards for individuals and families.

Family Leave

Up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave is provided by the Family & Medical Leave Act (1993), and more on this can be found in the Paid Leave section of the toolkit.

There has been some bipartisan support at the federal level for paid leave, but different approaches are being debated. Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican, has proposed legislation around paid parental leave that would allow parents to tap into Social Security benefits early in exchange for delayed receipt of benefits.

On the other hand, Democrats have been pushing the Family Act, which would fund paid leave for new parents, seriously ill workers, and those caring for sick relatives. This would be funded by a payroll tax.

As of the writing of this toolkit, neither set of proposed legislation has passed. If the Democrat plan passes, states would need to decide whether to expand upon the payroll tax to provide additional benefits.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES
Annie E. Casey Foundation Resources for Policy Makers

- **2018 KIDS COUNT Report** for a variety of indicators on economic well-being, education, family and community, and health for children in state districts
- **State-Level KIDS COUNT Organizations** is a directory of organizations that collect data in each state

Apprenticeships:

- **The National Skills Coalition** for highlighted resources, an overview of current law, and more resources on work-based learning
- **New America’s** report on “Youth Apprenticeship in America Today: Connecting High School Students to Apprenticeship.”

Earned Income Tax Credits:

- **Center for Budget and Policy Priorities** for an overview and more information on how EITCs can alleviate poverty
- **Families for Tax Credits** presents an overview for how EITCs help working-class families

Paid Leave:

- **Family Values At Work** to learn more about advocacy and resources surrounding paid leave

Child Care:

- **National Women’s Law Center** Tax Provisions Fact Sheet
  Note: NWLC suggests collecting stories and data to demonstrate how additional Child Care and Development Block Grant funding is helping to expand access to affordable, high-quality child care. You can find the collection form [here](#).
- **CLASP’s** report on how the federal budget impacts childcare.
  Note: The budget calls for $5.8 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant program, which helps states expand childcare for low-income families. That’s double the amount of money the program received previously, according to the Center for Law and Social Policy, an advocacy organization in Washington.
- **CLASP’s** state based examples of childcare subsidy program increases in states such as California, New Hampshire, and Michigan
- **The Office of Child Care’s** fact sheet. Learn about how the OCC administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) —a block grant to state, territory, and tribal governments that provides support for children and their families with paying for child care that will fit their needs and that will prepare children to succeed in school.
- **CLASP’s** report on how the impact of federal funding on Connecticut’s Care4Kids childcare subsidy program

Intergenerational Approaches:

- **Ascend at the Aspen Institute** for more ideas to move children and their parents toward economic security.
- **The National Council of State Legislatures** (NCSL) Two-Generation Strategies Toolkit
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation’s** Advancing Two-Generation Approaches
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation’s** Strengthening the Foundation: Strategic Evidence Building for Two-Generation Approaches
- **Annie E. Casey Foundation’s** Investing in Innovation: Reflections on the Family Economic Success-Early Childhood Education Pilots
ECONOMIC STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES

#TRENDING: STATE APPRENTICESHIP

STATE BEST PRACTICES

In 2014, Iowa passed the “Iowa Apprenticeship Act.” With an annual appropriation of $3 million for the program it aims to support grants to subsidize the cost of apprenticeship programs. This includes classroom instruction, purchasing equipment, and establishing new locations to expand apprenticeship training.

BACKGROUND

The history of apprenticeship programs dates back to the early 1900’s with Wisconsin being the first state to create a registered apprenticeship program in 1911. About 20 years later, Congress, in 1937, enacted the National Apprenticeship Act. Apprenticeships have helped build America from its very early colonial days to the present. These programs help to train the next generation of American workers in many skilled trades.

New efforts and innovative program models across the country are increasing the amount of people looking for apprenticeships. These new opportunities will serve a diverse range of populations including women, veterans, and those with disabilities.

Women In Government (WIG), has engaged in bringing a variety of economic stability and opportunities resources to the membership we serve. Economic stability and opportunities for low income families is about strengthening and building stronger families and communities which means ensuring access to these opportunities in order for children and families to succeed. WIG’s goal is to explore ways that states can address the myriad of challenges facing low income families and how state policymakers can help individuals overcome economic, social and policy barriers to achieving economic stability.
**MEASURES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE STATES:**

1. Convening public-private partnerships to develop high-quality, effective programs that address the workforce needs of the state.

2. Building a talent pipeline through pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship,

3. Establishing a comprehensive plan to integrate apprenticeship as part of a state’s broader workforce strategy.

4. Establish a dedicated funding stream to support labor management workforce intermediaries, meaning a third party arbiter, in order to meet current need and future training needs.

5. Provide access to wraparound services, such as child care, transportation assistance, and other resources that make it easier for workers to enter into and successfully complete training programs.

6. Programs with a strong connection to industry and sufficient services to help workers complete the program is helpful to seeing higher success.

