



Top 10 Reasons to Promote Partnerships between Family-to-Family Health Information Centers and Title V Block Grant Programs

Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant programs are in every state, the District of Columbia (DC), and jurisdiction. These programs promote the health and well-being of the nation's mothers, children and families, including children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN).¹

Title V Block Grant services are funded through federal grants from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) within the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and state and/or local dollars. States/jurisdictions must dedicate at least 30% of Title V funds for preventive and primary care services for children and at least 30% for services for CYSHCN.²

Each Title V program outlines the activities it will undertake annually to promote the health and wellness of children and families in their yearly Block Grant application. The Title V Block Grant Guidance encourages states/jurisdictions to partner with individuals, families, and family-led organizations in the development of their Block Grant proposal.

The MCHB also funds Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2Fs). These family-led centers are located in every state and DC. F2Fs are staffed by highly-skilled, knowledgeable family members who have first-hand experience with, and understanding of, the challenges families of CYSHCN and other families face. These uniquely qualified staff provide critical support to families, particularly families of children with complex needs and those from diverse communities. F2Fs also assist providers, state and federal agencies, legislators, and others to better understand and address the needs of CYSHCN.

There are many benefits to strong partnerships between F2Fs and State Title V programs in the development of the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, beginning with the following:

- 1) **Families know best.** Family leaders connected with F2Fs have access to extensive family knowledge and critical perspectives on activities that support the health and wellness of all children, including CYSHCN. *In 2016/2017, F2Fs were in contact with more than 920,000 families. F2Fs collect data about successes, concerns, and barriers to Title V services that families encounter and are in an excellent position to advise Title V programs about ways to improve services for all children.*
- 2) **F2Fs can help Title V programs collect needs assessment data and other feedback.** Every 5 years Title V programs conduct comprehensive needs assessments to identify and develop a coordinated system of services. They submit annual reports describing program activities and progress on National Performance and Outcome Measures. *F2Fs have the capacity through listservs, social media, newsletters, and word of mouth to help Title V programs disseminate surveys statewide, set up focus groups and solicit public comment for needs assessments and gather other feedback and input from a wide range of families.*

¹ <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/title-v-maternal-and-child-health-services-block-grant-program>

² <https://mchb.tvisdata.hrsa.gov/uploadedfiles/Documents/blockgrantguidance.pdf>

- 3) **F2Fs can help Title V programs ensure family engagement of all populations they serve.** F2Fs can identify, recruit, support, and mentor diverse families, fathers, and youth to actively participate in the development of a state's Title V Block Grant. *F2Fs have diverse staff and partnerships with many community-based organizations and cultural brokers who can assist Title V programs to engage families who are underserved and diverse in race/ethnicity, language, geographic and socio-economic status.*
- 4) **F2F/Title V partnerships are important for improving Title V services for all MCH population domains.** F2Fs do not focus solely on CYSHCN and their families. F2Fs work with many MCH populations. *In the last year, F2Fs participated in developing curriculum and materials; preparing and giving presentations; serving on committees; and partnering on proposals for activities that are important for all MCH domains, including: improving pregnancy/birth outcomes; obesity prevention/intervention; home visiting programs; dental health; adverse childhood experiences; state consortia activities for MCH; disaster planning and emergency response; work with FQHCs/CHCs; health and wellness promotion.*
- 5) **F2Fs can help Title V create meaningful family engagement opportunities.** Research by Family Voices³ identified key criteria for supporting meaningful family engagement activities that recognized the importance of supporting both family members and professional partners with skill-building opportunities for effective family engagement. *F2Fs can provide training to support family/professional partnerships in the development of the Title V Block Grant.*
- 6) **F2Fs/Title V partnerships help spread innovation.** F2Fs are closely connected across the states. They share successful strategies, such as effective engagement in Block Grant activities, and other partnership activities. *F2Fs can share innovative strategies and quality improvement ideas developed within their Title V programs with other states as well as opportunities to learn from other states.*
- 7) **F2Fs help Title V programs build capacity.** Many Title V staff, especially new staff, are not aware of state and national resources that provide technical assistance to help build capacity. *F2Fs can share in-depth knowledge about these resources, including other MCHB-funded initiatives.*
- 8) **F2F/Title V partnerships maximize the use of federal funds.** HRSA/MCHB supports the F2Fs and the Title V programs with federal dollars. *Title V/F2F partnerships maximize federal investments to promote the health and well-being of all children, women, and families.*
- 9) **F2F/Title V partnerships at the state level builds support for the Block Grant legislation.** A number of states engage F2Fs in the development of their Block Grants and invite family members to participate as members of the state team at their annual Block Grant review. *This experience helps families understand the importance of the Block Grant to more effectively promote the value of the Block Grant program in federal legislation.*
- 10) **F2Fs have extensive opportunities to advance the work of State Title V Programs.** Family Voices provides technical assistance to the F2Fs and has 25 years of experience in encouraging effective family engagement with state Title V agencies and with the Division of State and Community Health.⁴ *Through Family Voices, F2Fs have access to webinars, extensive resources about Title V programs and the Block Grant process, as well as opportunities to be mentored by experienced family leaders who have participated as federal Block Grant Reviewers.*

³ Funded by the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health

⁴ The Division of State and Community Health within MCHB administers the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program.