Testimony before the Committee on Human Services of the General Assembly
Submitted by Joan Barere, Senior Policy Analyst for Children and Family
Commission on Women, Children and Seniors
March 2, 2017

Re: SB 873, An Act Concerning a Two-Generational Initiative

HB 7121, An Act Concerning Revisions to the State’s Safe Haven Laws

Senator Markley, and Senator Moore, and Representative Abercrombie, and distinguished members of the Committee on Human Services: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS). This written testimony indicates CWCS support for both the bills listed above.

SB 873, An Act Concerning a Two-Generational Initiative

The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) supports the passage of SB 873, the raised bill which promotes the continued development of Two-Generational models of service delivery in Connecticut. The bill also provides for the development of new two-generational models at additional sites—in response to requests from Connecticut municipalities eager to engage in two-generational work.

CWCS is the designated agency providing organizational and staff capacity to the Connecticut Two-Generational Interagency Working Group—composed of legislators, representatives of executive and judicial agencies, philanthropy, academia, and most importantly locally appointed parents. In that capacity, Commission staff members have been involved in the administration of the Initiative since its inception in Connecticut. Because Two-Gen is an innovation—there are only a handful of states experimenting with two-generational models—and because the whole idea surrounding Two-Gen is to rethink and reimagine the way we see the delivery of human and developmental services, it doesn’t come with a rule book.

In 2015, Connecticut passed the first two-generational implementation bill in the nation (Sec. 401 of Public Act No. 15-5). There were no accompanying regulations to guide implementation. The experiences that followed—working across agencies and sectors, across communities, engaging the contributions of multiple partners, to create models of service that place the family at the center—have been a learning experience for everyone involved. At the local level, service providers are learning to work together to coordinate services to both parent and child—far beyond the “warm hand-off.” Ideas about how to eliminate and circumvent barriers, to fill service gaps, are bubbling up to the state level. And at the Interagency Working Group, the experiences of multiple sites and multiple agencies are being considered for their policy implications, and to develop a scope of
administration and oversight necessary to maintain the framework for and support and evaluate the progress of all this learning and activity. As required by statute, the Interagency Working Group has made its first report to the legislature (see Attachment 1, “A Two-Generational Approach: Reaching Workforce Success and School Readiness;” 2016 Report of the Interagency Working Group, submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly in January, 2017—the “2016 Two-Gen Report”). Some reflections on those experiences are included in the 2016 Two-Gen Report, as well as some recommendations that have arisen from the work to date.

Two-generational work is an integrated approach to service delivery that takes into account the interrelated needs and challenges of children and their parents and other caregivers, and equips both generations in the family simultaneously for school and workforce success. Meeting the needs of children and parents together, Two-Gen models foster stronger families too, helping them to sustain and build on their achievements. In Connecticut, where by statute this work is supported with TANF dollars, Two-Gen models focus on low-income families, helping them to overcome barriers to success and to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

In Connecticut, the Two-Generational Initiative is not a program. It is an Initiative that helps municipalities to host networks of coordinated program providers. The networks study their service areas, customize service delivery, remove roadblocks keeping families from achieving success, and braid existing funding. The result is two-fold: improved outcomes that benefit families and increased efficiencies that save money for Connecticut taxpayers.

The organization of the Initiative is reflected in its administration by the Interagency Working Group, which brings together stakeholders from throughout our state government and throughout the state. Supporting the Interagency Working Group, the Commission has worked to provide the framework for funding the individual sites, and to create administrative structures surrounding the funding, reporting, learning, and engagement between the Interagency Working Group and the sites. In addition to working with the agencies and the sites, and with parents at all the sites, the Commission is also regularly engaged with the United Way of Connecticut, which serves as fiscal agent for the Initiative. The United Way entered into a contract with the Connecticut Department of Labor which, despite the fact the source of funding for Two-Gen is Federal TANF dollars, was selected as the contracting agency for the first Two-Gen pilots. Reflecting the terms of the DOL/United Way contract, the Commission developed MOUs for each of the sites.

Because the project groups at each site selected their own lead agencies, which was part of the Two-Gen planning and application process at the municipal level, it took some time to get the appropriate signatories of those MOUs in place. That was completed about a year ago, although the sites had at that point been engaged in the learning, technical assistance, and planning since 2015. As a result of the planning and application process, the Interagency Working Group helped to hone the models proposed by each of the sites, and to approve their plans and budgets. Appropriated funds were then allocated among the sites in April 2016, allowing them to begin implementation at the local level.

What happened next is described in greater detail in the 2016 Two-Gen Report, when Two-Gen funds were further reduced. The sites at that point had just begun implementation of their approved plans. The Interagency Working Group did not wish to simply cut all projects across the board. In true Two-Gen fashion, engaging actors at all levels, the Initiative brought all the sites together, informed them there had been a cut, and asked if they wished to continue the work with substantially reduced funding. While this was not an easy passage for the Initiative, the sites did
agree overwhelmingly that they were committed to adopting two-generational models, as the benefits of the work had become apparent to them even in the planning stages. They agreed to go through a second application process, revising their proposals to preserve the unique cores of each site’s Two-Gen project. This of course entailed further delay in implementation, but also showed us all how important the Two-Gen learning and development had become on the local level. Participating service providers had engaged in partnerships deeper than they had ever experienced before; saw that they were doing things better, and more smoothly, and with more focused intent, to promote the best outcomes for the families at their sites. It was a real moment of growth for the Initiative, a passage of survival and regeneration that has supported great work since. You will hear more about the local initiatives from other testimony.

Through doing this work, the Commission sits at a pivotal point joining the various Two-Gen actors, and helping to develop the administrative glue that allows them to progress. This has allowed the Commission to observe all the learning, and technical assistance, and to collect the reports of service gaps and program inconsistencies, barriers and successes. These have occurred at all levels, the Interagency Working Group, the agencies, the local providers, the communities, the parents and children. We have learned from those many perspectives one critical truth: that in changing the way families are served, there is a ripple effect through our entire system. Historically we have administered our agencies in siloes, each with its own way of doing business, seeing clients, processing payments, etc. But when we need all the agencies to work together for a single family, these inconsistencies—while not in themselves harmful or inefficient—come into conflict. Ways of doing business that are not in themselves a problem can now be seen as “not Two-Gen.” Being more “Two-Gen” can involve valuing smooth service delivery to the family, via “no wrong door” policies and other methods, over scheduling, or reporting, or documentation, or data collection, or budgeting. When we find these areas of challenge, it can be difficult to sort them out. But that is a key component of two-generational work. All of us are just trying to learn how to get out of our own way and serve families for the best possible outcomes.

Each Two-Gen site is unique, and has a unique set of characteristics—urban, suburban, and rural; large, medium, and small. Each is learning from its networks of local parents, from applying Two-Gen principles to existing service models, to finding its own service gaps, barriers, and solutions. A critical feature of the Initiative is its learning community, which allows local Two-Gen practitioners to meet, share, and transmit their learning to one another and to the Interagency Working Group. The Interagency Working Group then considers the policy implications of the local work, and the local learnings, which then inform their agencies, helping to improve efficiency and effectiveness at the state level, which can result in systems changes that benefit all families statewide.

An initiative that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service to low-income children and their families, and that promises to sustain its outcomes, is a worthwhile investment, especially in tough economic times. A systems approach such as Two-Gen eliminates duplication of services, cuts down on interruptions in educational and training programs due to unresolved conflicts and barriers, and cuts down on waste and stress for families and agencies, all of which reduces pressure on municipal and state budgets. By creating its own learning community and transmitting best Two-Gen practices within the Connecticut Two-Gen community, the Initiative goes further. It contributes to culture change within service providers; learning to keep the family at the center, and institutionalizing that view, will take time, but ultimately will generate cost savings and, as families succeed in greater numbers, tax revenue.

The benefits of a Two-Generational model have been recognized nationwide, and the work in Connecticut has been a beacon on the Two-Gen landscape:

18-20 Trinity St., Hartford, CT 06106 ● Suite 204 ● 860-240-1475 ● www.ctcwcs.com
At the Federal level, the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) has recognized Connecticut as one of only a handful of states actively engaged in two-generational work employing TANF funding. ACF has committed to identifying ways to apply two-generational principles in human services delivery, to adopting those principles in state and local efforts, and to continue advancing a research agenda enhancing the understanding of effective two-generational approaches and their impacts. (See Attachment 2, “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Information Memorandum, No. TANF-ACF-IM-2016-03, April 12, 2016.)


For additional readings giving a national perspective on two-generational work and its promise, there is a downloadable anthology available also, compiled by the Aspen Institute, at http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/pages/ascend-fellowship-anthology.

The National Governors Association (NGA), together with the Center for Law in the Public Interest (CLASP), offered a grant competition in 2016 to encourage more states to begin work on two-generational models. The State of Connecticut applied for the funding, which would have provided $50,000 to support capacity to engage in a nationwide learning community around the development and administration of Two-Gen models. While Connecticut did not receive one of the grants, being more advanced in two-generational work than most of the applicants, it is worth noting that the NGA and CLASP hold the Connecticut model up as an example to other states, which they can observe as they develop their own best practices. In August 2015, nearly a year before the NGA grant competition, Connecticut’s Two-Generational Initiative was highlighted in an NGA publication, from its Economic, Human Services & Workforce Division, entitled “Tackling Intergenerational Poverty: How Governors Can Advance Coordinated Services for Low-Income Parents and Children.” A copy of that article is included here as Attachment 5.

The National Human Services Assembly (NHSA) has also focused on the Connecticut two-generational model, featuring a presentation from an Interagency Working Group representative at a 2016 convening supported by The Annie E. Casey Foundation. An article published by the NHSA following the convening emphasized the point that “The Two-Gen approach begins with establishing a new mindset focused on family-centered program design, continues with the alignment of services across multiple organizations, and culminates in providing coordinated services to children and parents together.” The article, which also includes excellent graphic diagrams of the Connecticut Two-Gen model, is entitled “The Two-Generation Approach Framework: A Closer Look at State Level Implementation,” and is included here as Attachment 6.
It is also worth noting that other states continue to get on the two-generational bandwagon. The most recent is Massachusetts, which has a proposed bill to start a two-generational pilot, focused on “two generations disrupting poverty.”

What we’ve learned about Two-Gen, and what will become apparent from the positive testimony of those involved with two-generational work around the state:

- If providers coordinate the delivery of human services with families at the center—and align their work in support of specific personal, educational and workforce development goals of client families—the likelihood of positive outcomes from those services will increase;

- If services are aimed at supporting parent and child simultaneously, the positive outcomes each attains will help to build a trend of family progress and success that is far more likely to be sustainable and to lift the family from poverty permanently;

- Supporting the whole family, which leads to a greater likelihood of school and workforce success, benefits the state and its taxpayers by ensuring that the revenues spent on services are spent well and efficiently, ultimately returning to the state’s coffers in the form of revenues from new taxpayers;

- The service coordination in two-generational models results in the braiding of existing funding streams for service delivery, which can lead to significant cost savings even as it supports greater effectiveness of services;

- The initial costs in community engagement and planning, in identifying gaps in service and barriers to success, the learning that results at the local and state level, result in improved coordination in our systems, which achievement ultimately is intended to be sustainable at little or no cost in each mature Two-Gen site, as local service providers adopt culture changes that foster their interconnection and new service models.

In sum, the relatively minimal cost of continuing Two-Generational work in Connecticut should more than pay for itself by helping every agency, every service provider, to show more value in strong family outcomes over time, ultimately resulting in reduced dependency on social service supports. The Commission strongly and respectfully encourages passage of SB 873.

**HB 7121, An Act Concerning Revisions to the State’s Safe Haven Laws**

CWCS strongly supports HB 7121, based on intimate working knowledge of the Safe Havens laws, owing to the longstanding role the Commission has played on the legislative Safe Haven Working Group.

Safe Havens was introduced to save infants from abandonment and death; it was never intended as a way to get more children into the DCF system or as a way to assure that siblings would be reunited.

Anonymity for the child’s biological parent(s) is guaranteed in the original law, and is a hallmark of why the law has been invoked more than two dozen times since its inception. It has always been assumed that the child and adoptive parent(s) both enjoyed rights of privacy.

However, that anonymity was violated in January, 2016, when, tragically, a child was removed from its adoptive home when DCF discovered—based upon information supplied by an emergency room staff—that...
nurse—that the abandoned baby had a sibling who had also been surrendered through the Safe Havens provision.

Had anonymity protection extended to the child, and to its adoptive family, this properly vetted, willing and loving home would not have been traumatized by having their adopted newborn taken from them. When a family decides to adopt a child, the bond that develops begins with that decision. It is our understanding that the family in question deliberately chose a Safe Havens baby to save an unwanted child from a life in foster care. Their separation, then, is all the more unfortunate.

While it is normally a good thing to have siblings remain together, in this instance, we believe that the privacy rights of both the child and the adoptive family were violated.

In future, HB 7121 would ensure the safety and permanency of placements of Safe Havens babies by making sure anonymity protections extend to all parties. We respectfully urge its passage, and we look forward to our continued work on the legislative Safe Havens Working Group.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comment today on these bills.
A Two-Generational Approach
Reaching Workforce Success and School Readiness

2016 Report of the Interagency Working Group,
submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly
as required by Sec. 198 of Public Act 14-297

Submitted January, 2017
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Real people, real-life dilemmas.

Christian Seliberty, an 18-year-old father, spoke to the Two-Generational Work Group about his struggle to attend high school, look for employment and care for his daughter. As a second-generation teenage parent, Christian lives in Section 8 housing and is dependent on his mother’s disability benefits for his multiple health challenges.

At a two-generational forum at the Legislative Office Building, Christian shared his difficulty in learning about supports available to him and his daughter, and how helpful it would be to go to one agency that could connect him to a variety of resources. His experience highlights the need for a two-generational approach to service delivery.
January 10, 2017

Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to present the Two-Generational Interagency Working Group’s Legislative Report on the Two-Generational Initiative pursuant to the 2016 Supplement to the General Statutes, Section 17b-112l.

As you know, the Two-Generational Interagency Working Group is staffed by the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors and consists of 32 members representing the legislature, executive branch, judicial branch, philanthropy, business, parents, non-profits, and community partners. The report is an account of the ongoing work of the Interagency Working Group, Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, Connecticut Association for Human Services, and the designated two-generational communities.

The report gives an overview and update on where we have been, the communities’ current progress, and an expectation of outcomes for June 2017.

Thank you for support of this important work that helps families achieve economic stability and self-sufficiency. We look forward to the continuation of this work and positive outcomes for our most vulnerable families.

Respectfully,

[Signatures]

Senator Marilyn Moore                                  Representative Jeff Currey
What does “two-generational” mean?

Two-generational work is a holistic system of workforce and school readiness and success that takes into account the interrelated needs and challenges of caregivers and children across generations. The Connecticut General Assembly’s statewide two-generational initiative equips families with the tools and skills they need to get on the path to opportunity and self-sufficiency, by ensuring education and workforce development services for parents and high-quality early education for children. Meeting the needs of children and parents together, the family builds education, economic assets, social capital, and health and wellbeing to create a legacy of economic security that passes from one generation to the next.

The two-generational approach recognizes that if any part of a family system is not getting the support it needs, the other parts suffer, too. Two-generational sees families as having inter-related needs in basic quality-of-life measures, such as food, education, shelter, transportation, and opportunity for self-determination. Two-generational systems and programmatic changes allow parents to achieve workforce readiness and workforce success concurrently with their children, who are given access to quality early education.

Why is a two-generational approach important?

