

The Economic Mobility Toolkit: A New Resource for Community Action Agencies

National Community Action Partnership

September 17, 2026

Disclaimer

This presentation is supported by Grant Number 90ET0502 from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant within the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Neither the Administration for Children and Families nor any of its components operate, control, are responsible for, or necessarily endorse this presentation (including, without limitation, its content, technical infrastructure, and policies, and any services or tools provided). The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Administration for Children and Families and the ACF Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant.

Agenda

- Welcome & Introduction
- CEM Project Overview
- Economic Mobility Toolkit
- Q & A
- Tools & Resources

Project Overview

Purpose

“The Collaborative on Economic Mobility is intended to highlight emerging and promising practices in economic mobility for low-income communities and to expand the capacity of the Community Action network to deliver services that promote economic mobility.”

What is Economic Mobility?

“The measure of how an individual or family’s economic well-being changes over time. The movement of an individual from a lower economic level to a higher economic level refers to upward mobility. The movement from a higher economic level to a lower economic level refers to downward mobility.”

Key Focus Areas

Workforce
Development

High-Quality
Education

Community-
Asset Building

Two-Generation
and Whole
Family
Approaches

Innovative
Community
Programs and
Organizations

Cross-Cutting Opportunities



Opportunities in
Housing



Opportunities in
Transportation



Opportunities in
Health

THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY TOOL KIT >>>>>>>

Strengthen your agency's economic mobility efforts with a comprehensive toolkit that brings together all Collaborative on Economic Mobility resources, along with bonus tools and resources to guide your agency's existing efforts and support new economic mobility initiatives.

THE TOOLKIT INCLUDES RESOURCES LIKE:

WEBINARS

TOOLKITS

RESOURCE BRIEFS

COMPANION GUIDES

CASE STUDIES

ONE-PAGERS

AND MORE!



THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY TOOLKIT

A Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM) Resource

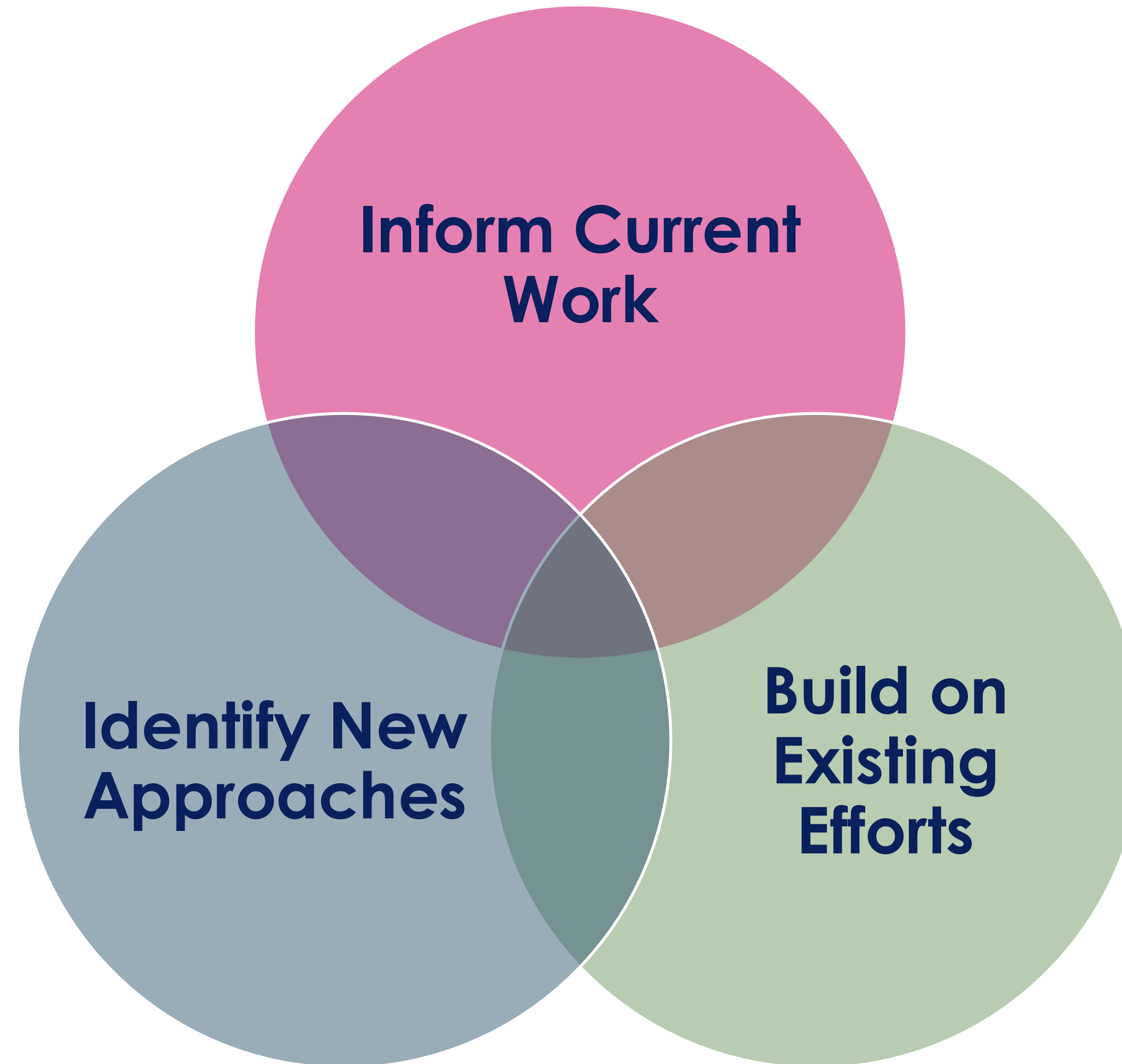


**DISCOVER THE
TOOLKIT TODAY!**



<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-Toolkit2026>

How to Use the Toolkit



Menti – *Who's in the Room?*

Economic Mobility Toolkit

Workforce Development

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR SERIES



Dive deeper into apprenticeship pathways with this two-part Workforce Development webinar series!

Explore action steps, strategies, and resources to strengthen your understanding and implementation of Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships.

**EXPLORE MORE
HERE!**



<https://tinyurl.com/WORKFORCE-DEVELOPMENT1>

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar on Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. These programs are shaping a brighter future not only for individuals but for the entire community.

In today's rapidly evolving job market, workforce development is key to building strong, resilient families and fostering long-term economic growth. It goes beyond simply filling job vacancies; it's about creating meaningful career pathways that drive long-term economic growth. By investing in education and training, we empower individuals to:

- **Increase Earning Potential:** Skilled workers command higher wages, improving financial stability.
- **Enhance Job Security:** In-demand skills provide resilience in an ever-changing job market.
- **Contribute to Community Prosperity:** A skilled workforce attracts investment, driving growth and strengthening local economies.
- **Break Cycles of Poverty:** Access to quality training creates opportunities for upward mobility.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PART 2 APPRENTICESHIP WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. This resource is designed to deepen your understanding of Registered Apprenticeships and provide you with additional resources to support your next steps, whether you're launching a program, expanding an existing program, or exploring how Registered Apprenticeships can strengthen your Workforce Development program goals.

What is a Registered Apprenticeship?

A Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-validated, structured, work-based learning model that combines on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction (RI). These programs are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency, ensuring they meet specific quality standards.

Feature	Registered Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Pre-Apprenticeship
Registration	Registered with DOL or State Apprenticeship Agency and abides by 23 established standards	Any apprenticeship that is not formally registered with DOL	Not necessarily registered
Wage	Paid employment	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid
Credential	Nationally recognized credential upon completion	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized
Duration	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Shorter term, often a few weeks to months
Purpose	Provides industry-validated, paid job training that leads to full occupational proficiency while earning a portable, nationally recognized credential	Offers structured, paid or unpaid job training to prepare individuals for skilled careers, potentially leading to industry-recognized credentials	Foundational program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeships

NORTH EAST COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

 Bowling Green, MO

 necac.org



Agency Context

Organizational Capacity

North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC) is a Community Action Agency, a Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Rural LISC) grantee, and a NeighborWorks chartered agency located in Bowling Green, Missouri. The service area spans across 12 counties in Northeast Missouri, including three counties that are part of the metropolitan statistical area adjacent to St. Louis, as well as nine rural counties. The agency's annual budget is approximately \$26 million. This includes over 30 different funding sources, including a mix of both state and federal funding. NECAC is governed by a 36-person volunteer Board of Directors which includes three representatives from each of the 12 counties in the service area. The representatives from each county

include an Elected Official Representative, a Civic Interest Representative, and a Low-Income Representative. The agency has approximately 95 full-time staff and 100 part-time staff. The management team is comprised of 10 individuals including the President/CEO, Deputy Director of Housing Development Programs, Finance Operations Director, Personnel Officer and Assistant Deputy Director, Executive Secretary and Office Manager, Public Relations Officer, Information Technology (IT) Operations Director, Rent Assistance Programs Director, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Operations Director, and Weatherization Director.

Service Delivery

NECAC operates over 60 different programs across the areas of Community Service, Housing Development, and Community Health. Programs within the area of Community

NORTH EAST COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

COMMUNITYACTIONPARTNERSHIP.COM | 1

<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-WRKFRCDDEV>

Spotlight On: Workforce Development

North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC) Case Study

Discover how NECAC enhanced its Workforce Development programming through organizational change and strong partnerships. This case study highlights how improved program structure and mission alignment created a stronger, more streamlined path to economic mobility.



EXPLORE THE CASE
STUDY TODAY

RESOURCE BRIEF:



YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

Discover how Youth Apprenticeship models can be applied to support young adults ages 16–24. Learn how your agency can help create structured pathways to education, career training, and employment opportunities.

