



Braiding Funds for Greater Effectiveness

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Objectives

- » Distinguish between braiding and blending funds.
- » Understand how to apply braiding and blending to accelerate learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- » Discuss strategies that districts are implementing or might consider to meet student needs more effectively.

Defining Terms



What is braiding?

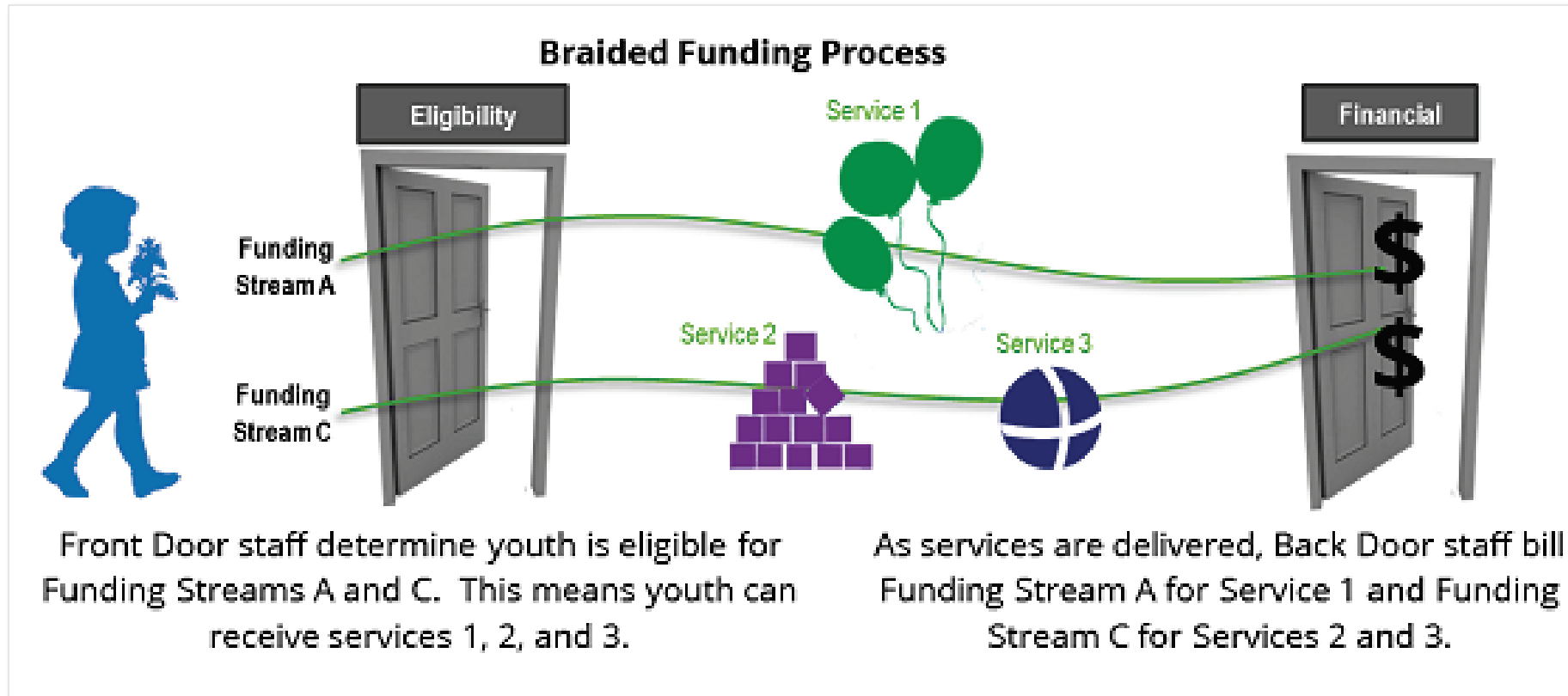
- » Coordinated financial assistance from several sources to meet one purpose
- » Each funding source maintains its own reporting requirements and identity
- » Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including IDEA Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS); Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Act; and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds

What is blending?

