2026

Baby Bonds Education and Community Engagement Toolkit

SECTION 1

How to Use This Toolkit

Purpose

This toolkit is an educational resource designed to help community organizations, educators, practitioners, and other stakeholders better understand Baby Bonds, communicate about them accurately, and facilitate informed community conversations.

The toolkit provides evidence-based information to help communities understand how Baby Bonds work, how they compare with other children's savings, and the design choices communities may consider when exploring these programs.

It also provides details about the common features of Baby Bonds programs, including public funding, progressive contributions based on family income or financial resources, pooled investment structures, sustainable funding approaches, and protections that help preserve access to public benefits.

Throughout the toolkit, you'll find plain-language explanations, facilitator resources, discussion prompts, and implementation tips that can be adapted for different audiences and communities.

Who This Toolkit Is For

This toolkit is intended for anyone interested in learning about Baby Bonds or building programs in their community, including:

- **Community organizations**
- **Philanthropic organizations**
- **Advocates**
- **Financial institutions**
- **Practitioners**
- **Researchers**
- **Educators**
- **Public officials**

Whether you are new to Baby Bonds or already familiar with asset-building strategies, this toolkit is designed to meet you where you are. Use it as a learning tool, conversation guide, or planning resource for engaging your community.

After using this toolkit, you will be able to:

- Explain Baby Bonds in plain language and why they are being explored as a strategy to expand economic opportunity.
- Share research-backed information about what research from the Child Savings Account (CSA) field, Baby Bonds modeling, and early state implementation suggest about the long-term financial outcomes of children and young adults.
- Identify key design features that shape Baby Bonds programs and distinguish Baby Bonds from CSAs, 529 college savings plans, and Section 530A Accounts (also known as Trump Accounts).
- Use research, data, and stories responsibly when engaging families, community partners, journalists, and policymakers.
- Plan and facilitate community conversations using the resources included in this toolkit.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is organized to help readers build an understanding of Baby Bonds and then apply that knowledge through community education and engagement.

Use **Section 2** if you want to...

Learn why Baby Bonds matter and what current research tells us.

Use **Section 3** if you want to...

Understand what Baby Bonds are, how they typically work, how they differ from Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs), 529 college savings plans, and federal Section 530A ("Trump") Accounts, and why these distinctions matter.

Use **Section 4** if you want to...

Lead community conversations, facilitate workshops, and answer questions. Learn how to use storytelling to promote understanding of Baby Bonds and explore what different program designs could mean for your community.

Use **Section 5** if you want to...

Identify next steps for introducing Baby Bonds to your community.

Section 2.
Why Baby Bonds Matter

Baby Bonds have gained increasing attention as policymakers, researchers, and community organizations explore ways to help more young adults begin adulthood with financial resources.

Baby Bonds are designed to give eligible young adults a stronger financial foundation as they enter adulthood.[1]

Rather than providing short-term financial assistance, Baby Bonds are intended to support long-term opportunities to build assets, including higher education, homeownership, business ownership, or retirement savings.

Research has demonstrated that wealth, not just income, plays an important role in shaping opportunities throughout life.[2] Baby Bonds are worth learning about and discussing in your community because they are designed to help more young adults begin adulthood with financial resources and may support long-term economic security.

For practitioners, understanding this distinction is important. Income helps families meet today's needs, while assets create opportunities for tomorrow.

Research on Early Assets and Long-Term Outcomes

Because statewide Baby Bonds programs are still relatively new, researchers rely on several complementary sources of evidence. These include research from the CSA field,[3] economic modeling of Baby Bonds,[4] and early implementation experience from states like Connecticut.[5]

Together, these sources offer useful insights into how early investments may influence long-term financial security, while also highlighting design choices and implementation questions that communities should consider. Research shows:

- **Early assets matter.** Research from the CSA field suggests that providing children with dedicated savings or investment accounts early in life can influence more than account balances.[6] Longitudinal studies have found associations between CSAs and higher educational expectations,[7] stronger social-emotional development,[8] and greater family engagement with saving.[9] While Baby Bonds differ from CSAs in purpose and design, these findings offer relevant lessons about how early assets can shape how families think about and prepare for a child's future.
- **Starting capital matters.** Economic modeling suggests that Baby Bonds programs that provide larger public investments to children from households with fewer financial resources could substantially increase wealth, reduce wealth disparities, and expand opportunities for homeownership, higher education, entrepreneurship, and retirement savings.[10] One analysis of a progressive Baby Bonds model found that such a program could substantially reduce wealth disparities among young adults while increasing wealth across the population.[11]
- **Program design matters.** As states begin implementing Baby Bonds programs, researchers are studying how design choices, such as eligibility, contribution amounts, investment strategies, and allowable uses, may shape participation, access, and future outcomes.[12] Foundational research and early policy analyses identify several design features that are commonly included in Baby Bonds programs.[13] These include automatic enrollment,[14] public funding,[15] progressive contribution amounts based on household resources,[16] long-term investment growth,[17] and restrictions that reserve funds for asset-building purposes such as education, homeownership, business development, or retirement.[18] These features are intended to reduce barriers to participation, provide meaningful starting capital, and encourage long-term financial security.

More recent policy analyses similarly conclude that careful attention to eligibility, funding, account administration, and participant protections can strengthen program implementation and improve public understanding.[19] In addition to these distinct bodies of evidence, Prosperity Now has put forth emerging field research to help community leaders understand the landscape of child asset-building, including what programs exist and how efforts can vary.[20]

You do not have to explain the differences between peer-reviewed empirical studies,[21] economic modeling,[22] longitudinal evaluations like those of the SEED OK program,[23] or implementation evidence from Connecticut and other state programs.[24]

PROGRAM DESIGN INSIGHT:

The SEED for Oklahoma Kids (SEED OK) program, one of the nation's longest-running randomized studies of children's savings accounts, found that automatic account opening significantly increased participation and reduced barriers for families. Particularly, universal automatic account opening helps include families who might otherwise be less likely to participate in voluntary savings programs.

Instead, the research and citations included in this toolkit are intended to build your confidence and serve as additional resources to support community conversations and planning.

Lessons from Children's Savings Accounts

Studies have shown that automatic enrollment generally results in higher participation than opt-in enrollment, while simple enrollment processes, consistent communication, and partnerships with trusted community organizations help families understand and engage with programs.[25] Research and implementation experience from the CSA field indicate that reducing administrative barriers, providing clear information, and working through trusted community partners can improve awareness of and participation in children's savings programs.[26]

These implementation lessons may help inform future Baby Bonds programs even though the policies differ in structure and purpose.

Early State Implementations Are Providing New Insights

Connecticut's Baby Bonds program is the first fully funded and implemented statewide Baby Bonds program in the United States.[27] The program automatically enrolls children born on or after July 1, 2023, whose births are covered by the state's Medicaid program (HUSKY Health).[28] The state invests $3,200 for each eligible child through the Connecticut Baby Bonds Trust. Funds are invested over time and become available when participants reach adulthood, provided they meet program requirements. Eligible participants may use the funds for approved purposes, such as higher education or job training, purchasing a home in Connecticut, starting or investing in a business located in the state, or saving for retirement. As the program develops, researchers and practitioners are gaining practical experience with identifying eligible participants, managing publicly funded investment accounts, communicating with families, and administering long-term trust funds.

Other states are at earlier stages. Rhode Island has enacted legislation establishing the Rhode Island Baby Bond Trust,[29] but the state Treasurer's Office says the program will officially launch once adequate funds are secured.[30] Vermont has authorized and begun work on a Baby Bonds pilot program, including research, design, fundraising, outreach, and implementation planning.[31] These examples should be presented as emerging implementation and design efforts, not as fully operating statewide programs. Together, they show that Baby Bonds work is moving through different stages across states: implementation in Connecticut, enacted but not yet launched in Rhode Island, and pilot/development work in Vermont.

WHAT DIFFERENT STATES' EXPERIENCES CAN TEACH YOUR COMMUNITY

Program design and progress vary across places and programs. Baby Bonds efforts across the country are at different stages. Some are fully implemented, while others are enacted but not yet funded, still in pilot development, or under consideration. Naming those stages clearly helps communities learn from each example without treating every model the same. Those differences can help communities consider how to design Baby Bonds programs that respond to local needs.