Explore topics like:

- Restorative Workforce Pathways
- Paid Work Experience
- Intermediary Models.

YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP

Introduction

Youth Apprenticeship is an emerging Apprenticeship program model that is specifically designed for young adults ages 16–24 and provides structured pathways that help to develop new skills and gain work experience through a combination of paid employment, mentorship, work based learning, and related instruction.

Youth Apprenticeships are an “Options Multiplier” which prepares young adults with a range of education and career opportunities, which can include full-time employment, full time college, a mix of part-time training and employment, or a Registered Apprenticeship program leading to a more advanced occupation.

Many families see traditional post-secondary education as the only route to economic mobility for their young adults, yet today’s workforce demands are reshaping what success after high school can look like.

The Youth Apprenticeship Landscape

The definition of a Youth Apprenticeship varies from state to state, as there is no federal definition of what a Youth Apprenticeship is. Some states have different names to define what a Youth Apprentice is and what their work requirements are. Youth Apprenticeship can also be referred to as Career and Technical Education (CTE) Apprenticeship, Registered Youth Apprenticeship, Quality Pre-Apprenticeship or Modern Youth Apprenticeship.



DISCOVER THE BRIEF



[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/CEMYOUTHAPPRENTICE](https://tinyurl.com/CEMYOUTHAPPRENTICE)

Additional Tools

Access the Resources:
tinyurl.com/CEMWrkForce

Advocate for the Future of Career & Technical Education (CTE)



[The Association for Career and Technical Education \(ACTE\) Job Sector Advocacy Sheets](#) highlight the critical role CTE plays in developing a skilled workforce for key industry sectors such as energy, health care, hospitality, education, and manufacturing. Community Action Agencies can utilize these sheets when designing and planning workforce development initiatives that are responsive to community needs.

Connect High-Quality Education & Workforce Development



Ready to take the next step in education and workforce collaboration? [ACT Summit 2027](#) brings together K–12, higher education, workforce, and cross-sector professionals to share innovative ideas, learn from peers, and explore actionable strategies for advancing education and workforce development.

Explore Apprenticeship Opportunities



[ApprenticeshipUSA](#) is a comprehensive place to learn more about advancing skilled trades through registered apprenticeship programs. It provides tools to search for opportunities, understand the benefits of apprenticeships, and access resources for employers looking to build a skilled workforce. The resources emphasize earning while learning and gaining industry-recognized credentials that lead to successful careers.

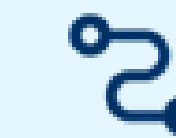
Understand Emerging Trends



Read and learn more about the current trends and strategic approaches for workforce development in these articles from Seattle Job Initiative (SJI). Each article provides advice and guidance to help support Community Action Agencies with implementation of these approaches.

- [Apprenticeships](#)
- [Emerging Occupations](#)
- [Digital Literacy](#)
- [Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Short-Term Credentials](#)
- [Youth Employment](#)
- [Career Pathways](#)

Build Pathways to Prosperity



[The Pathways to Prosperity Framework](#) is intended to help communities better prepare young people for family-supporting careers by strengthening and improving the pathway from high school to postsecondary education, and the workforce. The framework includes five key levers for successful workforce development systems: Secondary Postsecondary Integration, Career Navigation Systems, Work-Based Learning, Intermediaries, and Leadership and Policy. Strengthening and improving the workforce development system through these levers not only prepares young people for the workforce but also provides employers with a pipeline of skilled and talented professionals and meets the economic and labor needs of the state and region.

High-Quality Education

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WEBINAR SERIES



Unlock your potential and advance economic mobility by exploring this two-part webinar series from the Collaborative on Economic Mobility.

Discover how Community Action Agencies can:

- Re-Imagine and Strengthen strategic partnerships
- Deepen trust
- Align goals for lasting community impact.

EXPLORE HERE!



bit.ly/STRATEGIC-PARTNERSHIPS



BUCKS COUNTY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

Doylestown, PA

bcoe.org



Agency Context

Organizational Capacity

Bucks County Opportunity Council (BCOC) is a local Community Action Agency located in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. They serve over 56,000 people annually through five program areas including: Housing, Weatherization, Food, Income Tax Preparation, and Economic Self-Sufficiency. The annual budget is approximately \$15 million which consists of 67% public funding and 33% from private and other funding sources. The work is led by a 21-person tripartite Board of Directors and a 17-person leadership team including a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), three Directors (Development, Compliance, and Client Services), six Housing Site Supervisors, and six Managers (Human Resources, Volunteer and Community Connections, Self-Sufficiency Program, Food Program,

Communications and Development, and Weatherization Program). Additionally, there are 60 employees on staff and over 1,700 volunteers who contribute over 100,000 hours of volunteer service per year.