- »» Financial assistance combined into one stream to meet one purpose
- »» Has a single set of reporting requirements
- »» Each individual funding source loses its original identity
- »» Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I, II, III, and IV
- »» IDEA may be consolidated in a schoolwide program (15% CEIS funds)

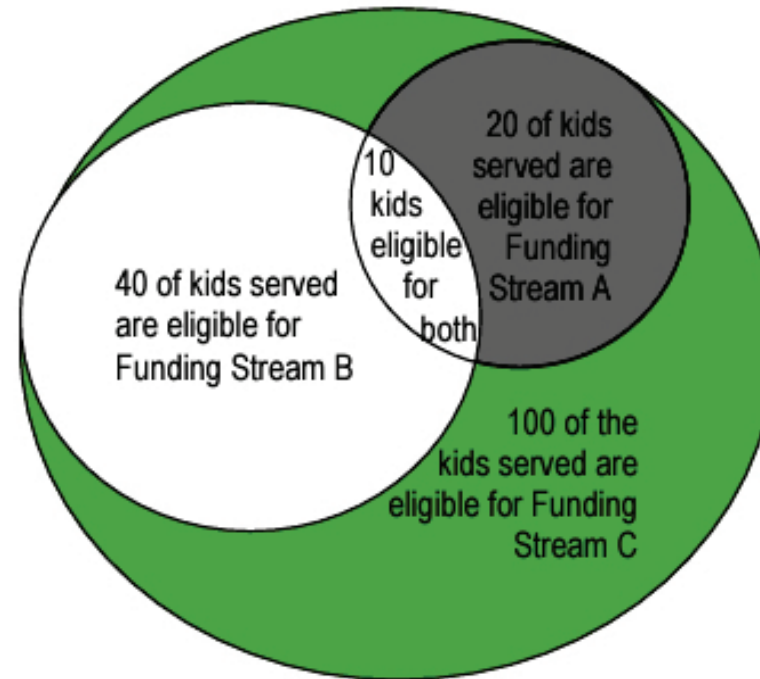
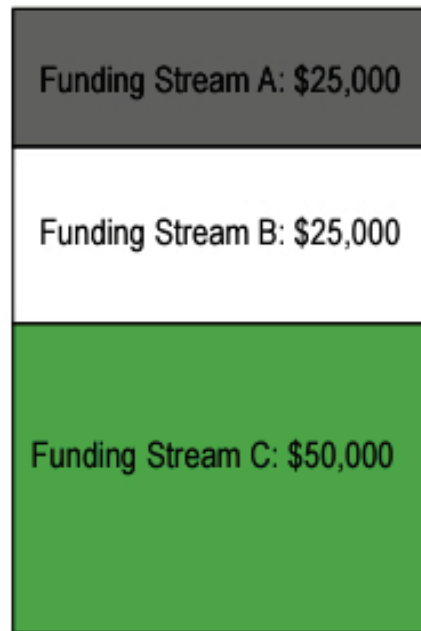
Applying Braiding and Blending

Braiding Funds to Maximize Efficiency



Blending Funds to Maximize Efficiency

» Example: \$100,000 from three funding streams to serve 100 youth



Why Districts Blend and Braid Funds

- Coordinating grant spending can support activities that drive performance and improve outcomes for all students.
- The decision on whether it is appropriate to braid or blend funds is program- and situation-specific.
- The Consolidated District Plan serves as a tool to connect federal funding sources.



Where is Iowa in the process of recovering from the pandemic?

Three phases

1. Urgent first year (Did we accomplish our pandemic goals?)
 - a. Addressing the pandemic (developing guidance to meet current emergency needs)
 - b. How to deliver education to students (virtual or in person)
 - c. Safety for all
2. Stabilization—all schools are open (What do we need now?)
3. Recovery (How are we providing services to students?)
 - a. Address learning loss (recovery)
 - b. Implement in-person instruction
 - c. Prioritize most vulnerable student populations
 - d. Provide resources to schools/programs

Six Guiding Principles for Braiding and Blending

1. Ensure continuity of all needed services (especially basic).
2. Focus on students who need it most across all federal programs.
3. Apply equity considerations across all programs.
4. Don't wait to plan; start now.
5. Communication is critical:
 - a. Between school staff
 - b. Between fiscal and program staff
 - c. With families and the community
6. Use your data: What are they telling you?

