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Cities Expanding Health Access for Children and Families

With support from The Atlantic Philanthropies and the National League of Cities (NLC), eight cities across the country participating in the Cities Expanding Health Access for Children and Families (CEHACF) initiative implemented comprehensive campaigns to increase health insurance enrollment access to health care for children and their families who do not have coverage but are eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Through a combination of community, public school, and media outreach, as well as application and enrollment assistance, CEHACF cities supported more than 16,000 enrollments and renewals in Medicaid and CHIP. Atlantic also hired Mathematica Policy Research to evaluate this initiative.

Cities Expanding Health Access for Children and Families Initiative



BACKGROUND

The passage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) presented new opportunities to help children and their families obtain health insurance by expanding Medicaid eligibility. When the ACA was passed in 2010, an estimated 7.3 million children under the age of 18 were without health insurance (U.S. Census Bureau 2010); however, 4.4 million of these children were eligible for low-cost public

insurance coverage through Medicaid or CHIP (Kenney et al 2012). Viewing the ACA as a potential opportunity to enroll eligible uninsured children, The Atlantic Philanthropies set a goal of achieving health coverage for all children through adoption of state policies that protect and expand children's coverage, as well as systems change in communities across the country to support outreach and assistance with public insurance enrollment and renewal procedures.

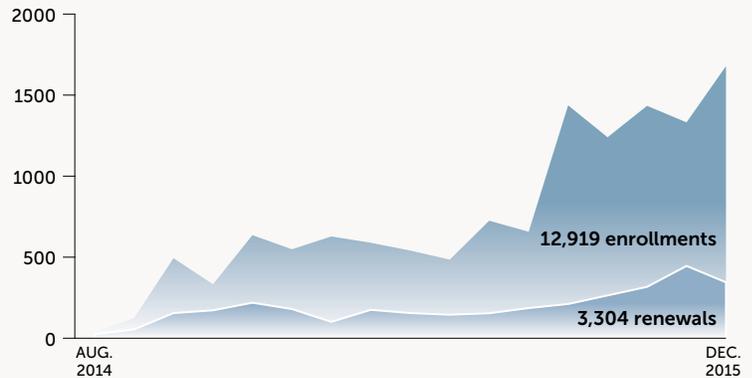
Recognizing the responsibility cities have for protecting the health and well-being of their residents and the platform that municipal leaders have to engage residents on these issues, The Atlantic Philanthropies granted \$3.25 million to the National League of Cities' (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families to implement the three-year CEHACF initiative to engage cities on children's coverage issues. Launched in January 2013, the three-phase strategy for making competitive grants available to cities included participation in educational sessions on effective health insurance outreach and enrollment strategies, as well as development and implementation of business plans. Leaders in selected cities were encouraged to partner with community-serving organizations and other key stakeholders in their locales to find and enroll uninsured children and families into Medicaid and CHIP.

Mathematica Policy Research worked with The Atlantic Philanthropies and NLC to develop and implement an evaluation that helps determine the extent to which municipal governments are effective in increasing coverage take-up and factors that contribute to success. The evaluation also identifies risks and rewards of grant-making strategies that follow a three-stage model of support and competition.

RESULTS

Cities participating in the CEHACF initiative made important strides in ensuring that their residents have health insurance coverage, supporting 12,919 enrollments and 3,304 renewals from August 2014 through December 2015.

Participating cities' enrollment and renewal results August 2014–December 2015



CITIES' ROLE IN EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTH COVERAGE

The CEHACF initiative demonstrated that municipal governments can be effective agents for increasing health care coverage for uninsured citizens. Mathematica's evaluation identified key factors that can contribute to the success of such efforts:

- Cities must be educated about and committed to implementing best practices, including direct, one-on-one enrollment assistance
- Institutionalized relationships with essential partners, such as schools, health clinics, and other community-based organizations is key to supporting outreach efforts

- Cross-city relationships facilitate sharing of ideas, challenges, and lessons learned

The National League of Cities will continue to provide technical assistance to the current cohort of eight CEHACF participants. In addition, Mathematica will synthesize lessons learned and promising practices, so that cities across the nation will be able to develop and implement their own strategies for increasing enrollment of children and families eligible for public health insurance programs.

To learn more, watch the recap video or read the evaluation report, "[Competitive Grant Making: Lessons for Funders to Help Local Governments Increase Health Coverage.](#)"