Service Delivery

Bucks County is a suburb of Philadelphia, with a population of approximately 650,000. The county's population has grown by 3.4% since 2010 and the current poverty rate is 5.9%. This includes nearly 17% of children under the age of 18, and 5% of senior citizens over the age of 65. The community's needs vary depending on which part of the county they reside in. For example, in the Lower Bucks County area, income tends to be lower and four of the school districts have free or reduced lunch rates for over 50% of their student body.

BUCKS COUNTY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITYACTIONPARTNERSHIPC | 1

<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-HIGHQUALITYED>

Spotlight On: High Quality Education

Bucks County Opportunity Council Case Study

Explore how Bucks County Opportunity Council partnered with their local Community College to break down barriers for low-income students. Through personalized coaching and support services, this case study highlights a proven pathway to lasting economic mobility and student success.



EXPLORE THE CASE
STUDY TODAY



Additional Tools

Access the Resources:
tinyurl.com/CEMHighQualityEdu

BARR Model: Building Assets, Reducing Risks



The BARR Model (Building Assets, Reducing Risks) is a strengths-based education approach that improves student outcomes by building stronger student-teacher relationships and using collaborative teacher teams to address both the academic and non-academic needs of students. Backed by more than 20 years of research, the model is now used in 26 states and nearly 500 schools nationwide.

Cradle to Career Outcomes



StriveTogether is a national Cradle to Career Network where place-based partners work together to build a better future for youth to thrive in their communities. This work is based on four key pillars of shared community vision, evidence-based decision-making, collaborative action, investment and sustainability. Success is measured by key milestones such as kindergarten readiness, early grade reading, middle grade math, high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment and completion, and employment.



Meaningful Mentorship



Mentoring Matters offers practical tools and guidance to support mentors in building strong, effective relationships. This resource emphasizes goal setting, communication strategies, and skill development to help mentors navigate each stage of the mentoring journey with clarity and confidence.

Human-Centered School Transformation



The Human-Centered Model was developed by The Center for Transforming Education to help schools develop flexible, growth-oriented mindsets. This approach encourages educators and leaders to embrace change, collaborate around shared goals, and create supportive environments. By transforming school values and practices, the model aims to better meet the needs of students and drive lasting and meaningful changes.

Rural Learning Systems



The Building Rural Community Systems cohort was developed through a partnership with CivicLab and funding from Ascendium Education Group and ECMC Foundation. This cohort brought together ten rural communities in Arkansas, California, Florida, Indiana, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, and South Carolina to identify system-level strategies, build cross-sector collaborative partnerships, and strengthen education-to-employment pathways.

Community-Asset Building



FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This webinar companion guide highlights best practices for Community Action Agencies to further develop innovative financial empowerment programs and integrate them into other human service programs.

This companion guide outlines strategies that both public and private Community Action Agencies can take advantage of to help individuals and families achieve financial success!

**CHECK OUT THE
GUIDE TODAY!**



<https://tinyurl.com/FINANCIAL-EMPOWER1>

ADVANCING ECONOMIC MOBILITY THROUGH FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

i Introduction

A stable financial foundation is fundamental for upward economic mobility. Financial stability allows individuals and families to fully benefit from programs that support employment, education, housing, health, and overall well-being. Financial stability is more than simply getting by day to day; it is about being able to sustain a household for months and years to come. Long term financial stability depends on both financial knowledge and access to affordable financial products and services. These services can help individuals and families to plan and prepare for financial emergencies and setbacks to ensure that financial goals and outcomes are not only achieved but also maintained.

Financial empowerment strategies are designed to help individuals and families build the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions. These strategies include financial education and coaching,



supportive policies and practices, and improved access to safe and affordable financial products such as affordable banking, credit unions, and savings accounts. By reimagining the approach to financial empowerment, Community Action Agencies can implement integrated services to help individuals and families manage finances, reduce debt, improve credit scores, build

LOUISVILLE METRO OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

📍 Louisville, KY

🌐 louisvilleky.gov/government/office-social-services



Agency Context

🏢 Organizational Capacity

Louisville Metro Government's Office of Social Services is a public Community Action Agency in Louisville, Kentucky that serves all the Louisville-Jefferson County Metro area. The agency's annual budget is approximately \$46.1 million with primary funding sources including Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Metro Government Fund, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Capital Project Fund, AmeriCorps, and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Additional grants and donations are provided by financial support institutes such as banks and credit union partners. The agency has approximately 150 staff and 200 volunteers. It is structured into eight branches which include:

Advocacy and Outreach, Administration, Homeless Services, Neighborhood Places, Financial Empowerment, Housing and Support, Senior Nutrition, and Planning and Compliance.

This case study will focus on the Office of Financial Empowerment, a branch of the Office of Social Services, which is led by a team of six including a Social Service Policy and Advocacy Manager, a Policy and Advocacy Supervisor, a Social Service Supervisor, and three Financial Counselors. The Social Service Policy and Advocacy Manager and the Policy and Advocacy Supervisor are both Certified Community Action Professionals (CCAP) with additional training and certifications in Financial Counseling, Financial Social Work, and Economic Mobility Coaching. The Social Service Supervisor and all three Financial Counselors are certified through the National Association of Certified Credit Counselors.

