

Stimulus Learning Series: Early Childhood and Families

Transforming early supports to enhance lifelong opportunity

July 15, 2021



HARVARD Kennedy School
Government Performance Lab



Introductions

Responding to open answer questions

Type into the chat: Tell us your name, your location, your organization, and one thing you are interested in learning today.



Agenda

1. **Barriers and opportunities to transform early childhood and family supports**
2. **Innovations from the field:**
 - Commissioner Beth Bye, Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood
 - Deputy Associate Commissioner Sarah Abrahams, Texas's Department of Family and Protective Services
3. **Panelist Q & A:** *Post questions in the chat!*
4. **Hearing from you:** What would be helpful to increase the impact of your work?

Practicing with our interactive tools

Responding to poll questions

Pick one poll: Did you attend our stimulus learning call on Benefits & Economic Mobility on July 9?

Pick many poll: Select the two primary colors that mix together to create your favorite color! (select all that apply)

Transforming early childhood and family support systems to enhance lifelong opportunity

Pandemic heightened challenges facing many young children and their families

The pandemic intensified stress faced by parents

Children have been exposed to more adverse experiences

Poor families and families of color experienced disproportional impacts, exacerbating pre-existing inequities

What you've told us...

Inaccessible supports

- Demand for affordable supports outstripping supply in hardest hit communities
- Complex systems for relative caregivers to get help

Narrow, reactive help

- Help is rarely available before crises occur
- Programs do not reflect what we know about child development
- Addressing basic needs enables families to weather crises – yet often limited

Stretched infrastructure

- Providers struggling to hire and retain qualified staff, modernize IT systems
- Residents shut out from shaping the resources that best meet their needs

Transforming early childhood and family support systems to enhance lifelong opportunity

Pandemic heightened challenges facing many young children and their families

What you've told us...

Demand for affordable supports outstripping supply in hardest hit communities

Poll: From where you sit, which of the following barriers is most important to address for transforming early childhood and family support systems? (select one)

Narrow, reactive help

Programs do not reflect what we know about child development

Addressing basic needs enables families to weather crises – yet often limited

Stretched infrastructure

Providers struggling to hire and retain qualified staff, modernize IT systems

Residents shut out from shaping the resources that best meet their needs

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Child
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Poor families and families of color experienced disproportional impacts, exacerbating pre-existing inequities

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Hearing from you

Type into the chat: What is an exciting project your community/organization is planning or already doing to improve early childhood and family support systems?

You told us about investments in early childhood that are...

Expanding accessibility

- 1 **Childcare and early learning affordability and availability:** “Increasing family buying power will unlock access to more slots”
- 2 **Universal and intensive home visiting for new parents :** “Every parent benefits from a helping hand”
- 3 **Targeted help for relative caregivers:** “Scattered resources makes accessing supports harder than it needs to be”

Offering more effective responses

- 4 **Improving the quality of care for children:** “High-quality childcare means a focus on early learning”
- 5 **Concrete assistance to meet basic needs:** “Food, shelter, and transportation underpin every other support we offer”
- 6 **Alternatives to child protection when children are safe:** “A concerned neighbor’s choice need not be to do nothing or escalate to CPS”

Strengthening the ecosystem

- 7 **Neighborhood-based family resource centers, resource navigation hubs:** “No one should have to parent alone”
- 8 **Stabilizing community providers and investing in their professionals:** “Additional financial support is vital to keep providers open”
- 9 **Connectivity and IT to make virtual care permanent:** “We need to keep meeting families where they are”

You told us about investments in early childhood that are...

