

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2986

To amend part A of title XI of the Social Security Act to establish an interagency council on social determinants of health, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 5, 2019

Mr. YOUNG (for himself and Ms. STABENOW) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To amend part A of title XI of the Social Security Act to establish an interagency council on social determinants of health, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Social Determinants
5 Accelerator Act of 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ACCELERATOR COUNCIL.**

7 Part A of title XI of the Social Security Act (42
8 U.S.C. 1301 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section
9 1139B, the following new section:

1 **“SEC. 1139C. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ACCELERATOR COUN-**
2 **CIL.**

3 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an
4 interagency council to be known as the Social Deter-
5 minants Accelerator Interagency Council (referred to in
6 this section as the ‘Council’).

7 “(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

8 “(1) FEDERAL COMPOSITION.—The Council
9 shall be composed of at least 1 designee from each
10 of the following Federal agencies:

11 “(A) The Office of Management and
12 Budget.

13 “(B) The Department of Agriculture.

14 “(C) The Department of Education.

15 “(D) The Indian Health Service.

16 “(E) The Department of Housing and
17 Urban Development.

18 “(F) The Department of Labor.

19 “(G) The Department of Transportation.

20 “(H) The Department of Justice.

21 “(I) Any other Federal agency the Chair of
22 the Council determines necessary.

23 “(2) DESIGNATION.—

24 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The head of each
25 agency specified in paragraph (1) shall des-
26 ignate at least one employee described in sub-

1 paragraph (B) to serve as a member of the
2 Council.

3 “(B) RESPONSIBILITIES.—An employee
4 described in this subparagraph shall be a senior
5 employee of the agency—

6 “(i) whose leadership responsibilities
7 relate to authorities, policies, and proce-
8 dures with respect to the health and well-
9 being of individuals receiving medical as-
10 sistance under a State plan (or a waiver of
11 such plan) under title XIX; or

12 “(ii) who has authority to implement
13 and evaluate initiatives that harness data
14 or conducts rigorous evaluation to improve
15 the impact and cost-effectiveness of feder-
16 ally funded services and benefits.

17 “(3) HHS REPRESENTATION.—In addition to
18 the designees under paragraph (1), the Council shall
19 include designees from at least 3 agencies within the
20 Department of Health and Human Services, includ-
21 ing the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,
22 who shall meet the criteria under paragraph (2)(B).

23 “(4) NON-FEDERAL COMPOSITION.—The Comp-
24 troller General of the United States may designate
25 up to 6 Council designees—

1 “(A) who have relevant subject matter ex-
2 pertise, including expertise implementing and
3 evaluating initiatives that harness data and
4 conduct evaluations to improve the impact and
5 cost-effectiveness of Federal Government serv-
6 ices; and

7 “(B) that each represent—

8 “(i) State, local, and Tribal health
9 and human services agencies;

10 “(ii) public housing authorities or
11 State housing finance agencies;

12 “(iii) State and local government
13 budget offices;

14 “(iv) State Medicaid agencies; or

15 “(v) national consumer advocacy orga-
16 nizations.

17 “(5) CHAIR.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chair of the
19 Council shall be the representative from the Of-
20 fice of Management and Budget to—

21 “(i) ensure a government-wide and
22 multi-agency response, when applicable;
23 and

24 “(ii) facilitate the timely resolution of
25 government-wide and multi-agency issues

1 to help the Council achieve consensus rec-
2 ommendations described under subsection
3 (c)(1).

4 “(B) INITIATING GUIDANCE.—The Chair,
5 on behalf of the Council, shall identify and in-
6 vite individuals from diverse entities to provide
7 the Council with advice and information per-
8 taining to addressing social determinants of
9 health, including—

10 “(i) individuals from State and local
11 government health and human services
12 agencies;

13 “(ii) individuals from State Medicaid
14 agencies;

15 “(iii) individuals from State and local
16 government budget offices;

17 “(iv) individuals from public housing
18 authorities or State housing finance agen-
19 cies;

20 “(v) individuals from nonprofit orga-
21 nizations, small businesses, and philan-
22 thropic organizations;

23 “(vi) advocates;

24 “(vii) researchers; and

1 “(viii) any other individuals the Chair
2 determines to be appropriate.