What Researchers Are Still Learning

Baby Bonds remain an emerging area of research. Because statewide programs are still relatively new, researchers are continuing to measure their long-term effects. While early CSA research, Baby Bonds economic modeling, and early implementation lessons are promising, it will take time to fully understand how Baby Bonds influence outcomes such as educational attainment, homeownership, business formation, retirement savings, or intergenerational wealth. Until then, it is important to distinguish between evidence from long-running CSA research, findings from economic modeling, and lessons from early program implementation.

Section 3.

Understanding Baby Bonds

Baby Bonds are publicly funded investment accounts that help children start adulthood with financial resources. In most programs, the government invests money on behalf of an eligible child until they reach adulthood.[32] The funds can then be used for higher education, homeownership, business development, or retirement.[33]

Lessons from the Children's Savings Account field suggest that programs are easier for families to navigate when they provide clear, plain-language information, minimize administrative barriers, and work through trusted community organizations to share information and answer questions.

How Baby Bonds Generally Work

While programs vary, most Baby Bond models follow the same basic idea. A public agency opens and manages an account for an eligible child. Families do not need to manage the funds or make investment decisions. The funds are invested over time until the child reaches adulthood.[34] Professional management can support diversification and may reduce administrative costs over time. Baby Bond funds are designed for the future rather than everyday expenses.

PLAIN LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER TIP

Baby Bonds are investment accounts, funded by the government and established for eligible children. The funds are invested over time and become available when participants reach adulthood for approved wealth-building purposes.

Who is Typically Eligible

Eligibility depends on the program. Some Baby Bond programs include every child born in a state or community, while others focus on children from households with lower incomes or fewer financial resources.[35] Most often, Baby Bonds use a progressive funding model, where children from the lowest-earning families receive the largest investments, similar to the administration of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).[36] Some existing programs also use other eligibility requirements, such as participation in a public benefit program or being born during a certain time period.[37]

How Baby Bonds Differ from Other Programs That Build a Financial Foundation for Children and Families

Baby Bonds differ from other child savings programs in how they are funded, managed, or used.

CSAs are savings or long-term investment accounts that encourage families to save for a child's future, often with support from governments, schools, nonprofit organizations, or financial institutions.[38] For example, CalKIDS provides eligible public school students with college savings accounts that include an initial deposit and opportunities to earn additional incentives.[39] The program is designed to encourage saving for education and career training after high school.[40] Many CSA programs include an initial deposit and opportunities for families, employers, or community partners to make additional contributions.

529 education savings plans, sometimes called college savings plans, are tax-advantaged accounts designed to help families save for qualified education expenses. A 529 plan is established and maintained by a state, state agency, or eligible educational institution. Families generally open the account, choose an investment option, and contribute their own funds.[41] Some Children's Savings Account programs use 529 infrastructure, but a family-owned 529 plan is different from a Baby Bonds program. Baby Bonds are publicly funded investments managed by a public entity and designed to provide starting capital when a participant reaches adulthood.

Section 530A accounts, also called Trump Accounts, are federally authorized long-term savings accounts that parents, guardians, or other authorized individuals can establish for eligible children. Eligible children born between Jan. 1, 2025, and Dec. 31, 2028, who are U.S. citizens with valid Social Security numbers may receive a one-time $1,000 federal pilot contribution if the required election is made. These accounts are related to the broader child savings field but are different from Baby Bonds. Baby Bonds are public investments designed to provide meaningful starting capital, often with larger investments for children from households with fewer financial resources.

Although these programs share a goal of improving children's financial futures, they differ in who is eligible, how accounts are funded, who manages the investments, when funds become available, and what the money can be used for. Understanding these differences helps families, community organizations, and policymakers accurately explain the purpose of each model.[42]

PLAIN LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER TIP

Frequently Asked Questions and Simple Answers

Who qualifies? Eligibility depends on the program. Some programs include every child born in a state or city, while others focus on children from households with lower incomes or meeting other eligibility requirements.

Who manages the money? A public entity, such as the state, manages investments on behalf of participants until funds become available.

