Children's Interagency Coordinating Council

Addressing Child Poverty and Well-Being: What Can Federal Agencies Do?

Congress asked the **Children's Interagency Coordinating Council (CICC)** to foster greater coordination and transparency on child policy across federal agencies and examine cross-cutting issues affecting child well-being, particularly child poverty. These issues cut across multiple federal agencies, so CICC members include the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and the Treasury and the Social Security Administration.

In 2026-2027, the CICC is engaging partners to explore potential long-term goals for the CICC. As a federal interagency group, there are many things the CICC might be able to do. Examples of the ways CICC agencies could work potentially together to address child poverty and well-being might include:

- Drawing **attention** to a topic, initiative, or community
- **Convening** partners and experts, including those with lived experience
- Providing **training** and technical assistance
- Highlighting existing/**available resources** (e.g., grants, toolkits)
- Conducting **research** and evaluation, including data analysis and monitoring
- Addressing **barriers** to help programs work better (e.g., sharing data across programs, updating regulations on program implementation)
- **Sharing information** among federal departments so they can better tap into each other's expertise
- **Providing strategies** and information to help communities coordinate across multiple federal programs (e.g., joint letters on how states can work together, joint grants that combine existing funds from multiple federal programs and reduce requirements to achieve better outcomes)

However, the CICC doesn't have the ability to increase funding for programs or change the law.

To inform potential CICC goals, it helps to understand what the CICC can do – **take federal, executive, multi-agency actions tied to child poverty and/or well-being –** and how the CICC defines those things.

What do we mean by children, poverty, and well-being?

- **Children** includes those ages 0-17 in the United States.
- **Poverty** means not having enough money or resources to meet basic needs.
- **Well-being** is a holistic concept that considers how all members of a family, across their lifetimes, are doing across several areas: financial and economic stability; community well-being; social well-being; health (including behavioral health); education, parenting, and child care; subjective well-being (e.g., agency); and security, safety, and stability.

What are federal, executive, multi-agency actions?

- Federal government actions occur nationally, as opposed to the state, county, territorial, Tribal, or local level. For example, programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are federal. Congress creates programs different ways, including as partnerships with states, Tribes, and territories. Depending on the design, the federal government may be able to allow, encourage, or require certain things of states, or may have limited ability to do so.
- **Executive branch actions** can be taken by the White House and federal departments, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as opposed to the legislative branch (Congress). Broadly, Congress lays out funding levels and program goals and limitations, and the executive branch departments implement programs and activities within those legal boundaries.
- **Multi-agency actions** require more than one federal department to be involved. For example, one might require action from *both* the Departments of Labor and Education.