3 “(c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Council are—

4 “(1) to make recommendations to the Secretary
5 regarding the criteria for making awards under sub-
6 section (g);

7 “(2) to identify Federal authorities and oppor-
8 tunities for use by States or local governments to
9 improve coordination of funding and administration
10 of Federal programs, and which may be unknown to
11 or underutilized by State or local governments and
12 to make information on such authorities and oppor-
13 tunities publicly available;

14 “(3) to provide targeted technical assistance to
15 States developing models focused on case manage-
16 ment of individuals receiving services administered
17 by State or local health and social services agencies,
18 including by identifying potential statutory or regu-
19 latory pathways for implementation of the models
20 and assisting in identifying potential sources of
21 funding to implement the models;

22 “(4) to report to Congress annually on the sub-
23 jects set forth in subsection (e);

24 “(5) to develop and disseminate evaluation
25 guidelines and standards that can be used to reliably

1 assess the impact of an intervention or approach
2 that may be implemented pursuant to this section on
3 outcomes, cost-effectiveness of, and return on invest-
4 ment from Federal, State, local, and Tribal govern-
5 ments, and to facilitate technical assistance, where
6 needed, to help to improve State and local evaluation
7 designs and implementation;

8 “(6) to seek feedback from State, local, and
9 Tribal governments on how to improve the technical
10 assistance the Council provides to better equip State,
11 local, and Tribal governments to coordinate health
12 and social service programs;

13 “(7) to solicit applications for grants under
14 subsection (g); and

15 “(8) to coordinate with other cross-agency ini-
16 tiatives focused on improving the health and well-
17 being of low-income and at-risk populations in order
18 to prevent unnecessary duplication between agency
19 initiatives.

20 “(d) SCHEDULE.—Not later than 60 days after the
21 date of the enactment of this section, the Council shall
22 convene to develop a schedule and plan for carrying out
23 the duties described in subsection (c), including sollicita-
24 tion of applications for the grants under subsection (g).

1 “(e) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Council shall sub-
2 mit an annual report to Congress, which shall include—

3 “(1) a list of the Council members;

4 “(2) activities and expenditures of the Council;

5 “(3) summaries of the approaches that will be
6 supported by State, local, and Tribal governments
7 that received a grant under subsection (g) includ-
8 ing—

9 “(A) evidence-based approaches such gov-
10 ernments plan to employ to, at a minimum, ad-
11 dress the economic, social, and health needs of
12 the affected populations; and

13 “(B) a description of how the practices
14 and approaches will impact the outcomes, cost-
15 effectiveness of, and return on investment from,
16 Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments
17 with respect to such purposes; and

18 “(4) the major barriers identified by State,
19 local, and Tribal governments that received a grant
20 under subsection (g), and the actions that Federal
21 agencies are taking to address such challenges.

22 “(f) COUNCIL PROCEDURES.—The Director of the
23 Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with
24 the Comptroller General of the United States, shall estab-
25 lish procedures for the Council to—

1 “(1) ensure that adequate resources are avail-
2 able to effectively execute the responsibilities of the
3 Council;

4 “(2) effectively coordinate with other relevant
5 advisory bodies and working groups to avoid unnec-
6 essary duplication;

7 “(3) create transparency to the public and Con-
8 gress with regard to Council membership, costs, and
9 activities to disseminate information; and

10 “(4) avoid conflicts of interest that would jeop-
11 ardize the ability of the Council to make decisions
12 and provide recommendations.

13 “(g) SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ACCELERATOR GRANTS
14 TO STATES OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.—

15 “(1) GRANTS TO STATES, LOCAL GOVERN-
16 MENTS, AND TRIBES.—Not later than 180 days after
17 the date of the enactment of this section, the Sec-
18 retary, in consultation with the Council, shall award
19 on a competitive basis not more than 25 grants to
20 eligible applicants described in paragraph (2), for
21 the development of social determinants accelerator
22 plans, as described in paragraph (6).

23 “(2) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT.—An eligible appli-
24 cant described in this paragraph is a State, local, or
25 Tribal health or human services agency that—

1 “(A) demonstrates the support of relevant
2 parties across relevant State, local, or Tribal ju-
3 risdictions; and

4 “(B) in the case of an applicant that is a
5 local government agency, provides to the Sec-
6 retary a letter of support from the lead State
7 health or human services agency for the State
8 in which the local government is located.

9 “(3) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The Secretary, in
10 coordination with the Council, shall determine the
11 total amount that the Secretary will make available
12 to each grantee under this subsection.

13 “(4) APPLICATION.—An eligible applicant seek-
14 ing a grant under this subsection shall include in the
15 application the following information:

16 “(A) The target population (or popu-
17 lations) that would benefit from implementation
18 of the social determinants accelerator plan pro-
19 posed to be developed by the applicant.

20 “(B) A description of the objective or ob-
21 jectives and outcome goals of such proposed
22 plan, which shall include at least 1 health out-
23 come and at least 1 other important social out-
24 come.

1 “(C) The sources and scope of inefficien-
2 cies that, if addressed by the plan, could result
3 in improved cost-effectiveness of or return on
4 investment from Federal, State, local, and Trib-
5 al governments.

6 “(D) A description of potential interven-
7 tions that could be designed or enabled using
8 such proposed plan.