LOUISVILLE METRO OFFICE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

COMMUNITYACTIONPARTNERSHIP.COM | 1

Spotlight On: Community-Asset Building

Louisville Metro Government - Office of Social Services

Learn how Louisville Metro Government's Office of Social Services implemented a Financial Empowerment Center through its Community-Asset Building work. By integrating financial empowerment services across programs, the agency helps families plan ahead, strengthen financial stability, and better withstand financial crises.



EXPLORE THE CASE
STUDY TODAY



<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-COMASSETBUILD>

Additional Tools

Creating Community Places & Spaces



The revitalization of neighborhoods creates vibrant spaces that promote economic growth and social well-being. Re-imagining common spaces such as parks, plazas, public squares, streets, and sidewalks unlocks opportunity for community development. Get inspired with the [Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places](#) and start your journey toward neighborhood revitalization.

Community Development Opportunities



[Community Economic Development](#) (CED) can help spark job creation and business growth in local communities. CED is a federal grant program that provides funding to private, non-profit Community Development Corporations (CDCs). Successful initiatives have included the development of affordable housing, community grocery stores, and childcare centers. The job opportunities created through CED funding offer living wages, competitive benefits, and the opportunity for career advancement.

Tools for Economic Development



[Homegrown Tools](#) is an online resource that shares real-world examples of successful small-town economic development. It offers case studies, practical strategies, and insights that communities have used to stimulate investment, create jobs, and strengthen local economies. Discover actionable ideas and approaches that can inspire your community's growth and success.

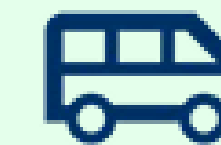
Access the Resources:
tinyurl.com/CEMCommAssetBuild

Strategic Collaborations Between Community Action Agencies & Tribal Entities



Through trust-building, strong governance, and shared decision making, Community Action Agencies can strengthen local capacity, uplift community development, and encourage the self-sufficiency of communities. [Community Action Program Legal Services \(CAPLAW\)](#)'s [Strategic Collaborations Between CAAs and Tribal Entities](#) case studies highlight the importance of Community Action Agencies, tribes, and tribal organizations collaborating to serve low-income tribal communities and the flexibility of Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding.

Connecting People & Places through Transportation Solutions



[The Community Action Transit Forum](#) explores how Community Action Agencies are coordinating and operating a wide range of transit solutions that help people and families stay connected to work, education, health care, and daily needs. The forum showcases how volunteer driver programs, fixed-route services, non-emergency medical transportation, coordinated transit efforts, and on-demand models function in real communities. Additional resources, including the [Rural Health Transformation Program \(RHTP\) toolkit](#), are available from the [Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Technical Assistance Center \(CCAM-TAC\)](#). The toolkit features an interactive state map, strategy resource guide, partnership strategies, mobile health strategies, and a funding guide.

Two-Generational and Whole Family Approaches

Collaborative on Economic Mobility

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH IN ACTION

Profiles of Agencies Creating Change

Two-Generation and Whole Family Approaches are designed to support family well-being and the opportunity for upward economic mobility by providing high-quality, comprehensive, and coordinated services that meet the needs of parents and children simultaneously. Highlighting Community Action Agencies who have successfully implemented a Whole Family Approach helps to support peer-to-peer learning and foster a deeper understanding of the foundational concepts of implementation, including the importance of coaching and building trusted working relationships with families, integrating services across multiple domains, leveraging funding opportunities, and building and strengthening strategic partnerships. The Community Action Agencies featured in this resource have successfully implemented economic mobility initiatives that operate through the lens of a Whole Family Approach which often requires changing organizational policies and practices. Each case study provides context on the agency's background, their implementation journey, the successes and challenges they encountered along the way, and the lessons they learned that can be applied within the context of other local communities.

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH



Across the examples that follow, one lesson is clear: workforce development initiatives are stronger when they are paired with family-centered coaching and coordinated services to support the whole family. Each of the agencies demonstrate how Community Action Agencies can combine coaching, partnerships, training pathways, and wraparound services to help families move from short-term stability toward long-term economic mobility.

COMMUNITYACTIONPARTNERSHIP.ORG | 1

Spotlight On: Whole Family Approach

Case Studies from Community Action Agencies Creating Change

Learn how three Community Action Agencies across urban, regional, and rural contexts that have successfully implemented economic mobility initiatives through the lens of a Whole Family Approach.

Each profile highlights the agency's background, implementation journey, and the successes and challenges that can be applied to other local communities.