7. Directing state funds to establish new and grow existing programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTICLES ON THE ISSUE</th>
<th>MORE STATE BEST PRACTICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Governing: Can Apprenticeships Train the Workforce of the Future? States Hope So.</td>
<td>• Colorado’s CareerWise Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Center for American Progress: Better Training and Better Jobs</td>
<td>• Connecticut proposed Apprenticeship and Employment Recruitment Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New York Times: Wanted: Factory Workers, Degree Required</td>
<td>• Kentucky’s Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education Week: Apprenticeships or College? How About Both?</td>
<td>• Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program for Adults and Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brookings: States Equip Employers to Drive Apprenticeship</td>
<td>• Massachusetts announces plans for legislation called An Act Enhancing Opportunities for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• U.S. Department of Labor: Registered Apprenticeship Programs and State Lists of Eligible Training Providers</td>
<td>• Minnesota PIPELINE Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• New Jersey Workforce Development Partnership Fund Training Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• South Carolina’s Apprenticeship Carolina: SC Technical College System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Washington State’s Workforce training and Education Coordinating Board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SESSION SNAP SHOT
ECONOMIC STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES

#TRENDING: FAMILY LEAVE

States with Enacted Paid Family Leave:
CA, DC, MA, NJ, NY, RI, WA

States with Expanded Family Medical Leave Act:
CA, CO, CT, DC, HI, KY, ME, MD, MA, MN, NH, NJ, NY, OR, RI, TN, VT, WA, WI

Win McNamee/Getty

Background

There are two approaches to family leave: Paid Family Leave (PFL) and the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). PFL is money that employees receive from their employer for a period of time to recover from a serious health issue, taking care of an ill family member, or are taking time to bond with a new child, whether from pregnancy or adoption. PFL is a benefit that employers in the United States may choose, but are not required, to provide to their employees. Six states: California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington, in addition to Washington, D.C. have passed PFL legislation that will go into effect at the start of 2020. PFL length ranges depending on the state from two up to twelve weeks.

Different from PFL, the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is unpaid time off with job security that an employee is eligible for, for specified family and medical reasons. During FMLA, the employee may retain their health insurance benefits in the same capacity as when they are working. Eligible employees may take leave for the arrival of a new child, for a family member’s serious health condition, or for a personal serious health condition that would interfere with their work. FMLA ranges in length depending on the type of leave.

FMLA has been expanded in a handful of states. The expansions vary state by state, but some examples are extending the length of leave, the reasons for leave, and the benefits included during leave. The states that have expanded FMLA are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin.
**STATE EXAMPLES**

**Paid Family Leave**

PFL has been enacted into law in six states, in addition to Washington, D.C. The legislation allows for four (4) to twelve (12) weeks paid family leave depending on the state. Additionally, PFL in most states offer to pay the employee up to 50% of his or her average weekly wages, although some states offer higher compensation. For example, New York’s compensation increases incrementally until 2020 when the legislation is fully enacted. Washington state also offers up to 90% of weekly wages to employees on PFL.

All states that have enacted PFL allow workers to take time off for bonding with a new child and taking care of a family member with a serious illness. Other states have expanded this to include taking time off for a personal injury or illness, in addition to taking time off to care for family of a service member deployed on active duty.

**Family Medical Leave Act**

FMLA has been expanded in 17 states, in addition to Washington, D.C. FMLA was enacted into law in 1993 by President Clinton. Employees are allowed up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year, unless otherwise noted by state law. Employees may take FMLA to care for a new child, to care for a newly placed child for adoption or foster care, to care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, or to take medical leave due to personal health condition.

As many as 17 states have expanded the benefits of FMLA. Many states have expanded the amount of time an employee can take off for FMLA, such as 16 weeks of leave in a 24 month period—which has been adopted by a number of states. Additionally, many states have expanded which employees are eligible for FMLA by changing the minimum number of employees to make FMLA more accessible to those at smaller businesses. Most states that have expanded FMLA have broadened the definition of family to include domestic partnerships and civil unions. The Department of Labor amended FMLA in 2015 to expand the definition of “spouse” to include same-sex couples.

There are several federal initiatives currently in the work to update FMLA. The FAMILY Act is working to give workers 66% of their normal wages during paid leave and has bipartisan support. Additionally, the Trump Administration has seriously looked into expanding FMLA to include six weeks of PFL.

**Articles on the Issue**

- Forbes: Paid Family Leave Can Make It Through Congress This Year, Predicts Key GOP Senator, July 12, 2018
- AEI-Brookings: Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Issue Whose Time Has Come, June 6, 2017
- New York Times: Why Don’t We Just Do Paid Family Leave the Right Way?, February 16, 2018
- Women In Government: Economic Stability Outcomes Toolkit
CITATIONS, CONTINUED

28“Child care payments going up for RI facilities.” WRPI. https://www.wpri.com/call-12-for-action/child-care-payments-going-up-for-ri-facilities/1292368693 2018
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