Expanding accessibility

Offering more effective responses

Strengthening the ecosystem

- 1 Childcare and early learning affordability and availability:

- 4 Improving the quality of care for children: “High-quality childcare

- 7 Neighborhood-based family resource centers, resource

Poll: Where is your community/organization focused on making improvements to early childhood and family support systems? (select all that apply)

- 2 U...
v...
parent benefits from a helping hand”

transportation underpin every other support we offer”

- 3 Targeted help for relative caregivers: “Scattered resources makes accessing supports harder than it needs to be”

- 6 Alternatives to child protection when children are safe: “A concerned neighbor’s choice need not be to do nothing or escalate to CPS”

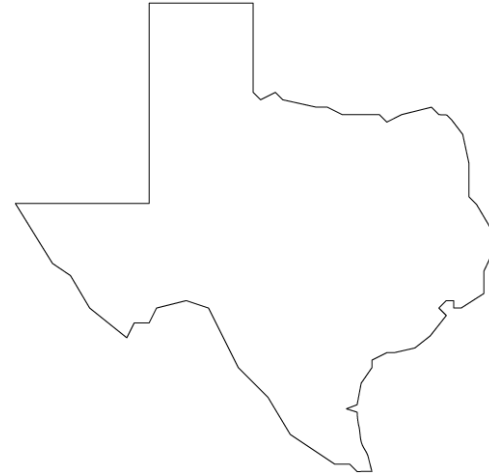
and investing in their professionals: “Additional financial support is vital to keep providers open”

- 9 Connectivity and IT to make virtual care permanent: “We need to keep meeting families where they are”

Government speakers



Beth Bye
Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood



Sarah Abrahams
Deputy Associate Commissioner
Department of Family and Protective
Services

Type into the chat: What questions do you have for our speakers?