Low-income families in Connecticut continue to face substantial obstacles to economic self-sufficiency and access to quality early childhood education for their children. In Connecticut, 80,000 children under age 5 are in low-income households, 60% percent of low-income families with young children have no parent working full-time, year round, and 80% of low-income parents do not have a postsecondary degree. Families face challenges at work and home with their childcare and education due to inflexible, unpredictable jobs and insufficient income coupled with the lack of access to quality early childcare and education. These challenges lead to a continuum in the cycle of poverty, parent and child stress at home, and undiagnosed developmental and mental health needs.

Although the benefits of two-generational approaches are most apparent in tough economic times, the inter-relatedness of needs within families remains regardless of people’s financial solvency. So, even in an economic upturn, the two-generational approach makes good sense for our state and our families.

However, despite some improvement in Connecticut’s unemployment numbers, many low-income families in Connecticut continue to feel the effects of the Great Recession. Poverty, or income insufficiency, is real – even here in the nation’s wealthiest state. Significantly, children’s school readiness (or the lack thereof) can be predicted from these parental circumstances. It stands to reason that lack of education and/or meaningful employment affects every household, and every child in it.

Two-generational strategies are important because too often families are served through “siloed” systems that result in fragmented services, lessening their impact on improving the lives of children, parents, and families. Two-generational approaches place families at the center, and place the work of coordination on agencies in order to ensure that whole family interests and needs are addressed.
What does this do for the wider society?

Adults without a high school diploma or equivalent do not fare well in the global economy, where education and high-level problem-solving skills are critical for today’s workforce, and about 70 percent of today’s job openings require post-secondary degrees or certifications. Employers also suffer, as more than $60 billion is lost in productivity each year by American businesses due to employees’ lack of basic skills.

Because the goal of two-generational policy is family economic stability through quality learning for the child, pathways to work for the parent, and related support services for both, the positive “ripple effects” are far and wide. Under an optimal two-generational structure, bureaucracy is scaled back and parent and child receive direct services and support as a family, not as individuals needing separate (and often uncoordinated) services.

For example, quality workforce development services can be located in the same facility as quality early childhood education and daycare coverage for parents. Another example is when pre-schools host parents who are studying for their G.E.D.s. The coordination of programming and services between (and among) agencies is the key to a two-generational approach. This coordinated effort of community partners helps the whole family together and removes barriers often seen in single-service programming (i.e. transportation, child care, etc.).

Such a “systems approach” eliminates duplication of services, which is kinder on municipal and State budgets, and it cuts down on unnecessary stressors on the family, e.g., long drive time, wasted transportation cost, long wait times in lines, frustration at finding a service is no longer available, etc. In short, a two-generational approach makes for a more efficient system, which is to the direct advantage of families and the communities in which they live.
Background: Brief legislative history of the two-generational approach

2014:
The State of Connecticut saw the need for two-generational strategies in the state and in 2014 commissioned the Commission on Children to form a Two-Generational Policy Work Group to research and advise on best practices for the state moving forward. In 2015, the first legislation in the nation for a statewide two-generational initiative was passed.

The text of the original bill passed in 2014, which was included as part of the state budget authority and received significant bi-partisan and bi-cameral support, read as follows:
Sec. 198 (a) The Commission on Children shall, within available appropriations, establish a two-generational school readiness plan to promote long-term learning and economic success for low-income families by addressing intergenerational barriers to school readiness and workforce readiness with high-quality preschool, intensified workforce training and targeted education, coupled with related support services. Such plan shall include recommendations for:

(1) Promoting and prioritizing access to high-quality early childhood programs for children ages birth to five years who are living at or below one hundred eighty-five per cent of the federal poverty level;

(2) providing the parents of such children with (A) the opportunity to acquire their high school diplomas, (B) adult education, and (C) technical skills to increase their employability and sustainable employment; and

(3) funding for implementation of the plan, including, but not limited to, use of the temporary assistance for needy families program and other federal, state and private funding.

(b) On or before December 1, 2014, the executive director of the Commission on Children shall report to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, education, workforce development and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the plan.

2015:
In 2015, the first two-generational implementation bill in the nation was passed. Highlights of the 2015 bill ((Sec 401 of Public Act No. 15-5) are:

- Delivers academic and job readiness support services across two generations in the same household;

- Builds a learning community of all demonstration sites to discuss and share strategies in two-generational planning, implementation and evaluation across urban, rural, suburban and regional targets;

- Takes all learnings to develop a state-wide blueprint for both school and workforce success in families;

- Creates six demonstration sites to assist parent and child by focusing on a) early learning programs, b) adult education, c) child care, d) housing, e) job training and workforce development, f) transportation, g) financial literacy and h) other related support services (offered at one location or with intentional coordination and planning partners at other locations);
• Creates a workforce liaison to gauge and coordinate the needs of employers and households in each demonstration community in two-generational planning and implementation;

• Creates an evaluation that looks at outcomes for the child, parent, family and system;

• Builds a strategic and planning partnership across state and town, with philanthropy, business, scholars, elected officials and parents; and

• Requires a long-term plan and blueprint for the delivery of services in a two-generational framework a) utilizing Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) funds, to the extent permissible under federal law to support two-generational programming; and b) including a plans for state grant incentives to private entities that develop two-generational programming.

Because the Connecticut General Assembly recognized the potential for improvement in outcomes, particularly for low-income families, if two-generational policies were embedded across policy domains, members through Section 401 of Public Act No. 15-5, established a program in six sites across the state: New Haven, Greater Hartford, Norwalk, Meriden, Colchester and Bridgeport.

The model affects policy, systems and programs. It strives to cross policy and fiscal domains with a focus on parent/child attachment, school and work opportunity, and social capital. Two-generational policy and program inherently change how the system works by crossing issue areas, braiding and blending funding streams, and placing the customer in the lead.

A model state Interagency Working Group (members listed on back page of this report) offers an integrated cross-sector input strategy across the early care, health, safety, education, employment, transportation, housing, health and mental health sectors. Six demonstration sites were originally designated by legislation which represented urban, rural, and suburban cities and towns. Five of these six sites are currently testing innovations, both programmatic and systematic. The sixth site, our rural lens, continues to work on documenting their two-generational learnings.

Each of these sites has implemented the strategy in public schools and social services, (although the Colchester program was discontinued in the summer of 2016, following a severe funding cut – see next section).

2016:
Then, in the last legislative session in 2016, the General Assembly passed P.A. 16-79. Minor adjustments through amendments were made which are:

• Legislation on two-generational initiative was amended to explicitly include non-custodial fathers, defines the three towns in Hartford region, and improves the outcome evaluation.

• Release of a guidance document enabled site planning and a two-generational application. Prepared by the Two-Generational Interagency Working Group and reviewed by the Office of the Attorney General, the guidance document provided a framework for sites to submit plans for approval by the Interagency Working Group. Site plans factor in the evaluation outcomes to be studied and the readiness factors that have been the subject of two-generational learning community meetings.
Brief legislative history (continued)

• W.K. Kellogg Foundation provided a partnership grant to Connecticut Association of Human Services. Funds defray the costs of two-generational technical assistance to the Interagency Working Group and designated sites, implementation coaches, a statewide program manager, and some features of the evaluation plan.

• Evaluation team from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work delivered a proposal to the Interagency Working Group and commenced work with the six sites, including an evaluation of process implementation.

• Funds were released to six demonstration sites for implementation of model innovations designed to result in learning opportunities unique to each site and local needs, to be reported and to form the basis for replicable best practices.

• The two-generational initiative partnered with the federal TANF Academy with a focus on non-custodial fathers. As part of that relationship, Waterbury became a “seventh site” in the initiative, and part of Connecticut’s two-generational learning community. The evaluation of that aspect of the work will be performed in part through the Ray Marshall Center, with the participation of Dr. Chris King, an expert in Two-Gen and employment and training initiatives.

• Partnership with Vroom was developed to distribute materials to low-income parents in both English and Spanish. Vroom was developed by a group of dedicated scientists, community leaders and trusted brands, with input from community organizations and families to provide parents and caregivers with ways to boost early learning.

• Partnership with the United Way of Connecticut to be the fiduciary agent for the two-generational initiative at no cost. The United way works across local and state agencies to secure funding reaches implementation sites.

Although these changes were made, the goal of the two-generational strategy has not changed: to move the entire family out of poverty through child school readiness, school success and adult workforce readiness and work success. It remains guided by the three branches of government and, critically, is parent-informed.
During the legislative session that ended in June of 2016, Connecticut's deficit had ballooned and rescissions drastically reduced State funding for the two-generational initiative by 50 percent. While it is very important to note the cuts were a dramatic blow to individual sites' abilities to fulfill all their approved plans, the program is, nonetheless, striving to continue to serve families most in need; albeit, at a much reduced enrollment.

Thanks to generous funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundations in the amount of $600,000, the initiative was able to have participating sites convene to share insight, challenges, outcomes, and, most importantly, build a sense of community.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving also gave philanthropic dollars: $20,000 for the Two-Generational Parent Academy, a self-directed initiative that grew out of the legislature's two-generational initiative.

In addition, tremendous administrative and technical support was given by the Connecticut Association of Human Services (CAHS).

In a year when many social services, education and family supports were drastically reduced or completely eliminated, the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS), the Two-Generational Interagency Working Group staffing for the six sites, and the families involved remain grateful that funding was preserved to continue operation. In implementing the plan, the State may access Federal TANF funds as permitted.

It is important to note, however, that the outcomes are in the process of being measured and will have preliminary results in June 2017. The uncertainty last spring about funding cuts meant that programs were put on hold and, the implementation of their plans, in reduced form, later than anticipated. Once partial funding was restored, under the guidance of the Interagency Working Group, participating sites had to re-evaluate and scale back their programs. Therefore, a full report of outcomes will be issued in June of 2017.

### Outcomes and funding status in 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>FY16 Awarded</th>
<th>FY16 Actual Received</th>
<th>FY17 Awarded</th>
<th>FY17 Actual - After 2nd Rescission</th>
<th>Total % Cut Due to Budgetary Rescissions</th>
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<td>Bridgeport</td>
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<td>$122,500</td>
<td>$24,500</td>
<td>(opted out)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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*TNote: $19,567 appropriated for consultation and documentation of learnings from Colchester (initiative's only rural site)*

During the legislative session that ended in June of 2016, Connecticut's deficit had ballooned and rescissions drastically reduced State funding for the two-generational initiative by 50 percent. While it is very important to note the cuts were a dramatic blow to individual sites' abilities to fulfill all their approved plans, the program is, nonetheless, striving to continue to serve families most in need; albeit, at a much reduced enrollment.
State of Connecticut partners

Several State agencies support both the philosophy and the implementation of Two-Gen. They are:

- The Office of Governor Dannel Malloy
- Connecticut General Assembly
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Correction
- State Department of Education
- Department of Social Services
- Office of Early Childhood
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Labor
- State of Connecticut Judicial Branch

Other partners

In addition to philanthropic partners such as HFPG and Kellogg, CAHS, as well as the State of Connecticut itself, several national partners collaborate with the two-generational initiative on policy and research support. They are:

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation – provides leadership on creating opportunity for families and, state and national research on child and family wellbeing indicators through the KIDS COUNT Data Center.

- The Bezos Foundation – collaborated on the distribution of materials to low-income parents in both English and Spanish.


- The National Conference of State Legislators – provided research on the two-generational approach national and use of TANF dollars to support families as a whole.

- The Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at University of Texas, Austin – national evaluator worked with state evaluator on evaluation efforts in all six sites as well as additional cities working to incorporate the two-generational approach within their communities.

- The TANF Academy (a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) – collaborates with Connecticut’s two-generational initiative and nationally on how to integrate two-generational strategies into TANF programs.

- The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities – consultation on local implementation of two-generational practices throughout the state.
Structure and accountability

The Interagency Working Group is composed of legislators, commissioners, judges, scholars, and members of the philanthropic, business and the nonprofit sectors. Co-chaired by legislators representing the Appropriations and Human Services Committees, it incorporates both parties in representation and leadership.

The core strategies of the two-generational work are:

1) a focus on low-income families,
2) creating a portal or entry that is open to both parent and child,
3) viewing the family as the unit,
4) addressing learning, work and family strength,
5) operating on the principal of service effectiveness and resource efficiency,
6) offering dignity and authentic commitment to diversity,
7) providing ample context for peer-to-peer learning,
8) supporting both fathers and mothers, custodial and non-custodial parents; and
9) valuing the family over stated protocols.

Accountability for the work requires demonstration sites to report out on the overall effort as well as to provide data-driven decision making. An evaluation by the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and the Ray Marshall Center provides both data outcomes and an analysis of the formation and implementation of the state model. National advisory ensures the Connecticut model is addressing the customer and brings to the work national research, resources and team learning.
Opportunities for growth

Two-generational approaches allow the parent/caregiver and child to receive job training, work placement, and education concurrently. Two-generational programming has multiple benefits over single-focus programs by creating opportunities for families through:

- Education – Investments in high-quality early childhood education yield a 7-10 percent per year return on investment based on increased school and career achievement as well as reduced social costs. At the same time, parents who complete a college degree double their incomes. A parent’s level of educational attainment is also a strong predictor of a child’s success.

- Social Capital - formal and informal networks of family, friends, neighbors, and institutions - through which people develop meaningful connections to build economic security are important contributors to families’ well-being. According to a recent survey, low-income mothers with children enrolled in child care centers were 40 percent less likely to be depressed than those whose children were not enrolled.

- Economic Assets - increased family income during early childhood can have a profound and lasting impact on children’s lives. A $3,000 difference in parents’ income when their child is young is associated with a 17 percent increase in the child’s future earnings. Yet nearly 45 percent of all children in the United States live in low-income families. Almost three-fourths of single-mother families with children are low-income. Beyond monthly incomes, savings and other financial assets are critical to help manage unexpected setbacks and build economic security. Children with as little as $1 to $499 in an account designated for college are more likely to enroll and graduate. Even small dollar amounts help children see themselves as college-bound.

- Health and Wellbeing - physical and mental health have a major impact on a family’s ability to thrive. Childhood trauma, for instance, has lasting health and social consequences. Recent brain research shows that the brains of new parents undergo major structural changes, just as babies’ brains do. Understanding how parents are biologically prepared for their new roles is important to ensuring young families get off to a good start. Studies also show that parents with health insurance are more likely to seek regular care for themselves and their children.[1]

[1] http://b.3cdn.net/ascend/5e6780f32400661a50_pgm6b0dpr.pdf
National Governors Association grant

In July, 2016, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) offered a grant opportunity which aimed to promote two-generational strategies among states. The initiative, Parents and Children Thriving Together, offered support to up to six states in pursuing strategies and policies that allow them to address the needs of parents and children at the same time, enabling both to succeed together. Specifically, the grant would assist participating states in developing and implementing a two-generational state plan that built on the interests of their respective governors, as well as growing research and emerging policy opportunities in workforce development, human services, education, health, child care and early childhood education.

The State of Connecticut applied for the NGA grant at the direction of the Executive Branch to build upon the existing two-generational initiative in the state. Although, ultimately, the state did not receive funding due to its already advanced two-generational initiative in place, Connecticut’s commitment to the two-generational approach was evident.
Site progress within the two-generational framework

Bridgeport

Bridgeport has four organizational components to its two-generational work that serve as the core for this project. These components include: All Our Kin, Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC), Child Family and Guidance Center, and CT Parent Power.

- All Our Kin – goal is to discover possibilities, best practices, and guidelines of innovative child care. Currently in the process of developing best practices and guidelines around evening and weekend child care. Topic based presentations to the parent council are set to be scheduled as well.

- BCAC – goal is to develop a tool for an organizational assessment for the city of Bridgeport that can consequently be used to asset map. Joint work and communication has been established with New Haven and technical assistance meetings have been successful in creating the framework for the assessment.

