

Partnership Fund for Program Integrity Innovation

Summary: The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 allocated \$37.5 million for the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Partnership Fund for Program Integrity Innovation (the Partnership Fund). The purpose of the Partnership Fund is to identify ways to improve service delivery, payment accuracy, and administrative efficiency, while also ensuring access to federal assistance programs that are administered by state or local agencies.

The Partnership Fund will allow federal, state or local agencies to pilot new ideas in service delivery in a controlled environment with a comprehensive evaluation. Then, successful initiatives could be expanded to other states and used to inform further administrative or legislative action. The pilots will be selected by OMB in consultation with federal, state, and other partners. Funding will be transferred to the respective federal agencies to carry out these pilots.

Reason for initiative: Many federal assistance programs are either partially or fully administered by state and local governments, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly Food Stamps), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Medicaid, Unemployment Insurance, Child Welfare, Child Care, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Federal and state program officials responsible for service delivery often work independently from those responsible for program oversight and improving payment accuracy. Similarly, these programs often operate independently of each other yet serve similar low-income populations.

Pilot selection: Selection of the pilots will follow standards set out by OMB, in consultation with an interagency council consisting of representatives of appropriate federal agencies, states, and other stakeholders. Pilots will prioritize the following areas: payment accuracy, administrative efficiency, and service to eligible beneficiaries. At least three different types of pilots are envisioned: (a) pilots that simplify application processes, eligibility criteria, and processes confirming continued eligibility; (b) pilots that promote/utilize data matching and information sharing across programs; and (c) pilots that test integrated applications, screening, and verification for multiple benefit programs.

In the selection of the pilots, cost will be considered and additional guidance will be forthcoming. Independent evaluations are a critical component of this initiative, and OMB will work with agencies to find the best methods to evaluate these pilots.

Results of the Partnership Fund: Based on the evaluations of initiatives, successful pilots will serve as models for other states and local agencies, and could be used to inform future administrative or legislative changes.

What doesn't the Partnership Fund do? The Partnership Fund is not a comprehensive initiative to modernize benefit delivery across all states. It will not supplant existing resources that state and federal agencies already spend on program administration. Further, it will not interfere with current incentive arrangements that help states improve program integrity for specific programs. The Partnership Fund does not pre-empt program statutes.