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Beyond Programs: State Strategies to Strengthen Families

2011 Marriage & Relationship Education Peer Learning for State Leaders
August 30, 2011

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Options

- Support existing programs
- Incorporate marriage and relationship education into public systems
- Reduce marriage license fee
- Target youth - education curriculum
- Engage state policymakers in stakeholder groups

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Support Existing Programs

- Evaluation
- Funding
- Promotion

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Incorporate marriage and relationship education into public systems

- Welfare (TANF)
- Child welfare
- Child support
- Head Start
- Adolescent health
- Education curriculum
- Public health
- Juvenile justice
- Corrections

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TANF Initiatives

Four Purposes	Eligible Families	Funding
Provide assistance to keep children in their homes		
End dependency by promoting job preparation, work and marriage	Needy and non-needy	Federal block grant and state MOE
Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies	Needy and non-needy	State must set criteria for non-needy families; Federal block grant funds only
Encourage the maintenance and formation of 2-parent families	Needy and non-needy	Federal funds for both categories; state MOE funds only for needy families

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TANF Initiatives - DRA Funds

- Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 - \$150M for healthy marriage activities
 - Ad campaigns
 - Education programs in high schools
 - Pre-marital and marriage education
 - Divorce reduction programs
 - Marriage mentoring
 - Programs to reduce disincentive to marriage



TANF Initiatives - State Examples

- Alaska – Grants for marriage and preg prev programs
- Louisiana – Family Strengthening programs
- Maryland – Healthy Marriage/Healthy Families - new couples; parenting, job search, counseling
- New Mexico – Family preservation and fatherhood initiatives




TANF Initiatives - State Examples

- Ohio – Strengthening Families initiative - reduce out-of-wedlock births
- Oklahoma – Oklahoma Marriage Initiative - relationship education
- Virginia – Partners in Prevention –non-marital pregnancy prevention program



Marriage License Fee Adjustments

- **Reduce marriage license fee for those who complete premarital education**
 - Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Texas
 - Proposed in Indiana and Michigan in 2011
- **Increase fee to fund divorce reduction program**
 - Minnesota: Couples on the Brink program - \$5 increase
 - Proposed in Hawaii in 2011




Target Youth

- **Teen dating violence education**
 - 14 states who require or encourage schools to include dating violence into curriculum
- **Relationship education**
 - Florida, Oklahoma and Utah offer marriage and relationship education in the public high schools.



Engage state policymakers

- Role of state legislators
- Executive branch and agency officials
- Judicial branch
- Community-based organizations and nonprofits
- Military



Questions - Dialogue

- For more information on NCSL resources:

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