Review Your Comprehensive Needs Assessment Process

Review data collection systems and your current comprehensive needs assessment.

- » What is missing?
- » Have you looked at assessment scores?
- » Have you looked at at-risk populations?
(How are you prioritizing the most vulnerable student populations?)
- » What are the data telling you?



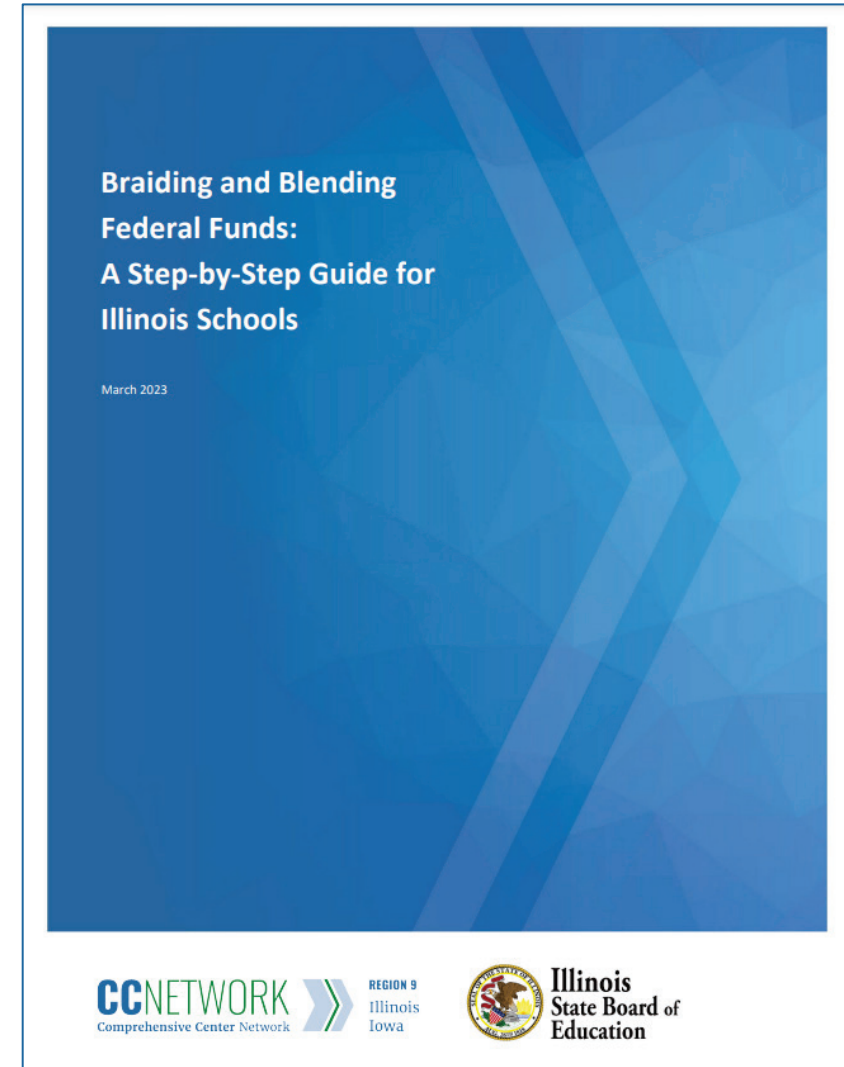
Success Elements



Group Discussion

Illinois Resource Guide for Braiding and Blending

- » To support staff and students...
 - > What is needed to thrive (e.g., grounding, well-being, agency)
 - > Practices to build individual capacity and a supportive environment
 - > Examples of and links to additional resources



Source: Region 9 Comprehensive Center and Illinois State Board of Education. (2023, March). Braiding and blending federal funds: A step-by-step guide for Illinois schools. <https://region9cc.org/our-work/projects/leveraging-resources-blending-and-braiding-funds-community-practice-cop-0>

Discuss at your table

- **Ask:** What questions did this raise for you?
- **Affirm:** What did you hear that supports your current beliefs, experience or understanding?
- **Argue:** What did you hear that challenges your current beliefs, experience or understanding?
- **Aspire:** What piqued your interest that you hope to explore further?



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