Intentionally blank during speaker 1

Building a Brighter Future

Strengthening Connecticut's Early Care and Education Infrastructure



OEC's vision incorporates system changes: Quality Improvement System



Outcomes
-Oriented



Increased Access



Invest in ECE Workforce

CHILD CARE
BEGINS WITH
TLC:
TRUSTED LICENSED CARE

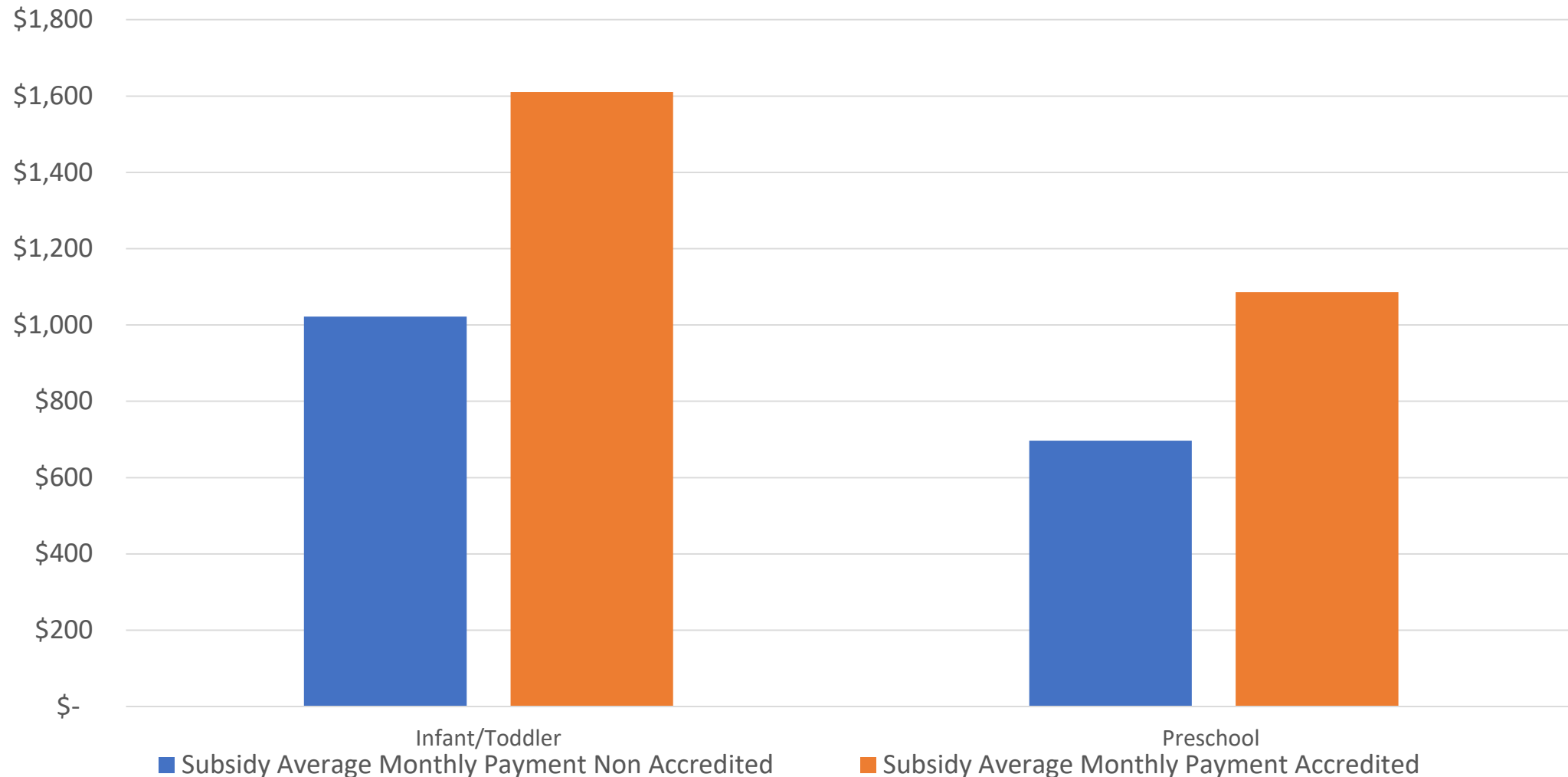
TLC³
**TOP
LEADER_{FOR}
CHILDREN**

TLC²
**TRUSTED
LEARNING
CENTER**

TLC¹
**TRUSTED
LICENSED
CARE**

CT ARPA Plan: Paying more for high quality

Subsidy Rate Increase: Average Monthly Center-Based Payment



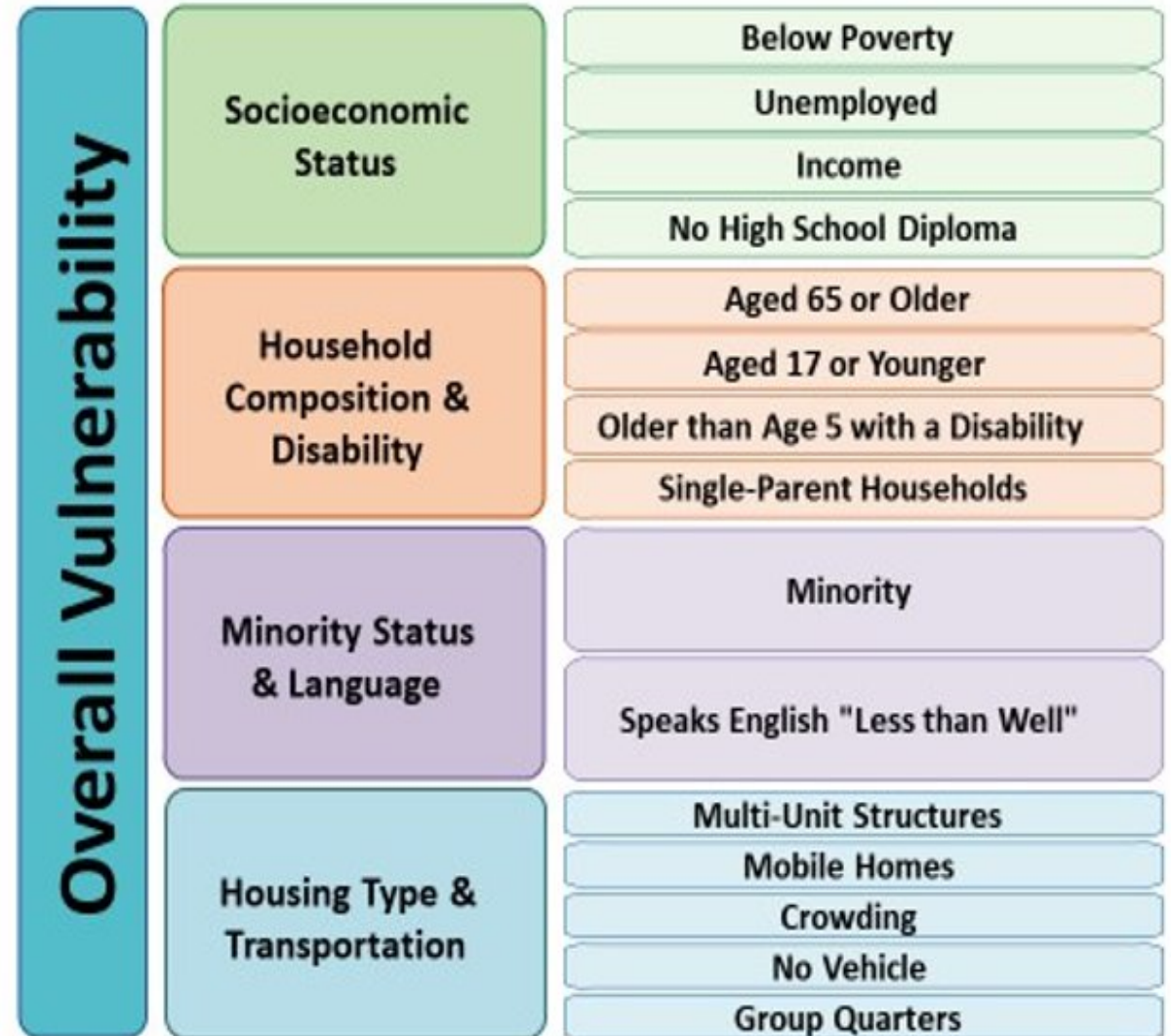
WHAT IS SVI?

