

Performance Partnerships for Disconnected Youth

Leaders from Federal, State, and local government agree on the imperative to overcome program silos and fragmented systems to use existing resources more effectively to improve outcomes for disconnected youth. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 provides authority for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service to establish up to 10 Performance Partnership pilots, which will allow a state, region, locality, or Federally-recognized tribe to propose pooling a portion of discretionary funds they receive under multiple Federal streams while measuring and tracking specific cross-program outcomes. This model for pooling funds, combined with strengthened accountability for results, is designed to ease administrative burden and promote better education, employment, and other key outcomes for youth.

What are Performance Partnerships?

Performance Partnerships will allow states and localities to pilot better ways of improving outcomes for disconnected youth by giving them additional flexibility in using discretionary funds across multiple Federal programs. States and localities that elect to participate in these pilots will commit to achieve significant improvements in educational, employment, and other key outcomes in exchange for this new flexibility.

Who are Disconnected Youth?

For the purposes of the pilots, the term “disconnected youth” refers to low-income young people, ages 14-24, who are homeless, in foster care, involved in the justice system, or are not working or not enrolled in (or at risk of dropping out of) an educational institution.

What Federal programs could be involved in the pilots?

The Performance Partnership pilots can involve discretionary funds, including both formula and competitive grant programs, under the agencies listed above. These programs may not use mandatory, or entitlement funds. These discretionary programs include those that:

- Serve disconnected youth populations, or are designed to prevent youth from disconnecting from school or work; and,
- Provide education, training and employment, or other social services, including interventions to improve health or social and emotional well-being.

Will States and localities receive additional funding to operate these pilots?

Performance Partnerships will not receive any new funding because they are designed to facilitate flexible use of *existing* funds.

How will the pilots ensure accountability for results and the protection of vulnerable populations?

Before implementing a pilot, the involved Federal agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, and the State, locality, or Federally- recognized tribe requesting the pilot authority must agree on the terms of the pilot. The heads of participating Federal agencies must determine that the pilot will not result in denying or restricting the eligibility of any individual for any of the services that are funded by the Federal discretionary funds involved in the pilot and, based on the best available information, will not adversely affect vulnerable populations

receiving such services. A lead Federal agency will enter into a Performance Partnership agreement with representatives of all participating State, local, and tribal governments that specifies:

- A fiscal entity for the pilot and its partners and their roles in the pilot;
- State, local, or tribal programs that will be involved in the pilot;
- Length of the agreement;
- Federal and non-federal funds, programs, and services to be utilized;
- Populations to be served;
- Cost-effective oversight procedures that will be used to maintain accountability;
- Outcomes that the pilot is designed to achieve;
- An appropriate, reliable, and objective outcome-measurement methodology that all parties will use to determine whether the pilot has achieved the specified objectives;
- Statutory, regulatory, or administrative requirements related to Federal mandatory programs that are barriers to achieving pilot outcomes; and
- Consequences of failing to meet pilot goals and the corrective actions that will be taken in order to increase the likelihood that the pilot will succeed.

Finally, Federal agencies may grant full or partial waivers of statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements in conjunction with each pilot. Waivers may be granted if the agency head determines that the waiver:

- Is consistent with the statutory purposes of the relevant Federal program;
- Is necessary to achieve the outcomes of the pilot as specified in the Partnership Performance agreement and is no broader in scope than is necessary to achieve such outcomes;
- Will result in either:
 - realizing efficiencies by simplifying reporting burdens or reducing administrative barriers with respect to such discretionary funds; or,
 - increasing the ability of individuals to obtain access to services that are provided by such discretionary funds.
- Does not relate to nondiscrimination, wage and labor standards, and allocations of funds to State and sub-state levels.