



# Having a child and early childhood for low-income families

## How might we help families of young children become more aware of existing programs and improve access to supports for eligible people?

Many eligible low-income families are not enrolled in the combination of supports that exist to help them thrive after a baby is born. Too often, the difficulty of knowing what programs exist and navigating siloed, complicated application processes results in critical benefits (such as health care, food, affordable childcare, and early childhood programs) not reaching the families who need them most.

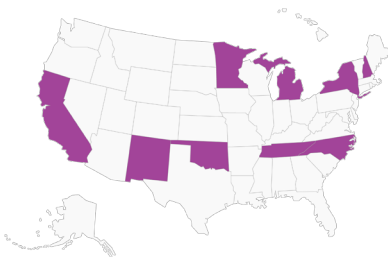


Executive Order 14058 directs the Federal government to identify “life experiences” that require interactions with multiple Federal agencies. Too often, people have to navigate a web of government websites, offices, and phone numbers to access the services they depend on. Government needs to better design and deliver services to meet people’s needs in these moments.

Learn more about this work at:  
<https://www.performance.gov/cx/projects/>

### The team spoke with:

- 32 members of the public
- 12 frontline staff
- 13 state/program administrators
- 64 subject matter experts



This research took place virtually and in-person, in English and in Spanish. 121 people from 10 states participated in the research. This group included single parents, people facing housing insecurity and homelessness, people who are justice-involved, and people with disabilities.

## To start, we listened to people’s stories.

The team spoke with people nationwide about this moment in their lives and where the government process could have been simpler and more helpful. The listening sessions captured honest conversations about people’s experiences, candid feedback on what could have worked better, and what really made a difference for them.

## We learned about some of the biggest pain points we have the opportunity to address:

### PAIN POINT

#### Lack of access to physical resources

The process of applying for benefits is time-consuming and complicated, which can disadvantage families balancing needs, including getting essential supplies.

### PAIN POINT

#### Barriers to apply

The burdensome application process makes it unclear if the costs of applying are outweighed by what it’s worth.

### PAIN POINT

#### Benefits are burdensome to maintain

Families face barriers to maintaining benefits as they juggle the responsibilities of parenthood.

Learn more about this work at:  
<https://www.performance.gov/cx/projects/having-a-child/>



## Story Excerpts

These story excerpts are composite representations of the actual people the team spoke with. The quotes and stories come directly from these conversations, but names have been changed.



### Experience Milestones

**Kailee**  
 Looking for employment  
 Single mom  
 First-time parent



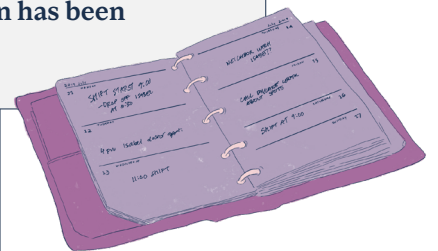
“I was depleted in funds and I’m losing my mind like ‘I can’t buy diapers. I can’t get any formula.’”



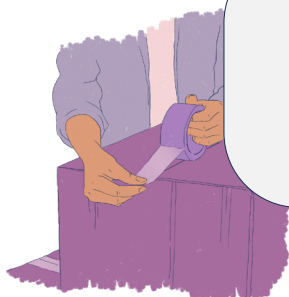
**Rosa**  
 Health Home Aid  
 Mother of two  
 Spanish-speaking



“Not all the questions were clear enough. You can make mistakes, and they don’t tell you ‘there’s a mistake in your form, please correct this question,’ or ‘if you have questions, contact us’ [until the application has been processed].”



**Haleemah**  
 On leave from work  
 Mother of two  
 Has childbirth health complications  
 Moves to a new state



“It’s all about jumping through hoops and staying on top of people to make sure the application is moving, but you can’t stay on hold on the phone for six hours if you work.”