- Child Family Guidance Center – goal is to uncover barriers and hardships of grandparents raising grandchildren while providing constructive sessions of support and enrichment. A document of progress has been given that includes deliverables to date, progress updates, quarter goals for 2017, and new insights into systemic issues and barriers.

- CT Parent Power – goal is to create a parent council with mothers, fathers, and grandparents and train them in the areas of self-advocacy, self-enrichment, and child development. The council has had four successful meetings with the fifth scheduled for January 2017. Data was also collected in regard to barriers.

All organizational components have made productive progress and met expectations. Each component has now become interrelated within the next. These subsequent connections connect all work and formulate the bigger picture of a two-generational approach. While progress has been assuring, it is of utmost importance to ensure that it continues in a consistent manner. Conclusively, Bridgeport’s work as a jurisdiction part of the two-generational initiative has been successful and is in a strong place.

Meriden

Meriden’s two-generational approach is focused on a core of 15 families who are enrolled through a universal intake process that helps agencies serving the family stay informed and reduces the amount of times families tell their story. The goal of the project is to provide more of a coordinated effort to support the family in following their plan and reaching their goals that they and a navigator put together.

By providing families with transportation and child care, Meriden is able to address two major barriers previously identified. The Navigator helps connect parents with career advancement opportunities while simultaneously ensuring the child is exposed to a quality early childhood experience. Family Resource Centers serve as the hub for the family’s development.

On the systems level, Meriden’s project strives to support the development of interagency relationships so that they now view the whole family as their client. Through consistent meetings, discussions and professional development, they are able to begin to achieve whole family outcomes without necessarily creating new services. Finally, encouraging a culture among providers that embraces consistent feedback from families and self-evaluation will lead to a more efficient system that puts the family’s needs first.

Meriden two-gen initiative.
New Haven

New Haven is currently focused on a two-generational systems change within the community. They are working with four partner organizations (Gateway Community College, New Haven Adult Education, Workforce Alliance and Christian Community Action) to assess alignment of two-generational practice standards to strengthen existing programming and identify areas for change, as well as a broad coalition of providers and stakeholders to identify how to strengthen and promote two-generational practice and policy.

- New Haven Adult Education is focusing on improving services for participants served by their Family Advocate and Community Resources.

- Workforce Alliance is focusing on low-income families, potentially including families participating in the JFES program.

- Christian Community Action is focusing on families that are literally homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless.

The four New Haven two-generational initiative partners have all committed to:

- Identifying a target consumer population

- Implementing a two-generation organizational assessment across senior-, mid- and front-line staff that looks at multiple domains of policy and practice

- Supporting listening and learning from their consumers through multiple methods (such as focus groups, surveys, etc.) to inform improved two-generation policy and practice

- Piloting an effort to put into practice improved two-generation policy or services based on the data collected from consumers and staff.

Based on the assessment process and consumer feedback, United Way of Greater New Haven will coordinate training and coaching to help the partners advance or establish new two-generational practices into their family-centered work.

New Haven’s project management structure includes a parent advisory group, an advisory committee that includes parents, and a project manager. CT Parent Power is partnering to engage parents to design and deliver the parent leadership component.
Hartford Region

The Hartford Region’s two-generational project includes programmatic, systemic, and infrastructure elements to address the barriers that prevent families from reaching economic self-sufficiency. Using a two-generational approach, project staff and parent leaders work alongside families to help parents find pathways to education, training, and sustainable employment, while helping their children find the supports they need to be ready for school success, and creating a family learning community among the whole family.

By establishing three “2Gen Hubs” in each of the designated municipalities in the region (Hartford, East Hartford, and West Hartford) that are closely connected under the auspices of a backbone organization and linked together by key foundational elements of a regional two-generational system, families benefit from both the familiarity of a local center, and the connection with the 2Gen Hubs in the neighboring two towns.

A strong infrastructure that supports the programmatic work and links the 2Gen Hubs together across municipalities is a critical element of the Hartford Region’s initiative. All partners in the project have agreed upon a set of core principles that puts families first and values parent leadership, and the three 2Gen Hubs will be linked together by a formal governance structure with shared accountability, a regional learning community, common supervision of the three navigators, use of a common enrollment/assessment process at all sites, development of a two-generational resource directory, access for families to project activities across municipalities, and the collection of common data/outcomes. By leveraging existing resources, the Hartford Region project maximizes the use of available services and uses the funding provided to fill gaps and break down barriers to participation.

The overarching goal of the project is to engage and enroll 75 families (25 at each hub), with at least one child ages 0-8, and at least one under-educated, unemployed, or under employed parent, in the cities of East Hartford, Hartford, and West Hartford. The Hartford Region set goals in the areas of systems, program and infrastructure development. There are three systems goals: (a) to develop common operating procedures among the 2Gen Hubs that include a holistic family enrollment & assessment process and the development of a family success plan, (b) to collect, track, and analyze common data and outcomes, and (c) to establish a community of practice.

At the program level, the primary goals for participants are (a) educational attainment (including diploma, industry recognized credentials and completion of job training program), (b) job placement, and (c) child development milestones.

Infrastructure goals include (a) establishing a governance structure for the project that has parent and cross-sector leadership, (b) developing the technology necessary to support systemic and programmatic goals.

Data and communications management are critical issues to the project’s long-term sustainability and success. To address the complex issue of multiple providers tracking and collecting data, the project is working collaboratively with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) to develop implement web-based technology, or “middleware,” that can facilitate data collection from all project partners.

Based on information collected in the common enrollment process and the outcomes established by the project, the system could be adapted and connected to any partner program that has the ability integrate the technology and the capacity, including training, to use it. The middleware would be able to upload indicated fields from any database that a partner program currently uses, and aggregate that data on an assigned or regular basis. Once the system is in place, the aggregate data for the project will be uploaded to an online dashboard so that all stakeholders can monitor progress and have access to current data that can potentially inform future program design, public policy, and funding decisions.

* It should be noted that due to funding rescissions, the Hartford Region was forced to scale back their project by serving slightly less families, over less time, while continuing to provide all of the critical program activities. The Hartford Hub began working with families in September, and the East Hartford Hub will begin serving families this month, January 2017. The West Hartford hub continues to be part of the technology and data planning, but is not able to work with families until additional funding becomes available.
Norwalk

Norwalk’s two-generational project serves households within Colonial Village, a public housing development in Norwalk, Connecticut. The model is the product of a diverse cross-sector team of approximately fifteen partner organizations and parents in Colonial Village. In addition to providing workforce development services for parents, leading to employment and financial stability, the project ensures that children have access to high-quality early childhood development opportunities for kindergarten through grade three. The fifteen families served are connected with services such as Adult Education/GED classes, ESL, transportation, financial literacy, mentoring for children, emergency food, healthcare providers and counseling for children with issues such as ADHD and autism spectrum disorders.

In addition, they work with parents to help them identify and access services that remove barriers to achieving financial stability and to helping their young children thrive. Monthly informal parent meetings with staff from key participating organizations ensure that we get regular parent feedback and adjust services accordingly so that the project remains parent-driven. Furthermore, all cross-sector organizations will come together to create and test a family self-sufficiency model with the benefit of parent input into program design.

The goal of Norwalk’s two-generational approach is to 1) create a flexible, results-driven project with continuous parent feedback and resulting sustainable adjustments in services so to deliver workforce preparation services, leading to employment and financial stability, and 2) to ensure that their children access high-quality early childhood development opportunities from kindergarten through grade three.

Norwalk has met with parents to identify how to remove barriers to achieving financial stability and helping their young children thrive. They are currently helping families access them, and ensure the burden of coordination is lifted from the parents by coordinating flexible services among service providers, onsite whenever possible. Dialogue at monthly informal parent-staff gatherings and periodic anonymous surveys give the project ongoing parent feedback. This feedback allows services to be adjusted accordingly, so the project remains parent-driven.

Colchester

Colchester’s initial plan for their two-generational project was to work with and empower families with young children, who do not yet earn a living wage, to move toward self-sufficiency. The goals of their project included strengthening partnerships between agencies serving families with low incomes as well as those serving children ages 8 and under; changing the focus in the system from segregated service provision to developing a coordinated service model; understanding the system and policy barriers faced by families with young children in Colchester; and determining how to best meet the workforce development needs of individual families while providing access to quality childcare and early learning opportunities.

In order to achieve these goals, Colchester planned to work with families and give them a voice in the process; measure and account for outcomes for children and their families; build a pipeline of services that meet unique, rural needs; align and link systems currently available at state, regional and local levels; create recommendations for local, regional, state, and federal systems change; ensure intentional planning and service delivery; and meet the needs of individual families on the best approach to break down barriers and provide services.

Due to funding rescissions and unique rural challenges, including lack of transportation and quality early care, Colchester did not continue systems planning and services for the community in fiscal year 2017. However, Colchester remains committed to giving their perspective on rural two-generational opportunities and challenges and is working with the Interagency Working Group on documenting their learnings.
The Two-Generational Parent Academy

The Two-Generational Parent Academy, planned for February 4, 2017, is a full day pilot briefing at the Legislative Office Building for parents in the Hartford region on two-generational as a strategy and way of doing business. Between 50-100 parents are expected to attend with the goal of both child and parent excelling as learners and contributors to the current and future workforce.

Envisioned and designed by Hartford parents who were inspired by the two-generational framework, a planning team of 15 parents have created a day of classes, an inspirational over view and policy panels for the day. Low-income parents will convene from Hartford, West Hartford and East Hartford to share their needs, learn about two-generational, access resources and share their stories regarding opportunities and obstacles to family economic success.

Parents are leading on outreach, content, guest speakers and goal planning for the event. The primary goals are to a) assure that parents know what two-generational is and the opportunity it affords and to b) help parents become messengers in tow-generational. A summary of parent stories will be made through film, with a focus on two-generational need, hopes and obstacles.

Inevitably, parents, policymakers and agencies will need to align in program, policy and attitude as two-generational is a major culture shift – placing the family in the center. In looking at both the needs of the child and the parent, it is believed that more efficacy and greater outcomes will be derived by working with both generations concurrently, intentionally and in a coordinated fashion. With parents helping to define what is needed, the customer is at the helm in a partnership with non-profits and government agencies.
What have we learned?

This is a partial list of the learnings by the Interagency Working Group, together with local participating sites, over the first year of the two-generational initiative.

1. The family has been cut up and served by funding stream and topic, rather than by need. This has ill served the family and has impeded outcomes of service programs.

2. Many providers and administrators have become accustomed to a siloed system where parents are served in one place and children in another.

3. Parents need to be the key informants in two-generational practice. If they are not, the community or government agency will not adequately partner with the customer, who is the only participant who has the will to ensure sustainability of poverty-reduction changes.

4. Low-income adults often cannot access state and local services with sufficient consistency to experience the intended benefit.

5. Accountability and indicators are based on funding requirements and not on systems or coordinated outcomes. These need to be incentivized.

6. The two-generational model does not seek to create something new and costly. In truth, if the model works, it prunes unnecessary practices and braids together resources with intentional impact.

7. Two-generational is truly a restorative justice practice, bringing the family back to the center and making up for an in inappropriate fragmenting of the family, with class and race bias underpinnings.

8. Two-generational work is driven by the three vehicles of policy, program and systems. All three are critical and must be clarified, or those implementing a two-gen strategy might miss both inputs and effects by talking past a particular vehicle.

9. Many community and government agencies say they are already doing two-generational programming. In many cases, this is partially true—but not to full form. Two-generational means working with both the parent and the child and looking at the impact on the family as a whole—not only the child or the adult. There is a risk, without clarifying the scope of two-generational work in a program, policy or systems effort, that the work will not be robust, and will show meager gains.

10. Two-generational work can be done on a cultural level in a simple way. Those that work with low-income children should be asking about the parents. Those that work with low-income parents should be asking about the children. Making sure there is an intentional and reliable link for both generations is a step that all agencies can perform, without undue additional work functions.

11. There are biases within the two-generational field itself towards target populations. The early care and K-3 professionals sometimes share bias and presumptions regarding parents in poverty due to their modest participation, perceived parenting skills and/or communications styles. The employment and training field often views parents who bring their children to appointments as raising an obstacle and impediment, and not being prepared to fully engage in the workforce. These professionals do not work from a family lens.

12. Make sure we educate and get “buy-in” from town leaders and state stakeholders before launching a two-generational program in that town.
Evaluation

The evaluation team for the two-generational initiative includes: University of Connecticut Department of Social Work staff with Dr. Kathryn Parr, PhD, economist and lead evaluator; University of Texas, Ray Marshall Center, Dr. Christopher King, PhD, economist, two-generational workforce analyst and consultant; and the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS), Sheryl Horowitz, PhD, anthropologist and evaluator.

The statutory evaluation and reporting requirements for the two-generational initiative as outlined in legislation are:

- The parent-informed strategies selected for success;
- The challenges and opportunities in working with a parent and child concurrently to promote school and workforce success;
- The changes in policy, program, budget or communications on the local and state levels to achieve the goals of the program;
- The cost of the program in both state and private dollars;
- Recommendations for statewide expansion;
- Child, parent and family outcomes in the areas of school readiness and school success; and
- Workforce readiness, work success and family support outcomes.

The evaluation for the two-generational initiative was developed as a participatory approach through meetings and discussion with Interagency Working Group members, Commission on Women, Children and Senior’s staff, the Connecticut Association of Human Services’ staff, parent focus groups, site visits with the six designated communities and interviews with key stakeholders.

The stakeholders, especially parents and local agencies, helped to develop the evaluation plan by identifying objectives, indicators, and standards for their programs. The stakeholders engaged in discussion and were directly observed to provide insight on their perceptions of progress in the program or operations. Feedback from focus groups, meetings, and surveys from these stakeholders helped to inform the evaluation and the analysis of results.

From these discussions, tools were developed to assist in coordinated evaluation methods for the initiative. These tools included:

1) family information form,
2) parent/child participant characteristics,
3) family need assessment – used to assess a multitude of domains including, but not limited to, income, employment, child care, school success, job training, family literacy, physical/mental/behavioral health, transportation, and housing.
4) readiness to change,
5) protective factors survey – which is a parent self-report of parent stress, social capital and family communication styles;
6) services form – which includes parent/caregiver outcomes such as educational attainment, job training/employment, and meaningful progress, as well as, child outcomes including developmental milestones and educational progress from kindergarten through eighth grade.
7) agency progress.

From a systems change perspective, the evaluation will track contextual, policy, and local systems change. Import-
ant questions relate to which policies support or hinder a two-generation approach and how policies are changed. From a program perspective, a formative or process evaluation will look at program development. For instance, site visits, interviews, staff surveys, meeting and program observation, and parent focus groups will assess how partnerships are formed, how services are delivered, and the experiences of families in the programs. As programs mature, communities will engage in developing ongoing indicators and results-based accountability standards to inform a continuous quality improvement process. Through the developmental and participatory approach, programs will learn to use their own data to modify and adjust their approach.

Interim findings will include qualitative assessment, as well as proximal quantitative outcomes. Qualitative findings will inform questions related to systems change, program formation, and parent experience. Also, qualitative findings will explore how equity and culturally competent practices impact client success. Proximal quantitative outcomes will involve collection of demographic data of program participation and program outputs such as attendance, continuity, progress toward individual goals, and child social-emotional and academic development.

As the programs become more established, it will be possible to conduct a more traditional summative evaluation, but always including participatory elements. Summative outcomes will be established through legislative intent and goals developed through the participatory approach. These may include family stability, adult education and workforce outcomes, child development, and parent-child connections. Outcomes will be compared across sites, adjusting for fidelity to the two-generational model and site-specific enhancements or characteristics, such as rural vs. urban, etc.

Careful examination and documentation of the implementation process is expected to yield important findings on best practices for transforming existing single-focus programs to the two-generational framework. These changes are multilevel, and include experiences of participants, program staff, program management, broader community and policy. The evaluation will be informed by continuous assessment of programs’ level of maturation or stage of program implementation.

