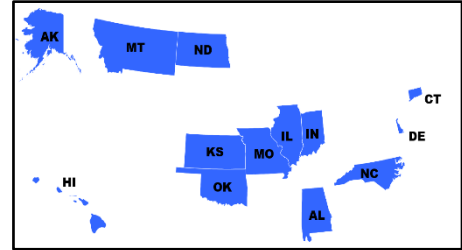


13 States Join Learning Network Supporting Child and Family Well-Being throughout the Pandemic

August 28 -- As families and communities face increased uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 13 states have joined a new network linking governors' offices, child welfare leaders, state human services and education officials, and nonprofit partners to support child and family well-being.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and Casey Family Programs today announced the launch of the Child and Family Well-Being Learning Cohort. Through the end of the year, the network will join governor's office representatives, state human services executives, child welfare leaders, education leaders and others in a collaborative network to coordinate strategic solutions to preventing child abuse and neglect and ensuring child and family well-being.



The states in the network are: Families in each of the states and across the nation are facing significant financial hardship as a result of the pandemic, including unemployment and food insecurity. Additionally, pandemic-related school and business closures mean that many children and families are further disconnected from supportive services that prevent child abuse and neglect, while many mandatory reporters may not be in a position to detect and report cases.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in record national unemployment rates, with women, people of color and workers with low incomes suffering disproportionate impacts. According to the Federal Reserve, almost 40 percent of those in households making less than \$40,000 a year had lost a job in March. In addition, research from the Urban Institute shows that more than 1 in 5 parents with children under 19 experienced food insecurity in May, with Black and Hispanic households facing food insecurity rates more than double that of their white counterparts.

The Child and Family Well-being Learning Cohort will support states in addressing racial and ethnic disparities that have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Governors across the country are committed to promoting the well-being of children and families in their states, but the COVID-19 pandemic makes this work even more urgent,” said Timothy Blute, director of the NGA Center. “In partnership with their state agency leaders and nonprofit and community-based organizations, governors are poised to take the lead in promoting holistic approaches to child and family well-being. The support and partnership of Casey Family Programs has been invaluable to bringing this Learning Cohort together.”

“This is a time for bold thinking and Casey Family Programs is honored to support this effort,” said David Sanders, executive vice president for systems improvement at Casey Family Programs. “The Child and Family Well-Being Learning Cohort provides state leaders the opportunity to bring communities together to transform systems, not waiting for children to be harmed but instead working together to help families and communities thrive.”

Through the network, participating states will:

- Engage with a collaborative network of like-minded state leaders to strategize around preventing child abuse and neglect and supporting child and family well-being;
- Receive access to innovative tools designed by peers in the field and be paired with experts engaged by the NGA Center and Casey Family Programs; and
- Access technical assistance including workshops, webinars, facilitated peer-to-peer learning and more.

States interested in joining the Learning Cohort should contact Rosalynd Mosser at rmosser@nga.org.