

# Remake the Safety Net (RSN) Demos

## *Welfare to Work Projects*

Office of Family Assistance

Administration for Children and Families

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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# ACF-FNS Meeting Agenda

- **Vision**
- **Historical Context**
- **Policy Principles**
- **Operating Principles**
- **Next Steps**

# The Problem

- **The current intention and architecture of the public safety net is not the most effective and efficient model to address the challenges of economically and socially vulnerable families.**
- **The safety net as we now know it is a fragmented collection of single-purpose programs that lack a holistic approach to serving the needs of vulnerable populations.**

# The Solution

**Remake the Safety Net (RSN) Demonstrations** — a portfolio of rigorously planned, implemented, and evaluated *Welfare to Work* demonstrations in partnership with states, localities, and other federal agencies, intended to grow the capacity of economically and socially challenged individuals to support themselves and their families and thereby reduce their need for and dependence on public assistance.

# FY 2019 President's Budget - HHS Budget in Brief

**“The Budget also includes the Welfare to Work Projects proposal that offers five-to-seven States the opportunity to streamline funding from Federal antipoverty programs and design comprehensive plans to deliver coordinated and effective services to low-income families. Participating states will have to tailor programs to their constituent’s needs, and reduce burdens and inefficiencies that result from overlapping and at times conflicting program requirements. Ultimately, this proposal will create a portfolio of rigorously planned and evaluated demonstrations that will cultivate evidenced-based strategies grounded in the values of work and personal responsibility. This approach will allow increased flexibility for participating states to tailor programs to their constituents’ needs, reduce burdens and inefficiencies due to overlapping program requirements, and allow us to learn from their experiences.”**

# Historical Context

- Reagan Administration and the 1987 Low-Income Opportunity Act
- Recent proposals as indicators of political support, including:
  - Speaker Ryan's Opportunity Grants
  - The EMPOWERS Act of 2017, introduced by Senator Joni Ernst
  - Senator Rubio's Flex Fund; and
  - Various "Superwaiver" proposals of the early 2000s.
- While missing some issues we think important and raising various technical problems, these proposals generally include:
  - A wide range of welfare programs;
  - Broad flexibility provided through waivers (including certain protections that cannot be waived);
  - An interagency board to administer the initiative;
  - A requirement for rigorous evaluation; and
  - A requirement for cost neutrality with respect to federal costs.

# Policy Principles

1. The **central policy objective** of growing the capacity of individuals to reduce their dependency on public supports and enhance their ability to be productive, contributing members of society.
2. The **federal government** should serve as a **catalyst**.
3. The development of a comprehensive **set of outcomes** that define growing capacity (“Capacity Index”).
4. An emphasis on national values of **work and personal responsibility**.
5. Provide services to target populations through **holistic, person-centered approaches**.

# 1. Central Policy Objective

To **grow the capacity** of economically and socially challenged individuals to support themselves and their families and thereby **reduce their need for and dependence on public assistance.**



## 2. Federal Government as Catalyst

**The federal government will serve as a catalyst for engaging all sectors of the community to develop and implement the shared vision of growing the capacity to reduce dependency.**

### 3. Capacity Index

Develop a set of metrics to measure whether the innovations really have grown the capacity of families to reduce their dependency and improve the lives of their families.



## 4. Work & Personal Responsibility

**State proposals must require work-capable individuals to be engaged in work or work activities.**

## 5. Holistic, person-centered approach

Pilots will remake **multiple public assistance programs**, such as health and human services, workforce development, housing, homeless services, nutrition, income support, and tax credit programs within a limited service area, into integrated, holistic approaches to serving target populations.



# Operating Principles

- 1. Efficiency and Innovation**
- 2. Local Flexibility with Accountability**
- 3. Evaluation**
- 4. Cost Neutrality**
- 5. Intergovernmental Alignment and Cooperation**

# 1. Efficiency & Innovation

- **Reduces burdens and inefficiencies associated with overlapping and at times conflicting program requirements.**
- **States or sub-states would redesign welfare programs by consolidating funding and service components from multiple public assistance, health and human services, workforce development and other programs.**

## 2. Local Flexibility with Accountability

- Increases state flexibility to tailor programs to their constituents' needs.
- Integration will be supported by waiving individual program requirements that are not aligned or are in conflict with *RSN* intent, while maintaining key protections.

## 3. Evaluation

- *RSN* will capture evidence of the impact of each demonstration on employment, public dependency, child and family well-being, and other key outcomes (Capacity Index).
- By using random assignment or other forms of rigorous impact evaluation, we can truly say whether we have “moved the needle” with regard to a certain population.
- The federal government would oversee rigorous evaluations of these efforts in partnership with states and localities.



## 4. Cost-neutrality

- The *RSN* pilots must be cost-neutral for the federal government with respect to total costs of all programs subsumed in the demonstration. Evaluation costs and planning grants will be paid for by the federal government.

## 5. Intergovernmental Alignment and Cooperation

- **An interagency board/commission would administer the initiative, approve the appropriate waivers, and monitor the progress of implementation and evaluation.**
- **Key departments include: HHS, USDA, Treasury, SSA, HUD, and DOL**

# Safety Net Programs

*(not exhaustive)*

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC)
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grants
- Section 8/Public Housing
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs
- Child Support Enforcement
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) (if still funded)