Can families contribute additional money? This depends on the specific program. Some Baby Bonds programs do not allow additional private contributions, while other children's savings programs do.

What can the funds be used for? Most Baby Bonds programs limit withdrawals to approved wealth-building purposes, such as higher education, career training, homeownership, business development, or retirement savings.

Are funds available during childhood? Generally, no. Baby Bonds are intended to help participants begin adulthood with financial resources rather than provide assistance for current expenses.

Are all Baby Bonds programs the same? No. States make different decisions about eligibility, funding, contribution amounts, account management, and allowable uses.

Key Design Choices Communities Should Understand

Every Baby Bond program reflects a series of design choices. While programs vary across states and communities, these decisions influence who is eligible, how accounts are funded and managed, and how participants access the funds. Understanding these choices can help community members, practitioners, and policymakers evaluate different approaches and have informed, nonpartisan discussions about program design.

Whether your community is exploring or implementing a Baby Bonds program, understanding these core design elements provides a solid foundation for meaningful community engagement.

Determine Who Is Eligible

One of the first decisions in designing a Baby Bonds program is determining who can participate. Some programs make every child born in a state eligible for an account, while others focus on children from households with lower incomes or fewer financial resources.[43] Eligibility may also be based on participation in a public benefit program, such as Medicaid, or other program-specific criteria.[44] These decisions influence both the number of children served and the resources needed to operate the program.[45]

Automatic Enrollment

One way to reduce barriers and support broad participation is to use automatic enrollment, or an opt-out framework. Under this approach, eligible children are enrolled without requiring parents or guardians to complete an application. This approach can reduce administrative barriers, increase participation, and simplify program administration by using existing state records to identify eligible participants.[46]

Contribution Size

The amount invested in a Baby Bond account is a key design decision. Some programs provide every eligible child with the same amount, while others provide larger contributions for children from households with fewer financial resources ("progressive funding").[47] This approach is intended to help narrow gaps in wealth over time while providing meaningful starting capital for adulthood.[48] Because Baby Bonds are designed to provide meaningful starting capital, the amount invested is an important part of program design. Economic modeling suggests that larger investments targeted to children with fewer financial resources may reduce wealth disparities more than equal contributions to all participants. The size of the contribution and whether contributions are made once or over time also affect the account's value when participants reach adulthood.[49]

WHY THIS MATTERS

Communities should balance contribution amounts with long-term financial sustainability over time.

Public Funding

Unlike traditional savings accounts or many CSAs, Baby Bonds are generally funded with public funds rather than family contributions. States may use different funding models, including annual appropriations, trust funds, dedicated revenue sources, or other public financing mechanisms.[50] The funding model influences how the program is financed, managed, and sustained over time.

Allowable Uses

Baby Bonds are intended to support long-term financial security rather than everyday expenses. Most proposals limit withdrawals to specific uses that help participants build wealth to invest in future opportunities.[51] Common allowable uses include higher education, career training, purchasing a home, starting or expanding a business, or saving for retirement.[52] States may also establish additional eligibility requirements or documentation before funds can be accessed.

Account Ownership

In many Baby Bonds programs, a public agency or state trust manages the investments until the participant reaches adulthood.[53] This approach allows professional management of the funds and helps ensure that program rules are followed. Once participants become eligible to access the funds, they are responsible for using them in accordance with program requirements.

Benefits Protections

Some Baby Bond programs are designed so that account balances are not counted toward eligibility for certain public benefit programs while funds remain invested. These protections help families participate in a long-term savings program without jeopardizing access to other forms of assistance.[54]

Because eligibility rules vary by program and benefit,[55] communities should review applicable federal and state requirements when designing or implementing a program.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Protecting Baby Bond accounts from asset limits helps ensure eligible families can participate without creating unintended consequences for public benefits eligibility.

Outreach

Even well-designed Baby Bonds programs depend on families and communities understanding how they work.[56] Outreach may include partnerships with schools, hospitals, community-based organizations, financial institutions, and other trusted organizations that regularly engage with families.[57] Insights from the CSA field suggest that reducing barriers and providing clear information can improve awareness and participation.[58]

WHY THIS MATTERS

Clear, consistent communication builds trust, increases participation, and helps families understand available opportunities.