Evaluation results will be shared and used at four levels: within the six communities, the family participants, the Interagency Working Group, and the legislature. At each of these levels, the evaluation updates will be integral to the project implementation and development. Results will be shared with all stakeholders at community meetings, through written documents, and presentations. Feedback will be solicited and revisions made when appropriate. All suggestions will be appended to the reports.

Locally, evaluation outcomes and findings will provide a basis for a continuous quality improvement feedback loop. Parents and community partners will have the opportunity to adjust their strategies and areas of focus. Based on local need, projects can request specific coaching or learning opportunities. The results of the local evaluation process, including accompanying technical assistance and potential program adjustments, will serve to achieve stronger outcomes and potentially inform local and state policy development.

By the end of fiscal year 2017, at least one final written report will be presented to the legislature with results of the analysis, recommendations for services, suggestions for sustainability, and possible expansions.
Conclusion: Policy issues and recommendations

• Issue #1:
There is a need for policies that support fathers as well as mothers, loosening restrictions on the cash assistance/subsidies that prevent participation, structuring TANF and other public benefits in a way that enables families to retain subsidies as they participate in adult education or training, or reenter the workforce, and eliminates geographic restrictions.

Recommendation:
Public policies and legislative changes that will enable families to fully participate not only in job training and education programs, but in the lives of their children.

• Issue #2:
Data collection remains a problem as, for example, many public schools in municipalities with high poverty rates offer free lunch to all students; however, we lose a key data element that helps us better-understand the intersection of poverty and school success.

Recommendation:
Integrated statewide system for data collection and data sharing is needed to truly integrate cross-sector system of services that support adults who need education, training and jobs. The State must take additional leadership in streamlining their data collection requirements and efforts to use common technology and methods across all state agencies. We encourage leaders at the State level to support this development of technology that will enable the collection, analysis, and reporting of data that can measure the collective impact on families.

• Issue #3:
Working with the six designated sites has shown us that the same challenges facing their communities are also facing similar communities across the state.

Recommendation:
Continued funding through TANF, for the current designated sites, as well as expansion of the initiative statewide. Ensure to also educate and get buy-in from local, state and community stakeholders before launching.

• Issue #4:
Although the State of Connecticut did not receive funding from the NGA grant due to its advanced two-generational efforts already in place, the need for leadership to link services through a community and statewide effort remains.

Recommendation:
Make state-level delivery of services more efficient through the two-generational lens which helps family as a whole and at the same time as saving the state money.
Two-Generational Interagency Working Group

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Representative Jeff Currey, Representative and Co-Chair, Connecticut General Assembly

Senator Toni Boucher, Senator, Connecticut General Assembly
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* The Two-Generational Interagency Working Group is staffed by the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors
A Two-Generational Approach
Reaching Workforce Success and School Readiness

2016 Report of the Interagency Working Group,
submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly
as required by Sec. 198 of Public Act 14-297

Submitted January, 2017
TO: State, Territory, and Tribal agencies administering the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

SUBJECT: Strengthening TANF Outcomes By Developing Two-Generation Approaches To Build Economic Security

REFERENCES: Title IV-A, section 404(a)(1) of the Social Security Act

PURPOSE: This Information Memorandum discusses opportunities for TANF agencies to strengthen program outcomes by developing two-generation approaches, which meet the needs of children and parents together.

BACKGROUND:

In 2014, approximately seven million families with children under age 18 had incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL) and an additional eight million had incomes between 100 and 200 percent of FPL. The lack of adequate income presents challenges for the child, the parent, and the child-parent interaction. Poverty can be a developmental risk for young children that affects their school readiness and development in multiple domains, including physical, emotional, mental, cognitive, and linguistic. Poverty can also present challenges to child development due to its potential negative effects on parental well-being. As the primary source of safety, security, and nurturance for young children, parents play a critical role in creating environments that promote healthy developmental outcomes and school readiness. However, poverty may be accompanied by limited education, unemployment, food and housing insecurity, poor health, mental health difficulties such as maternal depression, teen parenthood, and community violence. While many families provide strong and nurturing parenting to their children amidst these adversities, these stressors (especially when families are experiencing many at once) can compromise family well-being and affect parents’ overall ability to provide the necessary supports that help children thrive.

Low-income parents often have limited access to resources such as education and training opportunities linked to economic security; and reliable housing, transportation, and quality full-day child care that will allow parents to pursue job opportunities. Further, the stress of living in poverty without access to adequate mental and physical health services, and social and peer supports, can lessen parental sensitivity and emotional support for children. And, in turn, when child development is not fully supported, children may be less well prepared for school, more likely to drop out, and bound for their own adult life in poverty.
These low-income parents and children are precisely the families that the TANF program was intended to serve. The core benefits and services of TANF – basic assistance, work-related activities, and child care – are key services that support unemployed or underemployed parents with insufficient income and jobs skills and other barriers to employment. However, as a whole, states spent less than half of their TANF and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds on these activities in FY 2014, with less than seven percent going to work-related activities and just over 16 percent going to child care. Additionally, less than one-third of eligible families are currently receiving TANF cash assistance. There is an opportunity for states to focus a larger proportion of TANF funding to promote the well-being of the whole family, specifically job preparation and skills training for parents and high quality early childhood services for children.

Two-Generation Approaches and the Administration for Children and Families

Two-generation, or whole family, approaches meet the needs of children and their parents together. Serving the whole family is important because the income, educational attainment, and well-being of parents play a crucial role in children’s outcomes. Moreover, services for children such as high-quality child care also help parents balance the demands of work and parenting by lessening their stress and supporting child and family wellbeing. Acknowledging the importance of the two-generation dynamic, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) included in its strategic plan a goal to “promote collaboration on two-generation approaches among state and tribal human services agencies, workforce agencies, educational institutions, and local organizations that achieve positive outcomes for both parents and their children.” The Office of Family Assistance (OFA), which administers the TANF program within ACF, is strongly committed to this goal and believes that adoption of two-generation approaches within TANF programs could foster more strategic use of TANF funds and improve family economic security and well-being.

ACF brings a two-generation philosophy to its efforts, and works to support and advance two-generation approaches through its research, technical assistance, and program and policy guidance. ACF encourages grantees, including TANF agencies, to promote and support:

- linkages between high quality educational services for children and workforce development services for their parents;
- programmatic efforts to help parents gain the skills, knowledge, and resources to support their child’s development;
- ensuring that families have access to the economic and social supports needed for stability and resilience and healthy child development; and,
- helping families build social capital that can support both resilience and upward mobility.

ACF is committed to:

- identifying ways in which the above principles can apply in programs it administers;
- identifying ways in which it can better support the adoption of these principles in state and local efforts; and,
- advancing a research agenda that will enhance its understanding of effective two-generation approaches and their impacts for children, parents, and families.
As a program intended to help low-income families achieve economic security, TANF is well positioned to support two-generation approaches. Its flexibility allows states, territories, and tribes the ability to develop whole family approaches that address the needs of parents and children simultaneously. The use of TANF dollars to support two-generation approaches does not need to be limited to serving families receiving cash assistance; a broader group of low-income families can be served by TANF-funded two-generation approaches.

Research and Evaluation

The logic of two-generation approaches posits that linking and aligning services for children and parents will bring greater and more sustainable outcomes for children, parents, and families than either approach would on its own. There is growing interest among government entities, foundations, researchers, and service providers to develop, implement, fund, and evaluate these approaches.

There are several research and evaluation efforts within and beyond ACF that seek to build the evidence base, focusing on how these approaches achieve their goals and whether they can be implemented at scale. In 2011, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) within ACF created the Buffering Toxic Stress Consortium, a set of six grants evaluating promising parenting interventions in Early Head Start settings and focused on the question of whether parenting interventions can buffer children from toxic stress. In 2013, OPRE awarded four grants to support projects that are rigorously testing two-generation approaches to promoting family well-being and children’s school readiness within the context of Head Start. In 2014, OPRE launched the Goal-Oriented Adult Learning in Self-Sufficiency (GOALS) project, which is exploring how emerging insights from psychology can strengthen programs aimed at helping families build economic security and enhance family well-being. The Goals project is identifying promising strategies for strengthening skills and enhancing measurement of changes and developments in skill acquisition. In 2015 OPRE, through a contract to Mathematica Policy Research, launched the “Two-Generation Approaches to Improving Family Self-Sufficiency” project. The project is focused on examining evidence and providing options for how two-generation models might be evaluated. More information about each of these projects is available via the OPRE website.

POLICY:

The Office of Family Assistance recognizes the importance of working to achieve positive outcomes for whole families and encourages TANF agencies to consider the implementation of two-generation approaches that serve children and parents together.

Allowable Uses of TANF

As a general rule, federal TANF funds and MOE funds can be used to provide a range of benefits and services such as cash assistance, job training, job placement, education, subsidized employment, and supportive services including child care. Such expenditures must satisfy one or more of the four statutory purposes of the TANF program. A range of two-generation approaches focused on low-income families may be reasonably calculated to accomplish TANF Purposes 1 and 2:

- Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes; and,
- Reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
Coordination and Partnerships

A critical feature of two-generation approaches is the coordination that occurs across programs for parents and programs for children. TANF agencies can both coordinate and serve as active partners in statewide, tribal, regional, and local two-generation efforts. The expertise of TANF agency leaders can be helpful in ensuring that two-generation efforts are deploying the full array of available services to promote family economic security.

One way to coordinate services is through a co-design process, where the child-centered service provider and the parent-centered service provider work as a team to develop seamless services centered on the family. An example would be a TANF-funded occupational training at a community college and a Head Start program working together to create a Certified Nursing Assistant course schedule that coincides with the Head Start schedule. In this situation, parents could drop off their children, get to class, and be ready to pick up the child at the end of the day without missing class or having to pick up the child early. TANF could also support the co-location of parent and child services; for example, by providing a job skills class in a child care center, making it easier for families to secure both services.

What is different about the two-generation approach is that coordination is more than a referral; it is not left to the parent to knit together the various services he or she needs. TANF agencies, or community-based organizations they contract with, can play this coordinating role to offer comprehensive approaches that include multiple programs and supports.

High Quality Workforce Development

TANF can play a significant role in supporting employment. A two-generation employment program for TANF recipients and other low-income parents would be designed from the starting point of “how can we most successfully build the employment prospects of parents, who worry about the safety and development of their children?” Such a program might work around the child’s school day, or include discussions on how to handle the stresses of being a working parent, or intentionally promote social connections among parent-participants so they find ways to support each other’s success in the program.

Effective employment strategies would focus on job-driven training, which entails:

- Working up-front with employers to determine local or regional hiring needs and designing training programs that are responsive to those needs;
- Offering work-based learning opportunities with employers—including on-the-job training, internships, and pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeship as training paths to employment;
- Making better use of data to drive accountability, inform what programs are offered and what is taught, and offer user-friendly information for job seekers to choose what programs and pathways work for them and are likely to result in a job;
- Measuring and evaluating employment and earnings outcomes;
- Promoting a seamless progression from one educational stepping stone to another, and across work-based training and education, so individuals’ efforts result in progress;
- Breaking down barriers to accessing job-driven training, including access to supportive services and relevant guidance; and
• Creating regional collaborations among Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) one-stop centers, education institutions, labor, and nonprofits.\textsuperscript{13}

To support TANF agencies interested in designing high quality workforce development efforts, OPRE has released a series of publications:

- \textit{Promising Occupations Achievable Through Short-term Education or Training for Low-Income Families}
- \textit{Resources for Connecting TANF Recipients and Other Low-Income Families to Good Jobs}
- \textit{Using Data to Connect TANF Clients to Good Jobs: An Opportunity to Foster WIOA Partnerships.}

An intentionally designed TANF two-generation effort would ensure that participants have access to child care and transportation, without which parents may struggle to find and keep a job. Effective strategies might also emphasize connecting parents to jobs with more regular schedules; or alternatively, helping to arrange for flexible child care that can accommodate irregular or nontraditional work hours. All of the services described above can be supported with TANF funds, and through partnerships with programs funded under WIOA.

**High Quality Early Childhood Development**

Low-income parents need access to child care in order to work and to participate in job-driven training, both of which contribute to their economic stability. When low-income parents receive help paying for child care, they are more likely to be employed, have more stable employment, and have higher earnings\textsuperscript{14} —thereby, improving the well-being of parents and children. This child care support can assist TANF agencies in meeting required work participation rates and desired employment outcomes. However, the quality of children’s child care arrangements is equally important. Affordable, high-quality child care is an essential component to support families in their progress towards economic stability. High-quality child care helps children develop foundational skills that prepare them for success in school and improved adult outcomes. As noted previously, high quality child care also helps parents balance the demands of work and parenting by lessening their stress and supporting child and family well-being. TANF families with children in stable, high-quality child care can focus on their own goals for employment success and economic mobility, with less chance of loss in productivity due to worries about their children’s well-being. TANF funds can be used to provide high quality child care, and the Child Care and Development Fund\textsuperscript{15} and Head Start are also important partners and sources of support for high quality early childhood services.

**Social Capital Development**

Social capital is defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as “networks together with shared norms, values, and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups.”\textsuperscript{16} Within the context of families served by TANF programs, social capital can be thought of as the network of people and institutions upon which a family can rely for support and assistance. Research shows that when mothers have emotional support, their children have been found to have better outcomes.\textsuperscript{17} Social capital also appears to be a key success factor in producing positive outcomes for programs that serve low-income families, particularly with regard to mental health.\textsuperscript{18}
Components of program design that can help families develop social capital include peer support and cohort models, career coaches, connections with potential employers and industry contacts, and networking with school and workplace contacts. TANF agencies can provide opportunities for families to build social capital by promoting the development of both bonding and bridging ties.  

Bonding ties are formed among like individuals. For example, a TANF employment and training program could utilize a cohort model, where participants share common characteristics such as being parents with young children, or parents of young children enrolled in Head Start. Sharing such a characteristic brings individuals together such that they begin to encourage each other and help each other out in times of need. More than just enrolling similar people in a particular program, a cohort model provides a structure in which the participants engage with each other, sharing their successes and challenges, consistently and frequently. It can facilitate the development of long-lasting, supportive relationships.

Bridging ties connect individuals to others who have access to different resources. For example, a job search program may use TANF funds to hire job developers to build relationships with employers. The job developers would then help bridge connections between TANF recipients seeking employment and employers with available jobs for whom the recipients’ skills are a match.

**TANF AND TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES IN PRACTICE:**

TANF agencies have in recent years begun exploring and testing two-generation approaches. The following examples illustrate a few of the ways in which TANF can play a role in supporting two-generation approaches.

**Connecticut**

In 2015 Connecticut passed legislation and a provision in the state budget to establish a two-generation initiative using TANF and state funds. In April 2016, six pilot communities will begin to intentionally coordinate children’s school readiness and school success services with parents’ workforce readiness and support services. At the systems level, state and local governments along with community service provider agencies and parents will work to align funding, programming, and other systems so programs can more easily provide two-generation services. The overall purpose of the legislation is to “foster family economic self-sufficiency in low-income families.”

The six pilots will focus on families with household earnings at or below 75 percent of the state median income and at least one child from birth to age eight. Each community will be expected to include early learning, adult education, child care, housing, job training, transportation, financial literacy, and other related support services. Projects must engage parents in the design and development of the program.

Through its participation in the Office of Family Assistance’s Systems to Family Stability National Policy Academy, Connecticut plans to add a seventh pilot site to focus on serving non-custodial fathers and their families.