<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-WFA2GEN>



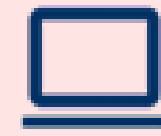
EXPLORE THE CASE
STUDY TODAY



Additional Tools

Access the Resources:
tinyurl.com/CEM2GenWFA

Technology Solutions



When information about children and parents is stored across separate systems, it can be difficult for staff to understand the full needs of the family and coordinate wraparound support. Data integration strategies and technology solutions can help Community Action Agencies strengthen Two-Generation or Whole-Family Approaches by creating a more complete view of families and improving service coordination. [Advancing Two-Generation Approaches Through Data](#) is a resource brief that focuses on the benefits and challenges of building an integrated data system while also providing real life examples.

The Importance of Stability



Sustaining economic mobility depends on the stability and well-being of every family member. [From Resources to Routines: The Importance of Stability in the Developmental Environment](#) explores how stable environments for children and caregivers support health, development, and long-term economic mobility, highlighting the importance of addressing the needs of the entire family.

Funding Opportunities for Children & Youth Services



This [Federal Funding Streams for Children and Youth Database](#) provides a comprehensive database of over 300 federal funding streams that support children and youth services across the country. The database identifies available funding opportunities, outlines eligibility requirements, and tracks funding and policy changes. Explore the tool to learn more about how your organization can expand funding opportunities to strengthen programs and services for children and youth.

Strengthening Service Delivery



Explore how Two-Generation or Whole-Family Approach programs can improve family services through structured learning, using the Learn, Innovate, Improve (LI²) approach. [Using a Structured Learning Process to Strengthen Two-Generation Service Delivery](#) is a resource that emphasizes how small, data-informed adjustments grounded in participant and staff input can lead to more effective service delivery. This resource can help Community Action Agencies learn how to better strengthen outcomes through intentional, collaborative change.

Whole Family Approach Quarterly Digest



[The Whole Family Approach Quarterly Digest](#) is a quarterly newsletter that highlights tools and resources to help support the Community Action network in implementing a Two-Generation or Whole-Family Approach. Each edition features a rotating selection of toolkits, case studies, funding opportunities, and more. Resources are available for every phase of the journey - whether you are interested in learning more about the framework, exploring the process of designing and implementing, or seeking to strengthen and improve your existing Two-Generation or Whole-Family Approach.

Innovative Community Programs and Organizations

TURNING IDEAS INTO IMPACT WEBINAR SERIES

Explore this webinar series to discover how your agency can build a culture of innovation that strengthens partnerships and creates lasting community impact.

- Design innovative solutions
- Implement with intention
- Sustain lasting impact

DISCOVER THE
RESOURCES
TODAY!

<https://tinyurl.com/IDEAS2IMPACT1>



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

Turning Ideas into Impact

Webinar Companion Guide—Part 1

Introduction

The *Turning Ideas into Impact* (Part 1 of 2) webinar highlights how Community Action Agencies (CAAs) can create the conditions for innovation to thrive by establishing innovation as an organizational value, aligning resources, and forming strategic partnerships. This companion guide is designed for executive leaders, program directors, managers, and emerging leaders within CAAs. It will help your team prepare for the design and implementation of innovative initiatives. Use this guide to reflect and discuss, revisit it as you navigate priorities, complete the activities collaboratively, and identify one actionable step to move your work forward.

1 ESTABLISHING INNOVATION AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE

Organizations that successfully innovate create environments where staff feel empowered to share ideas, test solutions, and learn from failure. Leadership plays a critical role in modeling openness, curiosity, and adaptability.

KEY ACTIONS

- ✓ Define what innovation means for your agency
- ✓ Encourage staff at all levels to contribute ideas
- ✓ Normalize learning from challenges and setbacks
- ✓ Identify internal champions to lead innovative efforts

SIGNS OF INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

- Staff feel safe sharing new ideas
- Leadership supports experimentation
- Learning is prioritized over perfection
- Cross-team collaboration is common

WEBINAR
COMPANION
GUIDE
PART 2

Turning Ideas into Impact

FROM IDEAS TO IMPACT IN COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES

This Webinar Companion Guide for *Turning Ideas into Impact* (Part 2 of 2) builds on the readiness work from Part 1. It focuses on how Community Action Agencies (CAAs) can turn innovative ideas into measurable, sustainable outcomes by intentionally designing initiatives, implementing them effectively, evaluating impact, and planning for sustainability and scale. It is designed for CAA teams who are ready to move from planning to action. This guide can be used during the webinar to draft or refine one initiative, then used as a working document after the webinar to confirm roles, set milestones, schedule check-ins, and track progress as you adapt and learn.

1. DESIGNING INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Strong design is the bridge between ideas and impact. Effective initiatives are grounded in community needs, informed by data, and guided by a clear theory of change.

Key Actions

- Define the problem clearly using data and community input
- Engage participants in co-design
- Develop a clear theory of change
- Start small with pilot efforts

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Center community voice
2. Use data to inform decisions
3. Focus on outcomes, not just activities
4. Test before scaling

Collaborative on Economic Mobility

INNOVATION IN ACTION

Profiles of Agencies Creating Change



<https://tinyurl.com/InnovationInAction1>

Spotlight On: Innovative Programs & Organizations

Louisville Metro Government - Office of Social Services

Explore case studies from six Community Action Agencies meeting the unique needs of their communities.