Reporting

Regular reporting promotes transparency and accountability. Many Baby Bonds programs include reporting requirements to help participants and the public understand program performance. Depending on the program, reports may describe participation rates, account growth, investment performance, administrative costs, demographic information, and how funds are ultimately used.[59] This information helps policymakers, researchers, and communities evaluate how programs are operating over time. It can also support ongoing outreach and public awareness efforts.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Regular reporting helps communities understand whether a program is reaching its intended population, operating effectively, and meeting its long-term goals.

Section 4.

Facilitating Community Conversations

Community conversations create opportunities for people to better understand Baby Bonds, ask questions, and share perspectives in an educational setting. These conversations should focus on building understanding, presenting accurate information, and listening to community experiences. Participants should leave with a better understanding of how Baby Bonds generally work and what questions communities may wish to consider when learning about different program models.

Facilitator Guide

Successful community conversations begin with clear expectations. Facilitators should:

- Establish that the session is educational and nonpartisan.
- Encourage respectful discussion and active listening.
- Use plain language and define unfamiliar terms.
- Distinguish between existing programs, proposed models, and research.
- Acknowledge that program details vary by state.
- Encourage participants to ask questions and share their experiences.

Preparing for the Conversation

Before convening a discussion, facilitators should become familiar with the core concepts presented throughout this toolkit, including how Baby Bonds generally work, how they differ from CSAs and other child investment programs, and the range of approaches currently being considered across states. Participants should understand that there is no single model and that program design varies across jurisdictions.

A productive conversation begins by establishing expectations for respectful dialogue. Facilitators should encourage participants to ask questions, share experiences when they choose, and recognize that community members may have different perspectives about financial opportunity, public investment, or government programs. The purpose is to improve understanding, not to reach agreement.

Audience-Specific Facilitation Guidance

Families

Families are often most interested in understanding how a program could benefit their children. Facilitators should emphasize that eligibility and program rules vary by state and encourage participants to consult official program resources for details.

Common Questions

- What are Baby Bonds?
- Could my child qualify?
- How could a Baby Bond program benefit my child?
- Who manages the money?
- When will the funds become available?
- What can the funds be used for?

REMEMBER

Families often want practical information about eligibility, account management, and how funds may eventually be used. Facilitators should explain that answers depend on the specific program being discussed and encourage participants to consult official program resources for state-specific guidance.

Community-Based Organizations

Community organizations are trusted sources of information for many families in the community. Discussions should focus on how organizations can provide accurate, accessible information and support families in understanding Baby Bonds.

Discussion Prompts

- How do financial assets influence opportunities later in life?
- What barriers prevent families from building long-term financial security?
- What trusted organizations already support families in our community?
- What information do families most often ask for?
- How can community organizations help families understand the difference between Baby Bonds and other children's savings programs?

REMEMBER

Community organizations may be interested in how Baby Bonds compare with existing asset-building initiatives, how outreach can support public understanding, and how organizations can help families locate accurate information. Research from Children's Savings Accounts indicates that trusted community partners play a vital role in improving awareness and participant engagement.

Educators and Service Providers

Educators, counselors, and service providers often receive questions from families and young people. Facilitators should encourage participants to focus on clear explanations rather than technical policy discussions.

Discussion Guide

- Explain concepts using everyday language.
- Avoid assumptions about a family's financial circumstances.
- Clarify when information applies to a specific state program rather than all Baby Bonds programs.
- Refer families to official program resources for eligibility or account-specific questions.
- Encourage questions and acknowledge when research or program guidance is still emerging.

REMEMBER

Educators, counselors, and service providers often serve as trusted sources of information. Facilitators should encourage them to use plain-language explanations, distinguish between established facts and emerging research, and direct families to official program information when discussing eligibility or benefits.

Sample Community Engagement Activities

Community conversations provide opportunities for participants to learn about Baby Bonds, ask questions, and explore how different program designs operate. These discussions should be tailored to the audience and focus on education and shared learning. Community engagement is not about persuading participants to support or oppose particular policy proposals. Facilitators should encourage participation from individuals with different experiences while ensuring that discussions remain respectful, factual, and centered on reliable information.