To oversee the program, the legislation established an interagency workgroup that is co-chaired by two legislative leaders representing the appropriations and human services committees and is managed by the staff of the legislative Commission on Children office. The interagency workgroup is also comprised of
the Commissioners of Social Services, Early Childhood, Education, Housing, Transportation, Public Health, Labor, and Correction; Chief Court Administrator; two-generation experts from non-profit and philanthropic organizations; and, other business and academic professionals as needed for planning and evaluation.

Washington

The state of Washington has developed a private-public partnership called Thrive Washington to expand the capacity for home visiting programs to serve TANF families. Federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), state TANF, and private funds are being used to provide slots in evidence-based home visiting programs to TANF families, focusing on pregnant moms and families with infants. The home visiting programs bring a whole-family lens to serving TANF clients, which encourages TANF staff to think about the parent-child relationship and the role of the parent as a caregiver. The intended outcomes include increased child and family well-being and improved parental employability.

Utah

Utah launched an innovative demonstration project called Next Generation Kids (NGK) to test family-based strategies to improve child, parent, and family outcomes. NGK enrolls TANF families headed by parents who received cash assistance as a child and also receive it as an adult head of household. The program brings together education, employment training, and other supports for parents with services to support the child’s educational and healthy development. “Work Success Coaches,” who are TANF staff trained in motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and other coaching strategies, work closely with the participating families. On-staff clinicians provide additional support. The program embraces a sector-based strategy, offering training in occupations where there is employer demand for workers. Currently operating in three communities, the program has already transitioned a number of families from assistance.

TANF dollars support the NGK infrastructure and many of the services provided. The program also relies on partners; for example, in Ogden, the school district provides NGK with office space at a local elementary school. NGK staff can visit with families at this school or other schools where children are enrolled. Community partners such as the United Way, the Community Action Program, Weber State University, other community-based organizations, and the school district itself work together to promote the success of NGK families. The state shifted resources for its NGK effort but did not hire new staff. The leadership has promoted a change in thinking about how TANF does business, moving from a compliance-centric view to a family outcome-centric view while meeting TANF requirements. Thus far, focusing on the family has had the positive effect of enrolling and keeping participating families working.

In addition to NGK, as part of the state’s Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Act passed in 2012, Utah’s TANF program launched an effort to bring “family-focused” training to all TANF staff working with cash assistance beneficiaries. With assistance from partners at the University of Utah and using TANF dollars, the agency is pursuing a gradual culture shift in which front-line staff come to see their clients as families rather than adults, and are able to tap the mutual motivation of parents and children improving together in a two-generation perspective.
**Tulsa, Oklahoma**

At the community level, CAP Tulsa, a community action agency, built a healthcare training program called CareerAdvance® for parents with children enrolled in its Head Start and early childhood education programs. CAP Tulsa uses Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG, a competitive grant program administered by the Office of Family Assistance) funding to operate CareerAdvance®. HPOG provides TANF recipients and other low-income populations with job-driven career pathways training, and CAP Tulsa has worked with the county TANF office to recruit TANF parents with young children into the program. The parents receive education, training, career coaching, and other supports, while the children begin their educational journey in Head Start. Because CAP Tulsa has HPOG funds, TANF dollars are not expended. However, a community without HPOG funds could build a similar program using TANF dollars to pay for education and training. Likewise, other HPOG grantees could focus efforts on ensuring the children of their TANF participants are enrolled in a high quality early childhood program such as Head Start.

**North Carolina**

In North Carolina, the state TANF Program (Work First), within the Division of Social Services, Economic and Family Services, partnered with the North Carolina Head Start State Collaboration Office to strengthen the coordination between Head Start /Early Head Start and TANF. Using Head Start State Collaboration funds, the two offices jointly administered a competitive grant process to stimulate partnerships between local Head Start/Early Head Start programs and county Departments of Social Services leading to: 1) significant increases in the number of cross-agency referrals; 2) the convening of cross-agency joint staff trainings for staff with similar job functions; and, 3) the development of an aligned family goal-setting plan for families being served by both programs. North Carolina’s effort highlights that the state can promote and incentivize local organizations to engage in two-generation planning.

Two counties were awarded grants, and both used the opportunity to open or deepen conversations about plans for collaboration. In one of the counties, Head Start/Early Head Start adopted the Work First goal-setting tool as its Family Partnership Agreement requirement. Staff from both programs met together with families, who led the development of their own goals and timeline. For example, it was common for families to prioritize “accessing viable employment” and “accessing high quality child care” (to support the parents’ efforts to work) simultaneously for goals. Both programs were able to bring their resources to the family, making for a more focused effort. Work First staff became more attentive to children’s needs and provided child-centered wrap-around services, while Head Start staff saw additional opportunities to support parents in becoming job-ready. As a result of the collaboration and streamlining efforts, more children of TANF participants accessed Head Start or Early Head Start slots through referrals from NC Work First. The programs were also able to expand services to children, as well as enhance and strengthen more family-centered services.

**RESOURCES:**

TANF agencies can refer to the following resources for more information about strengthening parental employment and child and family well-being outcomes through development of two-generation approaches.


For additional resources from the Office of Family Assistance Peer TA Resource Library, visit https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/resource_library?search_api_views_fulltext=two+generation&=Search

INQUIRIES: Please direct inquiries to the OFA TANF Program Manager in your region.

/s/

Nisha Patel
Director
Office of Family Assistance

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6 Yoshikawa, Aber, & Beardslee (2012).
11 Council of Economic Advisors (2014), Executive Office of the President of the United States, *The Economics of Early Childhood Investments*.
CREATING OPPORTUNITY
FOR FAMILIES
a two-generation approach
The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private philanthropy that creates a brighter future for the nation’s children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow.

KIDS COUNT®, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children.

At the national level, the initiative develops and distributes reports on key areas of well-being, including the annual KIDS COUNT Data Book. The initiative also maintains the KIDS COUNT Data Center (datacenter.kidscount.org), which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic and physical well-being of children. Additionally, the Foundation funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed, community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

Additional data and information on ordering this report can be found at www.kidscount.org.
For many American families, every day is a juggling act involving work, child care, school and conflicting schedules. But for low-income families, the balls are more likely to fall, and the consequences can be dire when they do. A lack of reliable child care can mean fewer work hours or even a lost job. Weekly or daily shift changes require repeatedly stitching together a patchwork of care. Just getting to work is tough without dependable transportation. And for children in these families, early educational opportunities and extracurricular activities tend to be unaffordable luxuries as parents stretch pennies to keep the lights on.
In short, the 10 million low-income U.S. families with young children face considerable daily obstacles that can threaten the entire family’s stability and lead to lifelong difficulties for their kids.

For 25 years, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has documented how America’s children are faring to spur action that lifts more kids out of poverty and opens doors to greater opportunities. Despite the efforts of many, however, the cycle of poverty persists. More kids grow up poor today than a quarter century ago — a fact that we cannot solely attribute to the lingering aftereffects of the recession. Yet we cannot give up: The future prospects of our children, our economy and our nation are at stake.

While the Casey Foundation continually seeks to improve child well-being through investments and reliable research to inform good policies for kids, we also have spent the past two decades promoting strategies to increase the financial stability of low-income families. A family-supporting job that provides a steady source of parental income and opportunities for advancement is critical to moving children out of poverty.

Furthermore, a child’s success is strongly tied to his or her family’s stability and well-being. An asthmatic child living in unsafe housing can become chronically absent from school, unable to focus on learning and, perhaps ultimately, unable to succeed academically. At the same time, poverty can undermine family stability.

**FIGURE 1**

**Low-Income Families Face Greater Barriers for Children in the Early Years**

Low-income families with children age 8 and under face extra barriers that can affect the early years of a child’s development. Parents in these families are more likely than their higher-income peers to lack higher education and employment, to have difficulty speaking English and to be younger than 25.

**PERCENTAGE HEADED BY A SINGLE PARENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Middle/Upper Income</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>45%</strong></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PERCENTAGE WITH PARENTS WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY SPEAKING ENGLISH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Middle/Upper Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>18%</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PERCENTAGE IN WHICH NO PARENT HAS AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR HIGHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Middle/Upper Income</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>79%</strong></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PERCENTAGE IN WHICH NO PARENT HAS FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Middle/Upper Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**PERCENTAGE WITH PARENTS UNDER AGE 25**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Middle/Upper Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>14%</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau’s analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012 American Community Survey.

NOTES: “Low income” refers to families with incomes less than 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. In 2012, this figure was about $47,000 for a family of four (two adults and two children). “Middle/upper income” refers to families with incomes greater than or equal to 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold. Unless otherwise noted, “young children” refers to children from birth to age 8.
A parent working multiple jobs to make ends meet without paid time off struggles to foster his or her child’s healthy growth on meager resources and bandwidth. A child raised in poverty is more likely to become an adult living in poverty — less likely to graduate from high school or remain consistently employed.\(^3\) Forty-two percent of children born to parents at the bottom of the income ladder stay there.\(^4\)

Recognizing this connection between child and family well-being and future success, we and others in the public, non-profit and private sectors are exploring ways to address the needs of families as a whole.\(^5\) This two-generation approach aims to create opportunities for families by simultaneously equipping parents and kids with the tools they need to thrive while removing the obstacles in their way.

**CHALLENGES FACING AMERICA’S LOW-INCOME FAMILIES**

Today’s low-income parents contend with a complex web of challenges — at work, in their child’s care and education and at home — that exacerbate the inherent difficulties of raising a family.

Inflexible, unpredictable jobs that do not pay enough to support a family. The changes in our economy during the past few decades have compounded the strain of supporting a family. Gone are the manufacturing jobs that offered a reliable, decent income, plus benefits and a path to a career. The

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**FIGURE 2**

What It Takes to Raise a Family

Many low-income families are headed by a single parent with no more than a high school diploma whose median monthly earnings cover just over half the basic costs of raising children.

![Costs and Earnings](chart.png)

- **MONTHLY COSTS FOR SINGLE PARENT WITH TWO CHILDREN**
  - Housing: $692
  - Food: $546
  - Transportation: $459
  - Child Care: $1,181
  - Health Care: $1,279
  - Taxes and Other Necessities: $732

- **MEDIAN MONTHLY EARNINGS OF WORKER WITH HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**
  - $4,889

Key programs for working families — including refundable tax credits, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — can reduce or eliminate the gap between earnings and living costs.

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**SOURCES**

The majority of today’s well-paying jobs call for some level of higher education. Now two incomes are required to maintain the same standard of living one manufacturing worker provided for a family years ago, which also means paying more for child care and transportation.

In nearly 80 percent of low-income families with children age 8 or younger, parents have no postsecondary degree, drastically limiting their job prospects. Their jobs often do not allow for time off to care for a sick child. Their schedules can be so unpredictable — fluctuating weekly, even daily — that they constantly must rework tenuous child care arrangements. Indeed, children age 5 or younger in low-income families are more likely than their peers in higher-income families to have parents who identify child care problems as the impetus for changing, quitting or simply not taking a job. Varying schedules and rising tuition costs also create obstacles to pursuing higher education that could help parents compete for better-paying jobs.

Low-income parents with young children are nearly three times more likely to report having poor or fair mental health than higher-income parents.

Lack of access to high-quality, flexible and reliable early child care and education. Working parents regularly struggle to find the safest, most convenient and enriching child care, preschool or babysitter. Choices for low-income families are automatically limited by cost and erratic job schedules, as few child care centers accommodate last-minute changes or evening and weekend hours. Many parents rely on family, friends or neighbors to watch their kids. Although some do find safe and stable care, the affordable, flexible options in low-income communities often fall below standards of quality, to the detriment of their children’s development. Children age 5 or younger in low-income families are more likely to have parents who report concerns about their child’s learning, development or behavior than their peers in higher-income families.

The ramifications are stark when children start elementary school. Less than half of kids from low-income families are ready for kindergarten, compared with 75 percent of those from moderate- or high-income families. In later years, they continue to lag behind their peers academically and developmentally.

Stress at home, for parents and kids. Parents play a central role in their children’s lives and development, setting an example and providing emotional support, as well as fulfilling their basic needs. This is a tall order for anyone, and low-income parents must do so while constantly trying to make ends meet. If child care arrangements, public transportation, housing or steady income fall through, other elements can easily follow, throwing the family into a tailspin.

The strain is even greater for single parents, who shoulder all of the responsibility alone. Nearly half of low-income families with young children are single-parent households.
Nearly half — 45 percent — of American families with children age 8 and under are low income, and many do not have the essential tools to achieve financial stability. Additionally, in half of these families, no parent has full-time, year-round employment. This lack of parental employment varied among states. Alaska, at 64 percent, had the highest rate, while North Dakota had the lowest, at 30 percent. In nearly 80 percent of these families, parents do not have the higher education required for well-paying jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage in Which No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment</th>
<th>Percentage in Which No Parent Has an Associate Degree or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>172,000</td>
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<td>19,000</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>46</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>588,000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>383,000</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
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<td>Indiana</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
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SOURCE: Population Reference Bureau’s analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012 American Community Survey.
Early Development and Child Care Concerns of Low-Income Families: 2011/2012

Children age 5 and under in low-income families are more likely to have parents who report concerns about their child’s learning, development or behavior. They also are more likely to have parents who say child care problems led to changing, quitting or simply not taking a job.

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**TABLE 2**

**SOURCES:** Child Trends’ analyses of data from the 2011/2012 National Survey of Children’s Health and from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2012 American Community Survey.

**N.A.** Data not available.

**NOTE:** Children were classified as at risk for developmental delays if parents answered that they had concerns regarding any developmental areas that are considered predictive of delay at a given age.
Families of color or those with dual-language learners or children with disabilities also face significant challenges. Furthermore, low-income families tend to live in neighborhoods with high crime, poor-quality housing and low-performing schools, as well as a dearth of child care or enriching after-school activities for kids. These factors make creating a safe, nurturing home environment even more difficult.

In trying to keep all of the pieces together, low-income families experience more daily stress than their higher-income counterparts. That stress inevitably touches their children. Stress resulting from insufficient income and financial uncertainty can cause depression, anxiety and a greater risk of substance abuse or domestic violence — all of which can compromise good parenting. Some parents lack strong support networks of family or friends to help lighten the load. Low-income parents with young children are nearly three times more likely to report having poor or fair mental health than higher-income parents.

ANOTHER HURDLE: PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES WORKING IN ISOLATION

While providing critical help to many, some of the federal and state programs designed to help low-income families overcome their daily challenges operate in isolation from one another. These programs, which include child care assistance and job training, among others, tend to focus on either children or parents — but generally not both.

Moreover, many of these programs were not designed for interagency collaboration. This rigidity filters down to the nonprofit, faith- and community-based organizations working with low-income families. Different funding sources, distinct definitions of success and narrow guidelines impede these organizations’ ability to respond to the needs of children and parents in tandem.

Such limitations impact families in several ways. Many parents have no knowledge of the full range of programs that could benefit them and their kids. Even when they do, applying for and accessing different programs can be a full-time job. The programs themselves put parents’ and children’s needs at odds. Employment and job-training programs are designed for adults and don’t necessarily factor in the child care required so that parents can be at work or in training, or the paid time off needed to care for a sick child or newborn. In addition, colleges often fail to acknowledge the reality of today’s students: Nearly 25 percent of U.S. college students are parents — and almost half of them are single — yet child care options are in short supply.

Similarly, early childhood education programs and elementary schools generally do not address parents’ financial and educational challenges or the broader family dynamics that affect a child’s well-being. A parent who cannot attend a parent-teacher
conference or school events may be dismissed as uninterested, rather than being seen as a parent struggling to work enough hours to make it through the month.

When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability. When families enrolled in some of these programs see a moderate increase in income, they can find themselves in jeopardy of losing the very benefits essential to helping meet their basic needs while they work toward financial stability.