Learn about emerging and promising practices in housing, transportation, and healthcare, and discover how these cross-cutting areas contribute to the success of economic mobility initiatives.



**EXPLORE THE CASE
STUDY TODAY**



Cross-Cutting Connections

Access the Resources:
tinyurl.com/CEMIInnovation

Collaborative Partnerships



Pair the ["Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development"](#) webinar series with the ["Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships"](#) webinar series to learn how to establish new, or strengthen existing, workforce development partnerships.

Health Connections



Pair the [Emerging Occupations](#) article with the [Innovative Programs and Organizations](#) case study to explore how job training opportunities in the field of Behavioral Health can address both workforce development and healthcare needs.

Data-Driven Decision-Making



Pair ["Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development"](#) with the ["Turning Ideas into Impact Part 2"](#) webinar training to learn how data-driven decision-making can help guide innovative workforce development strategies and transform them from ideas into actionable outcomes.

Coaching Models



Pair the [Whole Family Approach](#), [High-Quality Education](#), and [Community Asset Building](#) case studies together to learn more about how a coaching model can be integrated across programs and services to help support families in achieving their long-term goals for upward economic mobility.

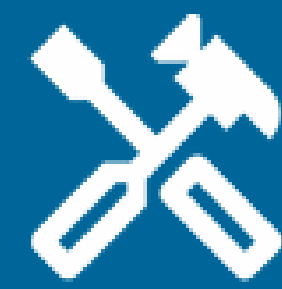
Transportation & Housing Solutions



Watch the video series [These Roads We Share](#) and [Voices from the Field](#) to learn more about how innovative transportation and housing solutions support economic mobility by building community assets and increasing access to opportunities for education and employment.



At-A-Glance



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Description	Promising Practices	Resources	Cross-Cutting Connections
Workforce development is a key focus within economic mobility, because obtaining full-time employment in skilled labor increases economic stability and fosters upward mobility. By strengthening workforce development activities, Community Action Agencies can increase the ability for individuals to access job training opportunities and increase wages.	- Aligning training programs with the specific needs of key industries experiencing growth. - Engaging with employers and implementing demand-driven strategies. - Providing hands-on experience and mentorship opportunities. - Integrating technology and digital literacy initiatives. - Entrepreneurship and small business development.	Webinar Trainings: Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Part 1 Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Part 2 Webinar Companion Guides: Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Part 1: Pre-Apprenticeships Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Part 2: Apprenticeships One-Pagers: Pre-Apprenticeships Apprenticeships Resource Brief: Youth Apprenticeships Case Study: Workforce Development	High-Quality Education: Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Part 2: Strengthening & Sustaining Strategic Partnerships
			TIP: Build stronger workforce development partnerships to better achieve your community's workforce goals!
			Two Gen/Whole Family Approach: Whole Family Approach Case Study
			TIP: Support the entire family while offering opportunities for job growth and advancement!



HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

Description	Promising Practices	Resources	Cross-Cutting Connections
High-quality education advances economic mobility by expanding access to learning opportunities and strengthening pathways to high school graduation, post-secondary degree completion, and skills certification. Community Action Agencies can support this work through collaboration, innovation, advocacy, and strategic partnerships with educational institutions.	• Personalized learning and competency-based education • Investing in job support for families including early childhood education • Career and Technical Education (CTE) • Collaborations with educational institutions • Initiatives that support the transition from high school to college or the workforce • The integration of technology and digital literacy initiatives	Webinar Trainings: • Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Part 1 • Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Part 2 Webinar Companion Guides: • Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Part 1: Building & Reimagining Established Partnerships • Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Part 2: Strengthening & Sustaining Strategic Partnerships One-Pagers: • Building & Re-Imagining Established Partnerships • Strengthening & Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Case Study: • High-Quality Education	Workforce Development: • Youth Apprenticeships
			✍️ TIP: Build stronger workforce development partnerships to better achieve your community's workforce goals!
			Community Asset Building: • Financial Education and Wealth Generation Strategies for Economic Mobility
			✍️ TIP: Promote financial literacy by integrating financial empowerment into programs and services.



COMMUNITY-ASSET BUILDING

Description	Promising Practices	Resources	Cross-Cutting Connections
Community-asset-building supports economic mobility by strengthening neighborhoods, expanding local resources, and addressing the effects of concentrated poverty. Through financial capability and economic empowerment strategies, Community Action Agencies can help families manage finances, reduce debt, improve credit, and build savings	• Adoption of asset-based community development strategies. • Private-Public collaborative partnerships that align resources and priorities toward shared goals. • Locally controlled place-based approaches. • Revitalization of neighborhoods. • Promoting financial capability and economic empowerment.	Webinar Training: • Financial Education and Wealth Generation Strategies for Economic Mobility Webinar Companion Guides: • Advancing Economic Mobility through Financial Empowerment One Pager: • Economic Mobility through Financial Empowerment Case Study: • Community-Asset Building	Workforce Development: • Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Part 2
			👉 TIP: Registered Apprenticeships provide a pathway to wage growth by allowing individuals to learn while they earn.
			Innovative Community Programs and Organizations: • Turning Ideas into Impact Part 2
			👉 TIP: Pilot your innovative initiatives with a “fail fast” mindset!