9 “(E) The State, local, Tribal, academic,
10 nonprofit, community-based organizations, and
11 other private sector partners that would partici-
12 pate in the development of the proposed plan
13 and subsequent implementation of programs or
14 initiatives included in such proposed plan.

15 “(F) Such other information as the Sec-
16 retary, in consultation with the Council, deter-
17 mines necessary to achieve the purposes of this
18 section.

19 “(5) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant
20 under this subsection may use funds received
21 through the grant for the following purposes:

22 “(A) To convene and coordinate with rel-
23 evant government entities and other stake-
24 holders across sectors to assist in the develop-
25 ment of a social determinant accelerator plan.

1 “(B) To identify approaches to improving
2 the health and well-being of individuals receiv-
3 ing medical assistance under a State plan (or a
4 waiver of such plan) under title XIX through
5 the implementation of the proposed social deter-
6 minants accelerator plan.

7 “(C) To engage qualified research experts
8 to advise on relevant research and to design a
9 proposed evaluation plan, in accordance with
10 the standards and guidelines issued by the Sec-
11 retary.

12 “(D) To collaborate with the Council to
13 support the development of social determinants
14 accelerator plans.

15 “(E) To prepare and submit a final social
16 determinants accelerator plan to the Council.

17 “(6) CONTENTS OF PLANS.—A social deter-
18 minant accelerator plan developed with a grant made
19 under this subsection shall include the following:

20 “(A) A description of the target population
21 (or populations) that would benefit from imple-
22 mentation of the social determinants accelerator
23 plan, including an analysis describing the pro-
24 jected impact on the well-being of individuals
25 described in paragraph (5)(B).

1 “(B) A description of the interventions or
2 approaches designed under the social deter-
3 minants accelerator plan and the evidence for
4 selecting such interventions or approaches.

5 “(C) The objectives and outcome goals of
6 such interventions or approaches, including at
7 least 1 health outcome and at least 1 other im-
8 portant social outcome.

9 “(D) A plan for accessing and linking rel-
10 evant data to enable coordinated benefits and
11 services for the jurisdictions described in para-
12 graph (2)(A) and an evaluation of the proposed
13 interventions and approaches.

14 “(E) A description of the State, local,
15 Tribal, academic, nonprofit, or community-
16 based organizations, or any other private sector
17 organizations that would participate in imple-
18 menting the proposed interventions or ap-
19 proaches, and the role each would play to con-
20 tribute to the success of the proposed interven-
21 tions or approaches.

22 “(F) The identification of the funding
23 sources that would be used to finance the pro-
24 posed interventions or approaches.

1 “(G) A description of any financial incen-
2 tives that may be provided, including outcome-
3 focused contracting approaches to encourage
4 service providers and other partners to improve
5 outcomes of, cost-effectiveness of, and return on
6 investment from, Federal, State, local, or Tribal
7 government spending.

8 “(H) The identification of the applicable
9 Federal, State, local, or Tribal statutory and
10 regulatory authorities, including waiver authori-
11 ties, to be leveraged to implement the proposed
12 interventions or approaches.

13 “(I) A description of potential consider-
14 ations that would enhance the impact,
15 scalability, or sustainability of the proposed
16 interventions or approaches and the actions the
17 grant awardee would take to address such con-
18 siderations.

19 “(J) A proposed rigorous evaluation plan,
20 to be carried out by an independent evaluator,
21 to measure the impact of the proposed interven-
22 tions or approaches on the outcomes of, cost-ef-
23 fectiveness of, and return on investment from,
24 Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments.

1 “(K) Precautions for ensuring that vulner-
2 able populations will not be denied access to
3 Medicaid or other essential services as a result
4 of implementing the proposed social deter-
5 minants accelerator plan.

6 “(h) FUNDING.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Out of any money in the
8 Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there is appro-
9 priated to carry out this section \$20,000,000, of
10 which up to \$5,000,000 may be used for administra-
11 tive expenses to carry out this section, to remain
12 available for obligation until the date that is 5 years
13 after the date of enactment of this section.

14 “(2) RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—

15 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Of the funds made
16 available under paragraph (1), the Secretary
17 shall reserve not less than 20 percent to award
18 grants to eligible applicants for the development
19 of social determinants accelerator plans under
20 subsection (g) intended to serve rural popu-
21 lations.

22 “(B) EXCEPTION.—In the case of a fiscal
23 year for which the Secretary determines that
24 there are not sufficient eligible applicants to
25 award up to 25 grants under subsection (g)

1 that are intended to serve rural populations and
2 the Secretary cannot satisfy the 20-percent re-
3 quirement, the Secretary may reserve an
4 amount that is less than 20 percent of amounts
5 made available under paragraph (1) to award
6 grants for such purpose.

7 “(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
8 this section shall prevent Federal agencies rep-
9 resented on the Council from contributing additional
10 funding from other sources to support activities to
11 improve the effectiveness of the Council.”.

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