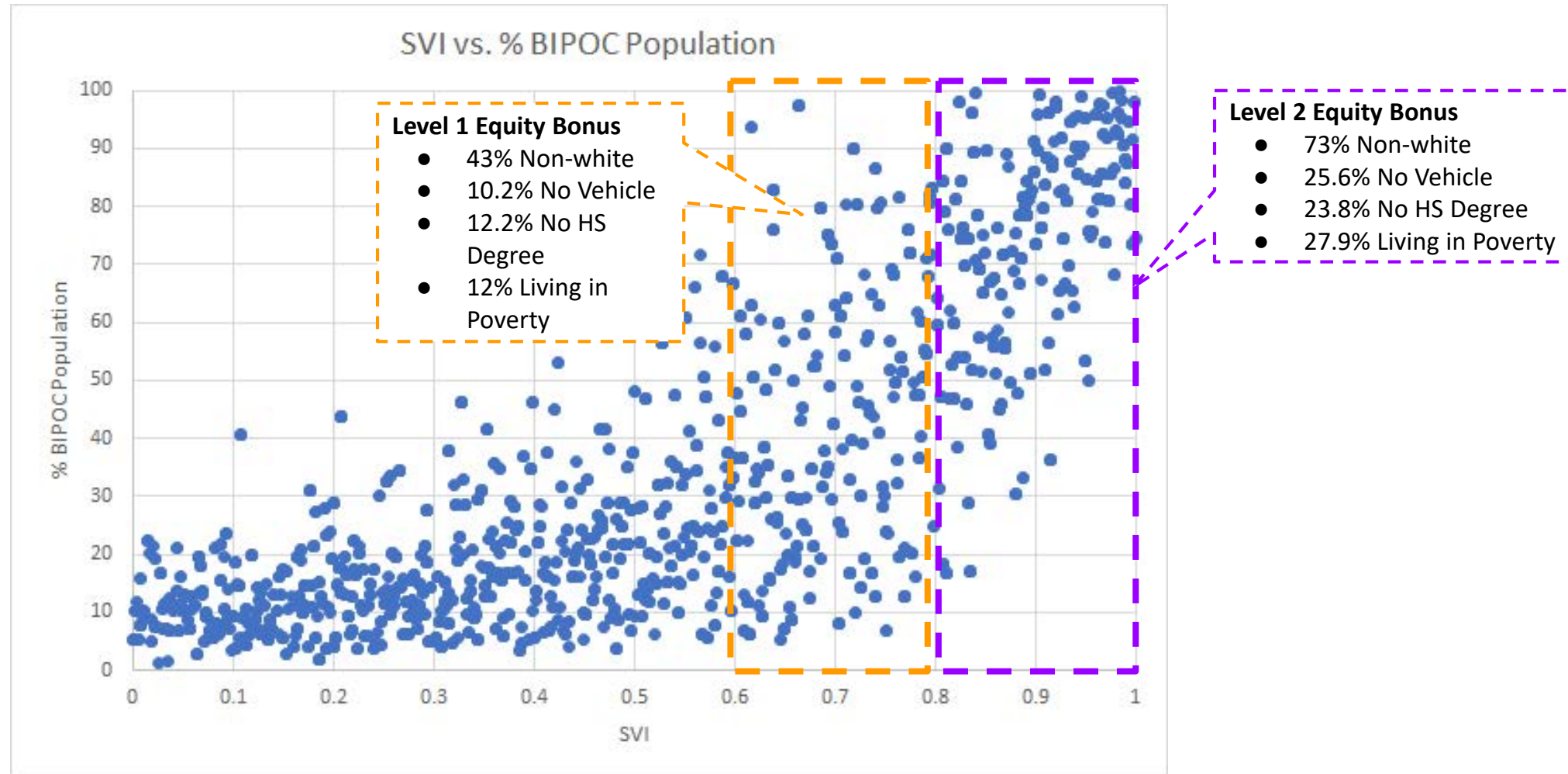
SVI = Social Vulnerability Index

Developed by the CDC to help local officials identify communities that may need support before, during, or after disasters.

SVI scores are from 0 to 1 and are either 1) relative within a single state or 2) relative to all **census tracts** nationwide.

Takes into account 15 variables at the census tract level.