HOST A COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION

Community information sessions introduce Baby Bonds in a clear, accessible, and educational format.

Sample Agenda (60–75 minutes)

- Welcome and introductions
- Session objectives
- Overview of Baby Bonds
- How Baby Bonds compare with other children's savings programs
- Examples of existing state programs
- Frequently asked questions
- Small-group or full-group discussion
- Closing summary and next steps/additional resources

Suggested Discussion Questions

- What information surprised you?
- What questions do you still have?
- Which parts of Baby Bonds were easiest to understand?
- What additional information would families find most helpful?

CONDUCT A STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

Roundtables allow participants with different perspectives to discuss shared questions and learn from one another.

Suggested Participants

- Parents and caregivers
- Youth and young adults
- Educators
- Service providers
- Community-based organizations
- Financial capability organizations
- Community leaders

Suggested Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Meeting objectives
3. Brief overview of Baby Bonds
4. Facilitated discussion
5. Small-group conversations
6. Report-out from each group
7. Summary of key themes
8. Next steps and resource sharing

FACILITATE LISTENING SESSIONS

Listening sessions are intended to understand community experiences and identify information needs rather than persuade participants.

Guiding questions:

- What financial challenges do young adults face in your community?
- What opportunities would help families build assets?
- What information do families and community members want to learn about Baby Bonds?
- What concerns or questions do people have about publicly funded savings programs?
- What organizations are most trusted to provide information?
- What communication approaches work best in your community?

Facilitators should document common themes without attributing comments to individual participants unless they have provided permission.

ENSURE TIMELY FOLLOW-UP

Following a community conversation, participants should receive a brief summary that reinforces key educational messages and directs them to reliable resources.

Suggested Follow-Up Message

Thank you for participating in our community discussion about Baby Bonds.

During our conversation, we discussed:

- What Baby Bonds are and how they generally work
- How Baby Bonds differ from other children's savings programs
- Examples from current state programs
- Questions and perspectives shared by participants

For additional information, please refer to official state program websites and the organizations referenced throughout this toolkit. As Baby Bonds programs continue to evolve, updated guidance and resources may become available.

Messaging Cautions

To maintain accuracy and public trust, communicators should avoid language that overstates what Baby Bonds can accomplish or implies certainty where evidence is still emerging.

Do:

- Explain that program designs vary.
- Cite credible research and official program information.
- Distinguish between implemented programs and proposals.
- Use plain language.
- Clarify when evidence is based on modeling rather than long-term outcomes.
- Encourage audiences to consult official state program resources for program-specific information.

Avoid:

- Suggesting all Baby Bonds programs are identical.
- Presenting proposed legislation as though it is already in effect.
- Guaranteeing specific financial outcomes or investment growth.
- Characterizing Baby Bonds as a solution to all financial challenges.
- Using partisan or advocacy-oriented language.
- Speculating about future program changes or eligibility without support from official sources.

Following these practices helps organizations communicate about Baby Bonds clearly, accurately, and consistently.

Suggested Discussion Topics

A typical community discussion may include:

1. Welcome, introductions, and session objectives.
2. Overview of Baby Bonds.
3. Explanation of how Baby Bonds compare with other children's savings and investment programs.
4. Examples of existing state programs.
5. Small-group or full-group discussion using guided questions.
6. Closing summary, additional resources, and opportunities for continued learning.

Discussion Prompts

Use these prompts to encourage conversation and reflection.

- What have you heard about Baby Bonds?
- Why might communities be interested in helping young adults begin adulthood with financial resources?
- How are Baby Bonds different from CSAs or college savings plans?
- What information would help families better understand these programs?
- What opportunities or challenges do young adults in our community face when they begin adulthood?
- What role can savings or other financial resources play during this transition?
- What questions do you have about how Baby Bonds work?
- Which program design features seem easiest to understand? Which require additional explanation?
- What information would families or community organizations need before participating in a program like this?

These questions invite participants to reflect on the information presented rather than support a particular policy outcome.

Closing the Conversation

Conclude each discussion by summarizing the key takeaways, addressing any unanswered questions, and directing attendees to credible resources for continued learning.

