Overview of Financing Strategies to Support Youth Programming

Program leaders can implement five broad categories of financing strategies to support the development and implementation of youth programming.[1] Although these strategies can be implemented at the program level, there are also various system-level approaches that state and local policymakers can use to support more effective youth programming. Decisions about which strategy or combination of strategies is most appropriate will depend on a program's nature, its stage of development, and the economic and political environment in which it operates.

Strategy 1: Making Better Use of Existing Resources

Ensuring that available resources are spent in the most effective and efficient way helps prevent the need to constantly seek additional funding sources. Efforts to make better use of existing resources include achieving greater efficiencies through administrative streamlining, making better use of in-kind resources, and improving internal operations and management systems.

Strategy 2: Maximizing Public Revenue

Maximizing federal and state revenue is a financing strategy that enables youth program leaders to identify relevant public funding sources and draw down the maximum amount that can be obtained from each source. This strategy entails identifying, tracking, and monitoring grant opportunities at the federal and state levels, understanding how the various federal funding streams flow, and learning which decisionmakers control the allocation of funds in the state or community.

Strategy 3: Building Partnerships

Building partnerships involves joining forces and collaborating with colleagues and various players in the community to expand the base of support for youth programs. These partnerships can occur between and across the public and private sectors and can help leverage financial resources, contribute leadership, help frame the policy agenda, and contribute to improved services for youth.

Strategy 4: Creating More Flexibility in Existing Funding Streams

Strategies to create more flexibility in existing funding streams involve coordinating and aligning funding from several agencies and funding sources to support integrated and coordinated service delivery. This strategy can be key to developing comprehensive support systems and paying for needed services when one funding stream cannot do the job alone.

Strategy 5: Creating New Revenue

Developing new revenue sources focuses on raising public- and private-sector funds for specific programs, services, and capacities. These funds can be generated at the program level by fundraising, charging fees, and taking advantage of opportunities for unrelated business income.

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[1] Adapted from Cheryl D. Hayes, *Thinking Broadly: Financing Strategies for Comprehensive Child and Family Initiatives* (Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, 2002); and Sharon Deich, *Thinking Broadly*: *Financing Strategies for Youth Programs* (Washington, D.C.: The Finance Project, 2007).