



Supporting states to streamline access to benefits

Working directly with States and safety net stakeholders to co-design solutions that improve delivery.

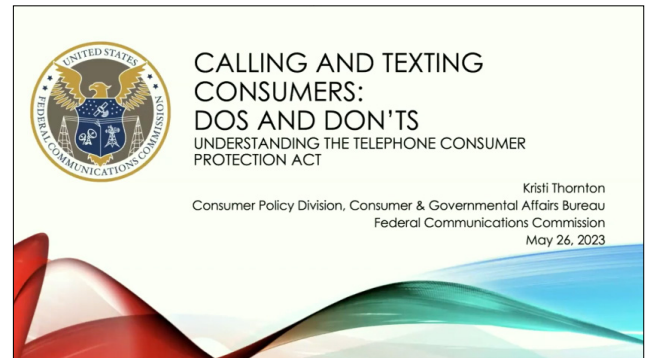
In 2023, the *Supporting States* (“Accelerator”) team collaborated with the Aspen Institute Financial Resilience Program to convene six monthly workgroups focused on remediating delivery barriers States face: data-sharing, operations, policy and requirements, procurement, talent, and text messaging and notifications. Twenty States have attended regular meetings, including Federal staff, stakeholders, and independent experts. States are identifying specific challenges, sharing insights, and beginning to develop valuable resources. The Accelerator team also organized a training led by agency colleagues at the Federal Communication Commission to clarify permissible uses of text messaging to communicate with benefits program participants. The team is developing data sharing and reuse guidance to facilitate State use of Federal and third-party data for verifications. The team is exploring State solutions to address talent needs and better incorporate human-centered design and collection of feedback on lived experiences into program operations. The team is developing other supports for State operations in text messaging, plain language notices, call centers, and account access. The team also conducted research with States and experts to identify and prioritize leading procurement practices for benefits programs for potential Federal pilots to come.

Collaborating agencies:

HHS (CMS, ACF), USDA (FNS), GSA

Foundation:

Discovery Research & Life Experience Charter









Recorded webinar on performance.gov

“Procurement is largely seen as a compliance to statutory requirement, rather than a customer-centric service to get customers what they want and ensure it’s fulfilling all their needs.”

-STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Improving data services for benefits delivery

DESIGN PHASE MILESTONES

Milestone	Status	Notes
Completed procurement research with States, stakeholders, vendors, and non-profits to identify common barriers to address and capture leading practices to elevate for the planning, procurement, and management of modern IT systems to support multi-program streamlined benefits delivery.		Completed. Timing changed from FY 2023 Q3 to FY 2023 Q4. Collection and prioritization of procurement best practices for benefits programs is under way.
Build and pilot procurement solutions with States.		In progress. State/Federal procurement work group is scheduled to launch in August 2023.
Test new methods of policy and product co-development and cross-government collaboration with States.		In progress. Co-design sessions held in May 2023 on call center operations, advanced analytics/artificial intelligence, and identity proofing solutions. State workgroups to receive input on priorities and co-develop products launching July-August 2023 on: Texting and Notifications; Procurement; Policy and Requirements; Talent; Operations; Data sharing.
Develop the initial one-to-three elements of the “one-day delivery toolkit” for States.		In progress. State customer experience and benefit delivery metrics guide under development. Additional state operations tools and guides are under development.
Develop multi-program text messaging guidance and templates for federal and federally-funded programs to communicate with States.		In progress. Held state and local benefits agency text messaging training with the Federal Communications Commission addressing non-health use cases.
Develop and share FY24 priorities and plan.		In progress. The timing changed from FY 2023 Q4 to FY 2024 Q2.

DESIGN PHASE PROJECT MEASURES

Design Phase Measure	Assessment Approach & Data	December 2023 Status
Target number of State agencies engaged in research and development of procurement solutions.	To be determined.	Too early to assess.
Target number of States piloting any developed procurement solutions.	Counting the number of State participants.	The team is building and monitoring the pipeline of potential State participants: 8 States have expressed interest; 5 States are in discussions.
Participant States shift towards streamlined multi-program applications and shortened time for eligibility determination and automated redetermination.	To be determined.	Too early to assess.
NEW: States engage with FCC texting guidance.	Analytics of users engaging with the webinar.	The team measured state engagement with the content, with over 700 participants registered and over 400 unique attendees, and hundreds more views and downloads of the content after the live FCC text message training event.
NEW: Content is useful for States	Polling to determine if content is valuable for the six work groups.	Data not yet available.



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Project Summary

The project, also known as the Accelerator, aims to help States adopt leading practices and innovate in Federal benefits delivery towards the goal of allowing families to apply for a suite of core benefits in 20 minutes and receive eligibility determinations within a day. This fast, simple access to multiple benefits is critical to help families weather financial disruptions such as a job loss, broken-down car, or unexpected bill that can often start a downward financial spiral. The Accelerator will provide multi-program tools, guidance, and templates to support State delivery transformation efforts in Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, CCDF, LIHEAP, and other means-tested benefits that serve low-income families. The Accelerator will look to identify best practices, build products and services that help States replicate them, and identify opportunities for further Federal support for State innovation. The Accelerator will work with States to identify policy, resource, regulatory, staffing, technological, and other barriers to running efficient integrated benefits delivery, and work to systematically overcome those challenges through better cross-program decision-making and coordinated action.

Customer pain point:

There are interventions that are known to ease the application process and speed the delivery of benefits to the people who need them, but many States have struggled to adopt them.

Project Objectives

In the first year, the Accelerator will focus on two areas: providing tools for improving procurement or development of state benefits technology systems, and providing clear guidance to States on best practice multi-program delivery methods. The Accelerator will conduct research with a cohort of States to validate and develop solutions that address procurement and IT modernization challenges. The Accelerator will also develop interagency guidance and templates on high-value topics to support state delivery (such as multi-program text messaging guidance).

Target milestones in 2023 include:

- Complete procurement research with States, stakeholders, vendors and non-profits. Report common barriers to address and capture best practices to elevate for the planning, procurement, and management of modern IT systems to support multi-program streamlined benefits delivery
- Build and pilot procurement solutions with States (if appropriate based on research)
- Test new methods of policy and product co-development with States and cross-government collaboration
- Develop and share FY24 priorities and plan

Primary deliverables in 2023 include:

- 1-3 State-validated solutions (toolkit, resource, best practices) to support IT or procurement barriers
- Develop initial 1-3 elements of the “one-day delivery toolkit” for States
- Develop multi-program text messaging guidance and templates (in collaboration with the Notifications project within the *Having a child and early childhood for low-income families* Life Experience)

Measures of Success

Key outcomes:

Develop tools and guidance for States to streamline policies and benefits determination operations and modernize their IT systems for public benefits management. The long-term outcome is accelerating State delivery of the multi-program 20-minute application and reach eligibility determinations in one day.

Design phase project measures:

- Target number of State agencies engaged in research and development of procurement solutions
- Target number of States piloting any developed procurement solutions
- Participant States shift towards streamlined multi-program applications and shortened time for eligibility determination and automated redetermination