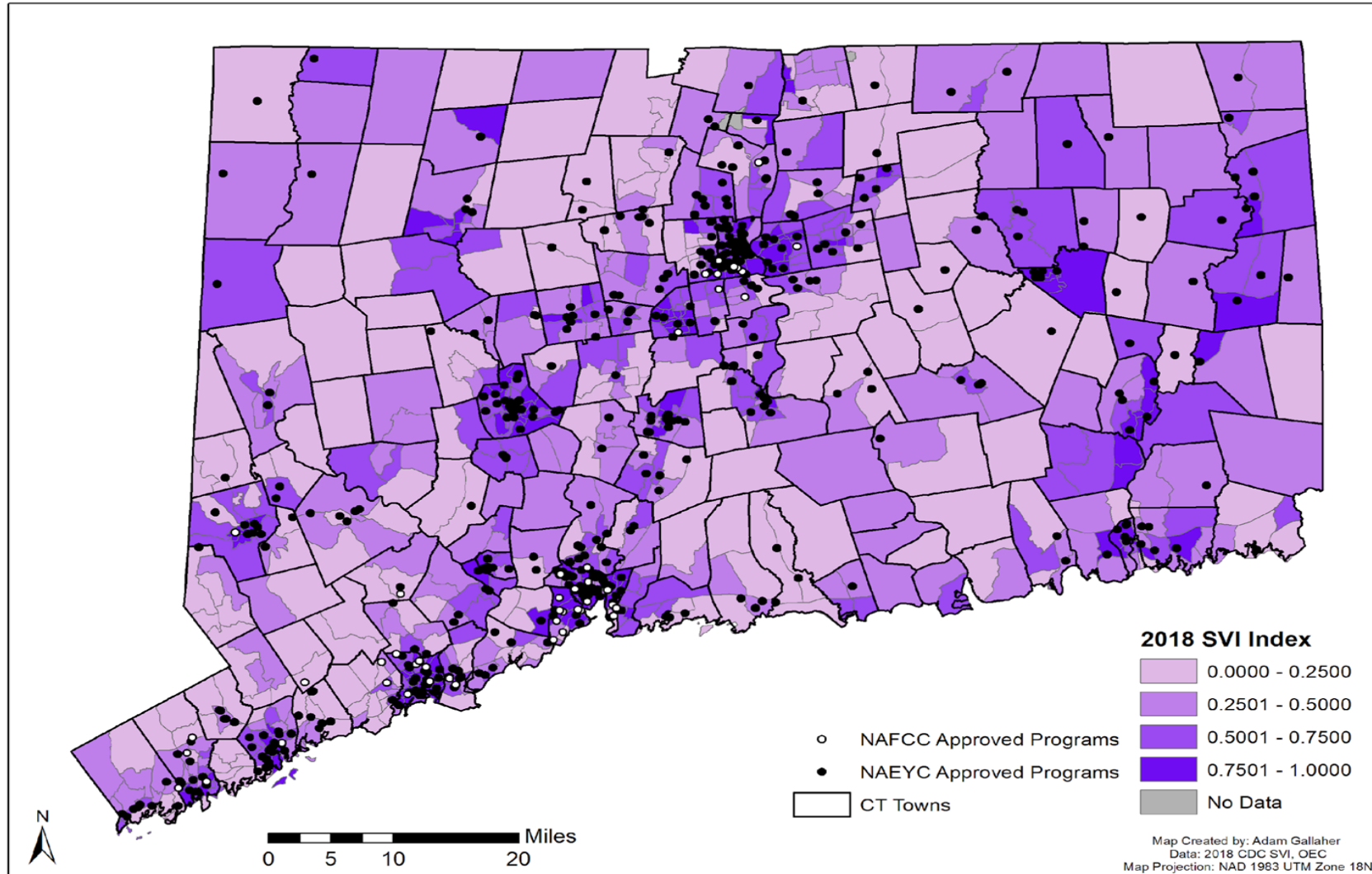


Data Informed Equity Bonus



SVI & Quality

Approved Programs in CT with 2018 SVI Index by Census Tracts



Map Takeaways

- We have a quality bonus in our funding approach
- But we wanted to ensure that the quality bonus and equity adjustment bonus (SVI) worked together
- As we mapped accreditation and SVI, we saw a **high concentration of accredited programs in high SVI census tracts**

Connecticut plans to use American Rescue Plan State funds to expand family support through universal home visiting

- **COVID-19 has reinforced health disparities** that affect many Connecticut families, particularly in Black communities
- Health inequities are best addressed early in life: **home visiting pairs pregnant and new parents with registered nurses and community health workers to improve health outcomes and enhance social determinants of health**
- Universal home visiting reduces emergency medical care and child welfare engagement - **generating \$3 in savings for every \$1 spent in program costs**
- Having a baby is a big life change - every family can **benefit from early public health supports like home visiting regardless of income and risk profile**
- OEC would offer universal home visiting in communities **disproportionally impacted by COVID-19** and address health equity from the start
- **Prenatal engagement and 1-3 postpartum visits can have long-term impact**, promoting health for babies and connecting families to needed community services



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Hearing from you

We asked: What is an exciting project your community/organization is planning or already doing to improve early childhood and family support systems?

Hearing from you

Poll: In which of the following areas would assistance or peer learning most advance your community/organization's work? (select all that apply)

Poll: If the GPL were to offer resources to support the design or implementation of innovations in early childhood, what would be most helpful? (select all that apply)

Type into the chat: We are considering future calls to discuss more specific design and implementation challenges. What topics would you be interested in learning more about?

Looking ahead: GPL's stimulus learning series

Type into the chat: We are considering future calls to discuss more specific design and implementation challenges. What topics would you be interested in learning more about?

July 9	Benefits & Economic Mobility
July 15	Early Childhood & Families
July 29	<i>Implementation deep-dive:</i> Guaranteed income programs
TBD	Behavioral Health & Homelessness
TBD	Workforce
TBD	<i>Implementation deep-dive:</i> Using procurement to advance innovation

Please respond to our survey – it will inform upcoming learning sessions and future GPL technical assistance offerings

Questions? Contact Danielle at danielle_cerny@hks.harvard.edu

Register for upcoming sessions at: <https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/stimulus-learning-series>