Government programs that provide food and child care assistance, for example, base eligibility on family income. One study found that a mere $0.50 uptick in hourly pay could result in the loss of a valuable child care subsidy — or a 25 percent drop in annual income. That sudden loss could put families back where they started, potentially threatening their children’s health and development.

AN APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING THE WHOLE FAMILY

To give families more opportunities to succeed, we must bring together programs for children and adults and take an intentional, coordinated approach. In this section, we detail the three key components of this two-generation strategy.

1. Provide parents with multiple pathways to get family-supporting jobs and achieve financial stability. Having more family income, especially during a child’s earliest years, can make a lifelong difference. Research suggests that even modest increases in income can result in improved child outcomes, particularly for young kids. One study found that children whose family income was below the federal poverty level — which today is about $24,000 for a family of four — completed fewer years of school, worked and earned less as adults, relied more on food assistance and suffered from poorer health than kids whose family income was at least twice that level. But an extra $3,000 annually for these families during a child’s earliest years could translate into an increase of more than 15 percent in what that same child earns as an adult.

We therefore must create opportunities for parents to develop the skills necessary to increase their income and achieve financial stability by providing access to education and training programs that prepare them for today’s jobs. Financial coaching can help families design strategies to manage income, plan and save for the future and build their assets — habits that create a crucial cushion to fall back on when the unexpected happens. We also must make sure families can access state and federal programs that boost income, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Research shows such income supplements can also improve child achievement.

2. Ensure access to high-quality early childhood education and enriching elementary school experiences. The evidence is clear: A solid
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foundation in children’s early years sets them up for success in school and beyond, paving the way for higher test scores, fewer behavioral problems, better job opportunities and greater income. High-quality child care and early education that intentionally foster healthy growth and development are essential to that foundation. Families need access to schools that provide effective instruction, address absenteeism and develop strong connections with parents. Greater coordination among early learning centers, schools and other programs for kids can further support healthy development from birth through the early elementary years.

3. Equip parents to better support their children socially and emotionally and to advocate for their kids’ education. A loving, nurturing parent can make a world of difference in any child’s life — and can soften the negative impact of living in poverty. One cannot overestimate the significance of positive parent-child relationships as an anchor in the midst of uncertainty. Such relationships give kids a much better chance of reaching their full potential.

When parents are able to reduce their stress and anxiety, they can better respond to their children’s emotional needs and help them weather substantial difficulties. Parents therefore must have opportunities to take care of their own health — emotional, mental and physical. They also need to build connections with other parents, their community and people

Lourdes, a New York mother of two, had been working on her associate degree before her first son was born. But after his premature birth, her education took a backseat to doctor’s appointments, specialist home visits and trips to the hospital. Instead, Lourdes focused on providing for her kids; going back to school was not an option.

Yet her job search kept hitting walls. She could not afford the child care she would need for her younger son, nor did she know anyone in her neighborhood to ask for help. Even after enrolling her youngest in the Educational Alliance’s Head Start at the school her firstborn attended, she couldn’t find a job that worked with their schedules.

Then her Head Start family advocate at the Educational Alliance asked if she would consider returning to school with the help of the nonprofit’s College Access and Success Program, which helps Early Head Start and Head Start parents realize their own educational goals.

With some guidance from a staff advisor, Lourdes completed the necessary forms for her local community college and went on a campus tour. She also eagerly pursued all of the opportunities the nonprofit had to offer. These included classes on saving, spending and investing; a family book fair; and parenting workshops to deepen her insight into her kids’ young minds. Through these activities, Lourdes met fellow parents who shared some of the same struggles.

This year, Lourdes is returning to community college to finish her associate degree in business management, with plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree in psychology next. Her long-term goal is to open her own child care center.

“Without [Educational Alliance] and all these workshops I’ve been to, I don’t think I would have gotten as far on my own,” she said. “It’s not just school based. It really has helped me overall.”
The New Haven Mental Health Outreach for MotherS (MOMS) Partnership in Connecticut meets low-income mothers where they are — at grocery stores, parks and other places in their neighborhoods. The partnership, a collaboration of agencies throughout New Haven, aims to help mothers overcome what they themselves have identified as major challenges in their lives. At the top of that list are getting necessities such as food and diapers, being socially isolated and dealing with stress.

Guided by the principle that family wellness starts with mothers, MOMS helps these parents reduce their stress. An eight-week stress management class teaches coping strategies. About 90 percent of the mothers who participated in the class this year have seen a decrease in their symptoms of depression, said Megan V. Smith, who directs MOMS.

Community ambassadors, who are mothers themselves, reach out to those who are more isolated and make referrals for assistance. Among the partnership’s plans is to open one-stop centers in neighborhood businesses or organizations to address basic needs, as well as mental health and employment challenges.

By reducing mothers’ stress, the MOMS Partnership aims to improve their ability to nurture their children’s development and to get — and keep — a job to support their families.

Virginia’s Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP) offers a practical example of taking a whole-family approach. This successful program — which uses the Parents as Teachers curriculum in home visits with new parents — goes beyond the usual focus on maternal and infant health. Along with quarterly visits from a registered nurse, a parent educator works with participants to develop important skills, such as creating routines, managing their families and bolstering their children’s health — all of which smooth parents’ path to employment. Educators also assist families with achieving self-sufficiency goals, such as getting a driver’s license, earning a GED or certification or pursuing higher education.

CHIP has seen a nearly 40 percent increase in the number of families with one or both parents working at least part time after a year in the program.

Addressing child and parent challenges simultaneously strengthens families and places them on firmer ground. This gives their children a more solid footing from the start, greatly improving their chances of charting a better course.
Creating Partnerships to Build Two-Generation Approaches

Schools and early-education, home-visiting and job-training programs are just some of the existing platforms that offer opportunities to factor in the needs of parents and children at the same time.

**HOME VISITING**
Home-visiting programs can help families move toward financial stability by building relationships with organizations focused on employment and financial coaching.

**SCHOOLS AND EARLY EDUCATION**
An elementary school or early-education program can collaborate with parents to expand their involvement in their child’s development and create programs for their own educational advancement.

**JOB TRAINING**
Job-training programs and community colleges can help parents access employment, high-quality child care for school and work and financial coaching to plan now and for the future.
Beyond a moral imperative to reduce family poverty, there are practical reasons for adopting a two-generation approach. The workforce of today and tomorrow must have the skills and education to meet employers’ needs and compete in the global economy. Investing in children and their families at key points in a child’s development will place the next generation on a steadier path. We simply cannot afford to continue doing business as usual.

A great deal of evidence underscores the importance of increased income, early childhood education and parents’ ability to nurture and advocate for their children, but none of these factors alone has been able to break the cycle of poverty in America. Although research is emerging on the effectiveness of approaches that simultaneously account for all three elements, several programs show great promise and provide an opportunity to further test and refine two-generation strategies to help families move out of poverty.

Here, we suggest changes that policymakers, businesses and community leaders can make to help whole families access the tools and develop the skills they need to thrive. Aside from identifying specific policies to increase income and opportunities for parents to support child development, we intentionally focus on linking systems and programs. These recommendations aim to achieve a greater return on our public-sector investments. While some proposals require new investments, others call for different ways of thinking and acting that can make us more efficient and effective in what we already do.

Three key principles undergird our recommendations. First, any policy discussion on what low-income families need must include their voices. Policymakers should create authentic opportunities to involve these families and recognize parents as experts on their kids and communities. Second, poverty and its host of negative consequences disproportionately affect children of color, and any policies aimed at reaching their families must address the obstacles that have impeded their chances to succeed. Communities of color long disconnected from economic opportunity must be a priority. Finally, government cannot accomplish this alone. Businesses, communities and faith-based institutions also should play vital roles.

RECOMMENDATION 1
Create policies that equip parents and children with the income, tools and skills they need to succeed — as a family and individually.

- Increasing and making refundable the Child Tax Credit for low-income parents of very young children is a critical step toward easing the burden of poverty. In addition, expanding the EITC for workers without dependents would increase the income of noncustodial parents, enabling them to maintain child support and devote additional resources to their children.

- We must strengthen policies that allow parents who have limited education and job skills to earn a family-supporting income. The new Workforce Innovation
and Opportunity Act and the Higher Education Act, as well as other career pathways and apprenticeship efforts, should build bridges to affordable, quality child care and early education and other tools that enable working parents to play their dual roles. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) has the same potential. Policies should pay particular attention to the role of fathers in supporting their families and fostering their children’s development. Pilot child-support programs, for example, are creating incentives for fathers to access training and increase their work hours while bolstering their parenting skills.

States and businesses should adopt policies that give parents needed flexibility at work, such as paid time off (family and sick leave). California, New Jersey and Rhode Island have passed paid family leave laws. Businesses also can adopt family-friendly scheduling policies. For example, Costco — known in the retail industry for its high rate of productivity and low employee turnover — notifies employees of their work schedules in advance to help them balance family commitments.42

Policies and programs should connect families with health care and newly expanded mental health programs now available to adults.

Programs should recognize parents’ strengths and help them take an active role in their child’s education and development. They can incorporate ways for parents to interact with fellow parents and build peer-support systems. Programs also should move beyond traditional parent involvement to offer leadership development and support over time.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

*Put common sense into common practice by structuring public systems to respond to the realities facing today’s families.*

- State and federal governments should use interagency commissions and innovation funds to promote public-private collaboration, align policies and programs and ensure that public-benefit policies help families move toward financial stability, rather than raising unintended obstacles.

- Federal leaders should incentivize child- and adult-focused state agencies to bring their data together to look at the whole family and develop a common set of outcomes, which could streamline their programs and processes. South Carolina, for instance, has long had an integrated data system that pulls participant information across multiple programs to assess effectiveness and inform policy improvements.

- States should adopt a no-wrong-door approach that encourages agencies to connect families with needed programs. Louisiana has embraced this concept, recently using SNAP eligibility data to automatically enroll kids in its Children’s Health Insurance Program. State and
To ensure that kids thrive and succeed from birth onward, we must simultaneously address the obstacles facing their parents.

Federal governments also should use online tools and other innovative methods for accessing benefits to streamline the process of applying and qualifying for programs.

Federal policymakers should take advantage of new legislation and reauthorization periods for policies such as the Higher Education Act (HEA) and programs such as Head Start and TANF to bring together adult- and child-focused programs. The HEA, for example, could expand federal tuition assistance programs to better accommodate part-time students. Head Start could pilot programs that connect parents with education and job training. Another Head Start pilot could have family support staff work with some children and families through the third grade to ensure that parents continue accessing medical and dental care for their kids, transportation and child care, among other necessities.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

*Use existing child, adult and neighborhood programs and platforms to build evidence for practical pathways out of poverty for entire families.*

- Early childhood and K–12 settings should partner with educational, employment and job-training programs that foster family financial stability.\(^1\)\(^5\) In California, United Way of the Bay Area is working with several community schools to embed programs that link parents with financial coaching, job-readiness assistance and other tools.

- Policymakers should support further expansion of home-visiting programs. They could offer incentives for these programs to work with employment and training organizations to ensure that parents have what they need to foster their children’s healthy development. Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana, for example, has teamed up with the Nurse-Family Partnership to connect parents receiving home visits with educational and job opportunities, as well as other programs geared toward breaking the cycle of family poverty.

- Policymakers should incentivize community colleges and employment and job-training agencies to partner with organizations focused on early childhood, benefit access and child care to design programs that help parents who are trying to further their education juggle work, school and family.

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Family Self-Sufficiency, Moving to Work and other supportive housing programs should connect families with early care and education, as well as tools to build financial stability. Initiatives such as the federal Choice Neighborhoods and Promise Neighborhoods, among others, could focus on creating opportunities for children and parents to succeed together within a community.

  One successful model is the Siemer Institute for Family Stability, which helps families at risk of homelessness stabilize their housing and increase their income so that their children can remain in the same
CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILIES

Today’s young children in low-income families will become tomorrow’s parents, and the implications for all of us. The 17 million children from birth onward, we must simultaneously address the obstacles facing their families to improve their situations over time. Certain programs have enabled some low-income children to realize, or even glimpse, the hope of a brighter future up to age 4½ years (NIH Publication No. 05–4318). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved September 2014, from www.nihc.gov/publications/pubs/documents/secycd_06.pdf

For too long, public agencies and programs have focused on either kids or adults, without taking the entire family into account. Although these programs certainly have enabled some low-income families to improve their situations over the past several decades, millions have yet to realize, or even glimpse, the hope of a better future. We can, and must, do better. To ensure that kids thrive and succeed from birth onward, we must simultaneously address the obstacles facing their parents. The ability of our children to enter and navigate paths to success has implications for all of us. The 17 million young children in low-income families today will become tomorrow’s parents, employees and leaders. Given opportunities to reach their full potential, they can become greater contributors to our society, building their own strong, stable families and communities and bolstering our economy. Their success translates into ours as a nation, making our future, along with theirs, that much brighter. School. Coaches help families with job training, child care and health care.

Policymakers should take advantage of state financing options to pay for new two-generation models. States could use SNAP Employment and Training funding to provide job-training programs tied to specific sectors in local economies, along with quality early care and education, after-school care and transportation.

CONCLUSION

For too long, public agencies and programs have focused on either kids or adults, without taking the entire family into account. Although these programs certainly have enabled some low-income families to improve their situations over the past several decades, millions have yet to realize, or even glimpse, the hope of a brighter future. We can, and must, do better. To ensure that kids thrive and succeed from birth onward, we must simultaneously address the obstacles facing their parents. The ability of our children to enter and navigate paths to success has implications for all of us. The 17 million young children in low-income families today will become tomorrow’s parents, employees and leaders. Given opportunities to reach their full potential, they can become greater contributors to our society, building their own strong, stable families and communities and bolstering our economy. Their success translates into ours as a nation, making our future, along with theirs, that much brighter.

ENDNOTES

1. Population Reference Bureau’s analysis of the 2012 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau. “Low income” refers to families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold, or $46,566 for a family of four (two adults and two children) in 2012.


17. Population Reference Bureau’s analysis of the 2012 American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau.


32. For more examples of home-visiting programs, including proven models, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness website: homevae.ahc.gov/programs.aspx

33. For more information on Virginia’s Comprehensive Health Investment Project, see www.chipofvirginia.org/outcomes.aspx


37. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. KIDS COUNT Data Center. Children ages 0 to 8 below 200 percent of poverty: 2005 and 2012 (Table). Retrieved from datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7867-children-ages-0-to-8-below-200-percent-poverty?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/868,16/1232/15173,15174


39. For more information on Virginia’s Comprehensive Health Investment Project, see www.chipofvirginia.org/outcomes.aspx


43. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. KIDS COUNT Data Center. Children ages 0 to 8 below 200 percent of poverty: 2005 and 2012 (Table). Retrieved from datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7867-children-ages-0-to-8-below-200-percent-poverty?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/868,16/1232/15173,15174

44. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. KIDS COUNT Data Center. Children ages 0 to 8 below 200 percent of poverty: 2005 and 2012 (Table). Retrieved from datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tabs/7867-children-ages-0-to-8-below-200-percent-poverty?loc=1&loct=1#detailed/1/any/false/868,16/1232/15173,15174
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Dear Colleagues,

Ensuring an intergenerational cycle of success for families is an important two-generation (2Gen) policy and practice value. As a renewed national discourse about 2Gen has gained strong traction over the last several years, “What are the intended outcomes of two-generation programs?” and “What are the pathways to these outcomes for two-generation programs?” have become gnawing questions for the field. In an effort to set a foundation for how practitioners and policymakers may consider and then answer these questions for themselves, we are pleased to release **Making Tomorrow Better Together: Report of the Two-Generation Outcomes Working Group.** The working group, comprised of leading 2Gen practitioners, researchers and evaluators, was asked to identify key outcomes for 2Gen programs upon which evidence-building for the field may be based.