WHOLE-FAMILY APPROACH

Description	Promising Practices	Resources	Cross-Cutting Connections
Two-Generation and Whole Family Approaches are designed to support family well-being and the opportunity for upward economic mobility by providing high-quality, comprehensive, and coordinated services that meet the needs of parents and children simultaneously. Community Action Agencies who have successfully implemented a Whole Family Approach demonstrate an understanding of the importance of coaching and building trusted working relationships with families, integrating services across multiple domains, leveraging funding opportunities, and building and strengthening strategic partnerships.	• Supporting working parents. • Focusing on outcomes for working families and their children. • Receiving training and technical assistance to help understand and implement service integration. • Identifying technology solutions to help staff integrate data.	Case Study: • Whole Family Approach	High Quality Education: • High-Quality Education
			 TIP: Find strategies to reduce barriers to education for students.
			Community Asset Building: • Community Asset Building
			 TIP: Help families achieve homeownership through financial empowerment.



INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & ORGANIZATIONS

Description	Promising Practices	Resources	Cross-Cutting Connections
Innovative community programs help address cross-cutting obstacles that can limit access to opportunities for economic mobility. By listening to community needs, integrating supportive services, and aligning resources, Community Action Agencies can develop local solutions that expand access, reduce challenges, and strengthen pathways to economic stability and mobility.	- Identifying safe and affordable housing solutions. - Addressing transportation challenges. - Integrating health and wellness initiatives.	Webinar Trainings: Turning Ideas into Impact Part 1 Turning Ideas into Impact Part 2 Webinar Companion Guides: Turning Ideas into Impact Part 1: Building the Foundation for Innovation in Community Action Agencies Turning Ideas into Impact Part 2: From Ideas to Impact in Community Action Agencies Case Study: Innovative Programs and Organizations	High Quality Education: Building and Sustaining Strategic Partnerships Part 1: Building & Reimagining Established Partnerships
			TIP: Work with partners to create seamless referrals between services!
			Workforce Development: Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development Part 1
			TIP: Design workforce solutions that develop skilled talent and meet community needs!

Menti – *How do you see yourself using the toolkit?*

Any Questions?



Tools and Resources

THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY TOOL KIT >>>>>>>

Strengthen your agency's economic mobility efforts with a comprehensive toolkit that brings together all Collaborative on Economic Mobility resources, along with bonus tools and resources to guide your agency's existing efforts and support new economic mobility initiatives.

THE TOOLKIT INCLUDES RESOURCES LIKE:

WEBINARS

TOOLKITS

RESOURCE BRIEFS

COMPANION GUIDES

CASE STUDIES

ONE-PAGERS

AND MORE!



THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY TOOLKIT

A Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM) Resource



**DISCOVER THE
TOOLKIT TODAY!**



<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-Toolkit2026>

COLLABORATIVE ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Explore the Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM) Webpage!

You can find tools and resources related to CEM key focus areas and sign up for the Fresh Finds Newsletter here!

CEM Key Focus Areas:

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ASSET BUILDING

HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
& ORGANIZATIONS



<https://tinyurl.com/GO2CEM>



COLLABORATIVE ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY TOOLKIT FOR STATE ASSOCIATIONS

State Associations can access quick and ready-to-share resources from the Collaborative on Economic Mobility with the Elevate and Innovate Toolkit.

Amplifying emerging and promising practices to advance economic mobility by sharing these transformative resources with your local network!



FRESH FINDS NEWSLETTER



WEBINAR SERIES & COMPANION GUIDES



READY-TO-SHARE SOCIAL MEDIA & NEWSLETTER TEMPLATES



PRE-MADE GRAPHICS FOR INSTANT USE

**DISCOVER THE
TOOLKIT TODAY!**



[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/CEM-ELEVATE](https://tinyurl.com/CEM-ELEVATE)

THE ELEVATE & INNOVATE TOOLKIT

A Collaborative on Economic
Mobility (CEM) Resource for
State Associations



FRESH FINDS

**DISCOVER THIS
RESOURCE!**

LEARN

EXPAND

IMPLEMENT

Are you interested in expanding the capacity of your organization to implement innovative programs and services?

Are you interested in improving outcomes for the individuals, families, and communities in your service area?

Are you interested in learning from the experiences of other community leaders across the country?

The “Fresh Finds” Newsletter is offered quarterly through the Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM). Sign up and be the first to know about new tools, resources, and training opportunities!



TINYURL.COM/FRESHFINDS25

We want to hear from you!

We would love to hear about your experience in today's webinar training. Please take a moment to complete the survey.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CEMToolkit>