Participants should leave with a clear understanding of Baby Bonds, how programs differ across jurisdictions, and where to find reliable, up-to-date information.

Using Stories to Build Understanding

Research helps explain the evidence behind Baby Bonds, while stories help connect those concepts to real-life experiences. When used thoughtfully, personal stories can illustrate how savings, financial resources, and opportunity shape people's lives. Stories should support learning, provide context for research, and encourage thoughtful discussion.

Story Collection Guide

Use the following questions to encourage reflection while allowing participants to share what they are comfortable sharing.

- What opportunities were easier or harder to access because of your family's financial resources?
- How did savings or financial resources shape your experience growing up?
- What financial goals do you have for yourself or your family?
- What hopes do you have for your children's future?
- What opportunities do you think help young adults get a strong start in adulthood?

Collect Stories Responsibly

Collect stories with respect, transparency, and informed consent. Participants should always understand why you are collecting their story, how it may be used, and that participation is completely voluntary.

When capturing stories:

- Explain why stories are being collected.
- Describe how stories may be used.
- Make participation completely voluntary.
- Allow participants to decline any question.
- Respect requests to remain anonymous.
- Provide opportunities to review quotations when appropriate.
- Never pressure someone to share personal financial information.

Choosing not to participate should never affect services or relationships with any organization. When stories will be published, obtain written consent whenever possible.

Stories are most effective when they are paired with accurate research and presented as one person's experience rather than everyone's experience. Lived experiences coupled with data can help communities better understand how financial resources influence opportunities over time while supporting respectful, informed conversations.

PRACTICE TIP: BEFORE SHARING A STORY, ASK YOURSELF:

- *Does the participant understand how the story will be used?*
- *Does the story accurately reflect the participant's experience?*
- *Does it add context to the research rather than replace it?*
- *Does it protect the participant's privacy and dignity?*

Section 5.

Conclusion: Moving from Understanding to Action

Every child deserves the opportunity to build a strong financial foundation. Across the country, communities are exploring asset-building strategies—from CSAs and college savings programs to Baby Bonds and Section 530A Accounts. While these approaches differ in design, they share a common goal: expanding opportunity by helping children and young adults build financial resources for the future.

Baby Bonds are still an emerging policy, and no single model exists. States and communities continue to explore different approaches to eligibility, funding, account management, allowable uses, and participant engagement. As more programs are implemented and evaluated, new evidence will continue to inform policy and practice.

Communities don't need all the answers before starting the conversation. Building understanding begins with learning how Baby Bonds work, understanding the research, distinguishing them from other asset-building programs, and listening to community perspectives.

Whether you are a community organization, educator, financial institution, researcher, public official, philanthropic partner, or resident, you can help build awareness and support informed decision-making. Trusted local organizations can share accurate information, elevate lived experiences, and connect people with reliable resources. If your community is interested in exploring Baby Bonds, consider these practical steps:

- Learn about existing Baby Bonds programs and related child savings models.
- Share accurate, research-based information with partners and community members.
- Convene community conversations to understand local priorities, questions, and opportunities.
- Gather stories that illustrate the importance of early financial assets, while respecting participants' privacy and experiences.
- Consider how different program design choices align with your community's goals, needs, and existing asset-building efforts.
- Continue learning from emerging research and implementation experiences as additional states launch and evaluate programs.

Building a Baby Bonds program requires thoughtful planning, trusted partnerships, and meaningful community engagement.

By using this toolkit to educate, facilitate dialogue, and explore program design, communities can make informed decisions about whether Baby Bonds are an appropriate strategy for helping future generations build lasting financial security.

Now You're Ready to Get Started

- ✔ **Learn the fundamentals of Baby Bonds** and how they differ from other child savings programs.
- ✔ **Identify and engage local partners** committed to children's financial well-being.
- ✔ **Host a community information session** or stakeholder roundtable.
- ✔ Gather community questions, feedback, and lived experiences to **inform future discussions**.
- ✔ **Explore how existing Baby Bonds models and emerging research** could inform your community's approach.
- ✔ **Stay informed** about new programs, research, and implementation lessons.

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