In order to lay the groundwork for this task, the working group first began by outlining a set of principles for 2Gen program evaluations (see page 5). The working group then grappled with what specific conditions and organizational culture are needed for successful 2Gen learning and evaluation. Third, the working group developed a 2Gen glossary of evaluation terms as a common lexicon for programs beginning to consider a two-generation approach. Finally, the working group sought to identify a sample set of outcomes for 2Gen programs.

We view this report as a complement to two 2Gen policy reports produced last year: **The Top Ten for 2Gen: Policy Ideas & Principles to Advance Two-Generation Efforts** (Ascend at the Aspen Institute) and **Creating Opportunity for Family: A Two-Generation Approach** (The Annie E. Casey Foundation). Those reports and others have been the impetus for emerging 2Gen policy efforts at the federal, state, and local level. Although the contributions herein are applicable to 2Gen policy initiatives, you will find they are particularly relevant to internal assessments and external evaluation of 2Gen programs operating in organizations and community settings.

We are also pleased to announce that Ascend is hosting an online platform for organizations to retain, organize, and build 2Gen findings as they emerge and develop. A central feature, the 2Gen Outcomes Bank, with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, highlights the research and evidence base substantiating outcomes for two-generation approaches as well as cites examples of how the outcome is targeted through two-generation policies and program designs from across the country. The Casey Foundation is launching a Strategic Evidence Building Advisory Group to explore methodologies, theories of change, and statistical analysis techniques towards advancing the empirical evidence of effectiveness for 2Gen programs.

This report would not have been possible without the intellectual capital of 2Gen leaders. **We thank in particular Monica Barczak, Keri Batchelder, Karenne Berry, Mary Bogle, Jennifer Brooks, Patrice Cromwell, Emmalie Dropkin, Amilcar Guzman, Cynthia Juniper, Christopher King, Julie Krow, Zorayda Moreira-Smith, Sue Popkin, Sophie Sahaf, Sarah Sattelmeyer, Wanda Walker, T’Pring Westbrook, and Ena Yasuhara.** Each of them was adept at deciphering and clarifying the nuances inherent in 2Gen learning and evaluation activities. Thanks also to Juan Collazos and Somala Diby of The Urban Institute who, under the able direction of Mary Bogle, assisted the working group to compile this report. **Making Tomorrow Better Together** is the result of our combined effort to further the 2Gen field. We hope your 2Gen work is stronger as a result.

Sincerely,

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PRINCIPLES OF TWO-GENERATION EVALUATION

- **Measure and account for outcomes for both children and parents** – Outcomes for both children and parents, or the adults in children’s lives, are at the heart of a true two-generation program. Working collaboratively with families, programs should both articulate and track outcomes for both children and adults.

- **Embed learning and evaluation in program design and strategy** – Strong two-generation programs embed learning and evaluation strategies when designing their program. Knowing up front how to measure success is central, along with articulating the program’s approach and assumptions to achieving intended outcomes. Armed with clear thresholds for near and long-term success, programs can better make programmatic refinements based on real-time learning.

- **Use multiple approaches** – Cutting-edge two-generation strategies draw on a growing multidisciplinary knowledge and evidence base, as well as data-driven field experience, to design and adapt effective approaches to advancing outcomes for children and parents together. To keep pace, two-generation learning and evaluation partners must draw flexibly on a mix of research methods, such as formative evaluation (i.e., learn as you go), the investigative methods of the biological sciences, and quasi-experimental and experimental design.

- **Use data** – Gathering and sharing data is necessary for the continuous improvement of two-generation programs and, in turn, enhanced outcomes for families. Programs should identify how data will be used prior to collecting it and use and share the data that is collected. Engaging families in data collection and data sharing strategies not only promotes transparency but may also support broader community goals such as increased civic engagement among families.

- **Evaluation efforts build internal capacity and ensure continuous feedback** – Organizations implementing two-generation programs need a solid internal capacity to support two-generation learning and evaluation efforts. Resources are dedicated to ensuring staff members are knowledgeable about two-generation learning and evaluation methods and tools. The organization also solicits feedback from families and community partners and program outcomes are compiled and reported routinely.
INTRODUCTION

Two-generation approaches emphasize the provision of education, economic supports, social capital, and health and well-being to create a legacy of economic security that passes from one generation to the next. Two-generation practitioners, policymakers, funders, and researchers act on the understanding that if you want to make tomorrow better for children, you have to make it better for their parents, and vice versa.

Two-generation practices hold great promise for longer and better outcomes for vulnerable families. Consequently, across the US, many organizations already serve children and parents through a two-generation approach and/or by collaborating with partners to implement a two-generation strategy. However, as of yet, relatively few organizations implement a two-generation program, which, per Figure 1, requires greater adherence to the principles of two-generation evaluation described above.

A growing knowledge base is available to practitioners who seek to conceptualize and implement programs that produce longer and better outcomes for both generations, but there is still much work to do to help the field access and effectively utilize this information. For example, most practitioners know about research showing that parental education levels can affect many aspects of children’s lives, and also that parents’ mental and physical health are closely intertwined with their children’s mental and physical health. But their capacity to use this research to select outcomes, establish evidence-based and innovative theories of change, and then continually test their assumptions and delivery models is highly variable. For example, which outcomes are most important to target for which populations (e.g., based on level of need or family type?); what sequence should outcomes across generations follow (e.g., should high-quality child care come before stable parent employment?); how should the choice of target outcomes be affected by dominant program models or policy aims (e.g., focused on employment, early childhood, or housing goals); and what levels of service dose, duration, and quality across generations are required to achieve longer and better outcomes?

This report is designed to be a starting point for further field-wide discussion (and eventual consensus) on two-generation
outcomes and potential pathways to those outcomes.

BUILDING ON WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW
To understand why the field needs a deeper understanding of intended outcomes and potential pathways to those outcomes, it is first important to understand where the two-generation field has come from. Noted two-generation researchers Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn detail the history of two-generation programs in their article “Two-Generation Programs in the Twenty-First Century,” which was published in the Spring 2014 issue of The Future of Children. The summary that follows draws extensively on their work.

Head Start is often cited as the first two-generation approach, at least at the national level. Launched by the Johnson Administration in 1965, the federally-funded preschool program for children also involved parents in a variety of ways. Between 1965 and the mid-1980s, numerous programs were funded to address the needs of families in poverty, but many served primarily children (e.g., Project CARE, the Infant Health and Development Program) or parents as a subset of adult-oriented programs (e.g., Job Training Partnership Act or JTPA programs, the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program).

By the early-to-mid-90s, the Foundation for Child Development coined the term “two-generation program” to describe programs which were explicitly testing the effects of providing simultaneous services to contiguous generations of families in poverty under a single program model. These programs included the Comprehensive Child Development Program, Even Start, and a set of large adolescent demonstration programs such as New Chance. Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn have dubbed these programs “Two-Generation 1.0.”

By the late 90s, interest in two-generation programs began to wane primarily because of evaluation findings that suggested Two-Generation 1.0 programs were producing only modest participant outcomes at relatively high cost. Researchers have explained these disappointing effects by pointing to various implementation flaws such as unequal emphasis on both generations, poor quality of services for children, weak intensity of services for adults, and imprecise targeting of the service population overall. In addition, the intense national and state focus on welfare reform in the 1990s and early 2000s took precedence over policies and programs to educate low-income parents.

Since the “Great Recession” of 2007 – 2009 and the lessened focus on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, however, concerns about social inequality, the US position in the world economy, and persistently high child poverty rates have ignited renewed interest in two-generation programs. A new wave of “Two-Generation 2.0” programs has developed based on lessons learned about the level of service quality and intensity to sustain even individual-level effects, much less family-level effects. Per Chase-Lansdale and Brooks-Gunn, these new programs focus on providing high-quality early childhood services simultaneously with adult human capital development which fosters parenting capacity as well as whole family economic success.

With the increasing momentum for two-generation approaches has come a clarion call that Two-Generation 2.0 programs have more work to do to surmount the pitfalls of the 1.0 wave. In particular, today’s experts note that integration of two-generation program components is essential to optimal outcomes (e.g., parenting and career skills rise commensurately and in tandem...
In order to be successful, the two-generation field needs to understand precisely how two-generation “2.0” is distinct from “1.0,” especially when it comes to maintaining a high level of services integration, quality, and intensity across both generations.

—Jennifer Brooks, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

with child learning and development outcomes), and that this can only be achieved by entities who internalize Two-Generation 1.0 lessons about targeting, quality, and intensity through strong learning cultures and deep commitment to continuous improvement through research, evidence, and data-sharing across partners.

THE VARIED VIEWPOINTS OF TODAY’S FIELD
Diverse actors shape the current two-generation field. This diversity offers various strengths and challenges in the search for key two-generation outcomes.

First, service providers seek to deliver results on the program level for the clients and communities they serve. They view outcomes through the lens of organizational mission; tangible performance measures of service utilization, client satisfaction, and client well-being; anecdotal evidence reflecting client progress; and measures of fiscal accountability and fundraising success. For agencies that take the lead role in delivering or coordinating two-generation outcomes, a key challenge is achieving the right level and combination of resources and programming for both generations within the bounds of the organization’s and its partners’ scopes, be they narrow or broad. A further challenge is designing and implementing conceptual models that incorporate programs with emphases ranging from early childhood to parental economic security. The promise of defining key outcomes and potential pathways to those outcomes for this group is that they will have a basis on which to build and measure actual two-generation programs, rather than approaches that provide only somewhat coordinated support to members of the same family, which is unfortunately commonplace in the absence of well-defined outcomes.

Second, policymakers seek to deliver results on the population level for entire neighborhoods, cities, regions, states, and the nation. At their best, both this group and service providers seek to learn about what works and then continually improve the programming and policies offered through the resources under their control. Policymakers view two-generation outcomes through lenses focused on the public good, the measurable well-being of particular sub-populations (e.g., immigrants, families on public assistance, working poor families), and return on investment. For this set of actors, a key challenge is securing support for two-generation investment from a public that often sympathizes with the needs of children more readily than with the needs of parents. The promise of defining key outcomes and potential pathways to those outcomes for this group is that they will be able to more clearly understand and articulate the return on investment achieved through allocation of public resources toward two-generation approaches.

Third, researchers and evaluators seek to support the field in accumulating the knowledge and evidence on which good policy and program design is based. They view two-generation outcomes through the lenses of scientific disciplines and logic models that make evaluating impact more feasible. A key challenge for this group is developing evaluation strategies that account for the complexity of two-generation program design. The promise of defining key outcomes and potential pathways
to those outcomes for this group is more clarity on how to test the components of two-generation logic models (inputs, outputs, and outcomes) through formal demonstrations and experiments that will provide the evidence the field needs to grow. In addition, with a list of common outcomes fully established, this group could be instrumental in establishing methods for data collection and corresponding data collection instruments, on both the level of formal evaluation and continuous improvement for programs.

**Fourth, parents and other family members** seek to make life better for themselves and their children. Interestingly, this is the only group for whom it is entirely natural to see the fates and fortunes of all generations as inextricably linked. For this group, a key challenge is being treated as full partners with all other stakeholders, much less as the rightful leaders, in defining outcomes for themselves and for their children. The promise of defining key outcomes for this group is that they will be activated in their roles as two-generation program leaders, rather than remaining merely the subjects of loosely defined interventions.

**And finally, partnerships and collaborations** may include any combination of the previous four groups. Most collaborations are alliances between or among service providers who come together around a two-generation strategy in recognition that no one organization or entity can meet the comprehensive needs of families. Sometimes, these collaborations seek results on the population level, rather than just for the families one or more partner serves jointly. Especially for two-generation purposes, such partnerships typically struggle with how to fund, align, and coordinate their activities thoroughly enough to achieve agreed-upon outcomes, e.g., when one organization’s ability to achieve parent employability outcomes requires its partner to provide high-quality child care during evening-class hours. At their best, collaborations can represent all actors: parents, providers, policymakers, and learning partners. However, in order to achieve shared goals, these actors must address the significant complexities of agreeing on outcomes and contend with the different lenses each brings to what matters most in achieving those outcomes.

Ultimately, for all of the groups described above, the promise of defining key outcomes and potential pathways to those outcomes is still speculative, based more on observational studies than proven fact. The remainder of this report is aimed primarily at the service provider audience to support them as they seek to realize the vision of the two-generation field that, if conceptualized and implemented correctly, two-generation programs will produce far more powerful outcomes for families than those generated by the mostly child- or parent-focused interventions we have today.

**THE PROMISE OF TWO-GENERATION PROGRAMS: BETTER AND LONGER OUTCOMES FOR ENTIRE FAMILIES**

This section addresses the central questions of this report: What are the intended outcomes of two-generation programs? I wish leaders and policymakers understood first that an investment in parents and children struggling to achieve economic security is just that — an investment. As a country, we need to think long term. I also believe that that investment is not enough. Families struggling to achieve economic security need basic assistance, but they also need an advocate by their side: mentors, people to whom they can turn for advice and perspective.

—Monique Rizer, Opportunity Nation; 2000 Gates Millennium Scholar
programs? and What are the pathways to these outcomes for two-generation programs?

**Defining Two-Generation Outcomes**

There are no “two-generation outcomes,” per se. Rather, there are outcomes that two-generation programs typically target across the child-focused, parent-focused, and family-focused spectrum. Table 1, found on p. 16, offers a preliminary list of these outcomes for field-wide discussion. Programs that provide services to just parents or children also often draw from this list, but they rarely integrate their services across generations or target family-focused outcomes, which are hard to obtain through a single-generation program model.

Please note that it is beyond the scope of this report to present an exhaustive or final list of all outcomes currently intended by two-generation programs. However, as announced in the opening letter to this report, the online Ascend Two-Generation Outcomes Bank serves as an expanding and updateable resource from which the two-generation field can draw. The Two-Generation Outcomes Bank links outcomes typically targeted by two-generation programs to relevant research and evidence – such as the sources cited above – as well as cites examples of how the outcome is targeted through two-generation policies and programs across the country.

In choosing to target outcomes like those listed in Table 1, two-generation programs are often influenced by research and observation studies that show (Haskins 2014):

- Intergenerational education affects many areas of children’s lives, and these effects persist overtime;
- Boosting parents’ income is likely to have positive effects on their children, primarily when this boost takes place during early childhood;
- Parents’ employment can have both positive and negative effects on their children; one positive effect may be higher family income, while a negative one, particularly in less flexible workplaces, may be less time spent with the family;
- Parents’ mental and physical health are closely intertwined with their children’s mental and physical health—some of which is the result of genetics, but much of which can be traced to environment and behavior.

Two-generation practitioners move from being an approach to being a program when they take the initiative – either alone or with partners – on developing a strong two-generation theory of change, as well as internal and external evaluation mechanisms to better understand the drivers and potential levers for improving child and parent outcomes simultaneously. Once these conditions are set and implementation has begun, two-generation programs must then challenge their assumptions and ask themselves: Are our intentions to produce strong outcomes matched by real-life results? This requires that two-generation programs continuously improve by testing both their design and implementation strategies through an appropriate balance of innovation and evidence-based practice. In sum, two-generation programs produce the learning culture, technology, and data necessary to:

- Identify the best outcomes for their target population and program capacity;
- Design the right conceptual framework and implementation plan, which spells out details on timing, sequence, and level of intensity for both generations as well as short- and medium- or long-term measures of success;
Test and modify implementation results by collecting and analyzing data on all measures, ensuring meaningful input from beneficiaries; making real-time programmatic adjustments; and conducting and learning from longer-term evaluations that approximate a counterfactual.

First, Identify Appropriate Outcomes
A two-generation program may aim for a myriad of outcomes, such as – but not limited to – those outlined in Table 1. Innovation and customization are encouraged and programs certainly need not identify exactly the same outcomes as other programs to qualify for membership in the two-generation field. What is critical is that each program conducts a thorough needs assessment – on both the community and family level – of their target population of children, parents, and other family members. Typically, a two-generation program will consider the holistic needs of entire families in addition to the individual needs of children and adults, and these needs are always identified in close consultation with families themselves. As a program considers its intended outcomes, it should weigh factors like family composition, culture, citizenship status, neighborhood of residence, presence of special mental health or disability needs, and family history of labor market attachment, intergenerational poverty, and college attendance. For example, Jeremiah Program, a Minnesota-based nonprofit, began in 1997 after interviews with single-mother students from Minneapolis showed how little access they had to child care and safe and stable housing. Now Jeremiah serves about 300 families in five sites nationwide, seeking educational and workforce outcomes for the single moms, school success outcomes for their children, and a reduction in dependence on public assistance for whole families. Each family’s needs and goals – across generations – are identified through a rigorous pre-admissions process. Periodic family meetings, which are attended by both parent-focused and child-focused staff, track a service plan and outcomes against baseline data collected at pre-admissions.

Like any other helping agency or nonprofit, a two-generation program must also remain mindful of its core mission and available resources. The reality is that two-generation service providers cannot always meet every need a family may have, particularly across generations. Two-generation programs must ponder the following questions carefully in order to identify a realistic set of outcomes as well as to select suitable provider partners and advocacy goals:

1. What should be the intended outcomes for parents (or other adult caregivers) based on our program resources and activities as well as assessment of parent needs? Are these sufficient to achieve our mission? How, in turn, are these parent outcomes dependent on or related to resources available to their children?

2. What should be the intended outcomes for children based on our program resources and activities as well as assessment of child needs? Are these sufficient to achieve our mission? How, in turn, are these child outcomes dependent on or related to resources available to their parents?

3. Ultimately, what should be the intended outcome(s) for the entire family? How are those outcomes defined (e.g., housing stability, higher educational attainment for one or both generations, advancement from one income bracket to the next, the end to inter-generational poverty)? Will achieving the outcomes we have selected for children and parents get us there?
Second, Design the Right Conceptual Framework

Once practitioners have the ends – the outcomes – in mind, they must design their program components based on a theory of change which draws on good science, the large evidence base amassed from single-generation programs, and observational and investigational research on two-generation effects from experts like Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Teresa Eckrich Sommer, and Jack Shonkoff. An excellent source for studies and scholarly articles on two-generation models can be found at the website of The Northwestern University Two-Generation Research Initiative. A two-generation program theory of change may look like Figure 2, but it is expected that individual programs will vary the components widely based on outcomes targeted, resources available, the views of key stakeholders, and local innovation. In particular, when developing theories of change, two-generation programs weigh heavily the compositions, cultures, needs, strengths, and personal goals of the families they serve – recognizing that these elements are not only essential to targeting the right outcomes, but also to establishing effective strategies and short- and medium-term benchmarks along the way to long-range outcomes.

Two-generation programs (and their evaluations) express the specifics of their theories of change through logic models that may look like Figure 3 below. While logic models are not unique to two-generation programs, the consideration given to how parent and child inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes interact (the arrows) and with what intensity (duration and dosage) they are offered across generations is unique and of utmost importance to program design and implementation. In other words, two-generation program leaders are very intentional about the relationship between the activities and results they promote for both generations. This is why it is so important for two-generation programs to have strong learning

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**FIGURE 2: SAMPLE TWO-GENERATION THEORY OF CHANGE**

**TWO-GENERATION THEORY OF CHANGE**
for an increase in family economic security, educational success, and health and well-being from one generation to the next by 2018.

This diagram illustrates, in very broad terms, the two-generation theory of change: a family forms; together, all members draw on education, economic supports, social capital, and health and well-being. Current and successive generations enjoy economic security and stability.

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**FIGURE 3: LOGIC MODEL**

Source: Ascend at the Aspen Institute, 2015
cultures. Targeting and tracking the integration of activities and outcomes across generations requires more programmatic sophistication than simply offering an unrelated menu of services to either or both generations.

Various forms of interaction expressed in a well-integrated two-generation logic model may be understood as follows. First, two-generation programs actively seek to provide complementary activities (e.g., if the parent is working, child care must at least cover work hours) which produce separate parent-focused or child-focused outcomes (e.g., career advancement, school readiness). Second, two-generation programs actively seek to augment their delivery models with mutually reinforcing activities. Examples of mutual reinforcement include parent skill-building programs that enhance parent capacity to promote child academic success in and outside the classroom; opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom or other learning settings where parents and children can motivate each other to develop new skills; and physical moves to new housing or neighborhoods which provide both a safe family home and opportunities for community-building and social-capital development with other families. Third, two-generation programs actively seek to produce robust multiplier effects within the family unit itself. In other words, the program specifically targets child-, parent-, and family-level outcomes that will build off one another in the long run even after the program has ended.

For example, the United Way of the Bay Area operates almost a dozen SparkPoint Centers, which help low-income residents create step-by-step plans to
tackle their unique financial needs and connect to related services, such as credit counseling, tax preparation, and home ownership support. SparkPoint Community Schools is United Way’s two-generation spin-off which specifically links the financial footing and knowledge of parents to the academic outcomes of their children. Regular SparkPoint Centers seek the same outcomes for clients as school-based centers, covering results like increasing income, accumulating savings, improving credit scores, and decreasing debt. However, at workshops and counseling offered by SparkPoint Community Schools, parents often begin with the goal of sending their child to college, which motivates them to improve their credit and increase their savings. When parents graduate from the workshop series, they participate in a ceremony wearing a cap and gown. For most of the families served, this experience is the first time they have seen a family member graduate, so children gain motivating role models for academic success as well.

For example, LIFT is a national non-profit with a network of community-based offices in cities like New York and Los Angeles. They pair clients, who are known as members, with advocates, and together they make progress on the member’s goals and work to strengthen the member’s connections to social services, supportive relationships, and the local community. Because LIFT’s theory of change emphasizes the relationship between members and advocates and a member-led goal setting process, LIFT regularly surveys their members and conducts focus groups to gather perceptual data and feedback on the relationship with LIFT and more broadly on opportunities for improvement. The focus groups also provide an opportunity to challenge theory of change assumptions, such as what program inputs are most valued and why. The network-wide survey is then used, from the CEO on down, to track performance and better understand opportunities to improve results for members.

Third, Test and Modify
Two-generation practitioners who decide to pursue the promise of two-generation programming must implement their programs using the techniques and tools of continuous improvement. Continuous improvement efforts are typically supported by performance management software as well as by staff who are charged with: establishing clear short- and long-range measures for all inputs, outputs, and outcomes; collecting data, both quantitative (e.g., through forms) and qualitative data (e.g., through focus groups); and bringing forth reports and analyses that assist program staff and other stakeholders to weigh if their two-generation program design goals are being met and make any necessary adjustments to key elements, such as service intensity.

This diagram illustrates the hypothesis that positive outcomes in a caregiver’s mental health might lead to positive caregiver employment outcomes and a consequent increase in family economic stability, which, in turn, will improve child well-being. To the extent multiplier effects are achieved, the loop continues with outcomes accruing to both and succeeding generations.

Source: Adapted from Shonkoff, 2013

FIGURE 4: TWO-GENERATION PROGRAM HYPOTHESIS: FAMILY MULTIPLIER EFFECTS
Continuous improvement efforts typically produce data and instigate changes to service delivery models at a much faster pace than formal evaluation, which can take years to unfold as researchers go about the careful business of collecting enough data to draw meaningful conclusions. For programs that work closely with external evaluators, performance managers and researchers alike need to embrace and surmount some inevitable challenges. For example, staff of CareerAdvance® at CAP Tulsa, a well-known and heavily evaluated two-generation program, has regularly modified their program in response to participant feedback collected during focus groups. In addition, when the community college decided to change its course offerings, the program had to adapt inputs quickly to preserve the integrity of its theory of change. In turn, the formal evaluation team from Northwestern University, the University of Texas at Austin, Columbia University, and New York University has had to integrate these program model changes into the program’s research design.

The formal evaluation team regularly debriefs CareerAdvance® performance managers on various interim findings. For example, the evaluators provide annual reports that feed CAP Tulsa’s own data back to them in a way that is easy to interpret and build upon. In addition, the formal evaluators are sometimes able to provide special support, such as analyzing administrative data from the local Department of Human Services and Employment Security Commission. However, what the evaluators cannot do is break out any of the administrative or interview data by treatment versus comparison group until the spring of 2016. In fact, the formal evaluation team itself decided early on not to look at the groups separately until the spring to avoid jumping to premature conclusions or tilting their interpretation of findings. While the inability to access early findings from the impact study has been frustrating to performance managers, the expectation on all sides is that their patience will be rewarded when the two-generation field benefits from the formal study findings on CareerAdvance®.

CONCLUSION
Because the two-generation field is still developing (at least in its more rigorous 2.0 form), the working group wishes to fully acknowledge that the two-generation hypothesis of longer and better outcomes has not yet been proven through formal evaluation. In fact, a stronger evidence-based case can still be made for well-managed single-generation programs (e.g., adult workforce development, early childhood) that pursue their more limited set of activities at a higher level of quality and intensity than poorly conceptualized and implemented two-generation programs that provide comprehensive services but fail to balance high quality and intensity across both generations.

Nevertheless, the basic research to support the two-generation hypothesis is robust. This is why establishing a common understanding about outcomes for two-generation programs and the pathways to those outcomes is so important. If we learn about and adhere to the right targeting, quality, intensity, and programmatic balance necessary to achieve those outcomes, we will realize the promise of two-generation programs to produce longer and better outcomes for families.

Two-generation is a nascent field, which will continue to evolve in the coming years. Hopefully, this report will help provide the necessary foundation to guide this evolution in the right direction.

— Christopher King, Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources
### TABLE 1: OUTCOMES TYPICALLY TARGETED BY TWO-GENERATION PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME DOMAIN</th>
<th>MEASURABLE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>SOURCE/REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **CHILD IS READY FOR SCHOOL AND TAKES CHARGE OF HIS/HER LEARNING**  
*(Foundation for Child Development)* | | |
| Meets developmental milestones | [Development and Psychopathology 2013](#)  
US Department of HHS, ACF 2010  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Improved literacy skills | Aikens et al., 2013  
St. Pierre et al., 1996 | |
| Improved classroom behavior | St. Pierre et al., 1996 | |
| Higher attendance | Connolly & Olson 2012  
St. Pierre et al., 1996  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Reduction in grade repetition | St. Pierre et al., 1996 | |
| Improved postsecondary outcomes | Ascend at the Aspen Institute  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Improved grades/achievement | Greenberg & Domitrovich 2011  
St. Pierre et al., 1996  
Zhao & Modarresi 2010  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| **PARENT BECOMES MORE POWERFUL LEARNING PARTNER AND IS MOTIVATED TO PURSUE POSTSECONDARY LEARNING**  
*(Foundation for Child Development)* | | |
| Increased GED attainment | Bassett 2014  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Increased enrollment in postsecondary education | Ascend at the Aspen Institute  
Sabol & Chase-Lansdale 2014  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Increased motivation to pursue postsecondary education | Ascend at the Aspen Institute  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Receipt of certification and/or degree | Ascend at the Aspen Institute  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Parents are empowered as their children’s first/primary teachers | National Head Start Association Impact Working Group (in progress) | |
| Improved functional literacy | St. Pierre et al., 1996 | |
| Increased involvement in children’s learning activities | Gelber & Isen 2011 | |
| Higher expectations for parent’s and child’s educational attainment | Sommer et al., 2012  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
| Improved parenting skills | Development & Psychopathology 2013  
Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn 2014 | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME DOMAIN</th>
<th>MEASURABLE OUTCOMES</th>
<th>SOURCE/REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAMILY: EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS BECOMES A CORE FAMILY VALUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased family literacy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enhanced home learning environment</td>
<td><strong>Foundation for Child Development 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased family engagement</td>
<td><strong>Miller et al., 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND</strong></td>
<td><strong>CHILD HAS A MODEL FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMIC ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>Career exposure</td>
<td><strong>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2014</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased wage benefits</td>
<td><strong>Johnson and Jackson 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PARENT IS MOTIVATED TO CLIMB</strong></td>
<td><strong>PARENT IS MOTIVATED TO CLIMB CAREER LADDER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CAREER LADDER</strong></td>
<td>Improved earnings</td>
<td><strong>St. Pierre et al., 1996</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced reliance on public aid</td>
<td><strong>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job stability</td>
<td><strong>Love et al., 2002</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better income/job</td>
<td><strong>St. Pierre et al., 1996</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased participation in job training</td>
<td><strong>Love et al., 2002</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY IS EMPOWERED AND STABLE</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAMILY IS EMPOWERED AND STABLE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased economic status and stability</td>
<td><strong>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased financial assets</td>
<td><strong>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic needs are continuously being met</td>
<td><strong>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2014</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL CAPITAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>CHILD DEVELOPS EMOTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY TO SUCCEED IN SOCIETY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved social adjustment in school and community</td>
<td><strong>Aikens et al., 2013</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ascend at the Aspen Institute, 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Zhai et al., 2011</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Chase-Lansdale &amp; Brooks-Gunn 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved cognitive performance</td>
<td><strong>Development and Psychopathology 2013</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Love et al., 2002</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>US Dept. of HHS, ACF 2010</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Zhai et al., 2011</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Chase-Lansdale &amp; Brooks-Gunn 2014</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTCOME DOMAIN</td>
<td>MEASURABLE OUTCOMES</td>
<td>SOURCE/REFERENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCIAL CAPITAL</td>
<td>Increased coordination with teachers in child’s learning</td>
<td>Cognitive Behavioral Practice 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved emotional support skills</td>
<td>Love et al., 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased connection to other families</td>
<td>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2014 Sommer et al., 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive cognitive and social-emotional development</td>
<td>Love et al., 2002 Vogel et al., 2010 Chase-Lansdale &amp; Brooks-Gunn 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased child health insurance coverage</td>
<td>US Dept of HHS, ACF 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased likelihood of being immunized</td>
<td>US Dept of HHS, ACF 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOME DOMAIN</td>
<td>MEASURABLE OUTCOMES</td>
<td>SOURCE/REFERENCE</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>PARENT HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH IS STRENGTHENED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased psychological distress</td>
<td>The Future of Children 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased maternal depression</td>
<td>Chase-Lansdale &amp; Brooks Gunn 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased access to health insurance</td>
<td>The Future of Children 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>Crittenton Women’s Union</td>
<td>Foundation for Child Development 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS ARE STRENGTHENED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased emotional well-being</td>
<td>Ascend at the Aspen Institute 2014</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chase-Lansdale &amp; Brooks Gunn 2014</td>
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Please note that this Outcomes Table compiles outcomes for two-generation programs as identified by researchers, evaluators, and practitioners within the existing two-generation literature to date. This literature spans the fields of neurobiology, early developmental psychology, program evaluation, early childhood education, and emerging two-generation research. This version of the Outcomes Table will serve as a starting point for Ascend’s forthcoming Outcomes Bank, which will highlight the research and evidence base substantiating outcomes specific to two-generation approaches. Additional outcomes will be added as they are identified by the field.
Glossary of Terms for Two-Generation Evaluation

Two-Generation Approach
A mindset for designing programs and policies that serve children and parents simultaneously. For example: an adult education program designed to provide quality care for young children.

Two-Generation Program
A program designed to provide services to both child and adult simultaneously and track outcomes for both. For example: an adult education program tracks the education gains of participants while tracking the attendance of Head Start children.

Two-Generation Strategy
A plan to coordinate services with other organizations to meet the needs of all family members. For example: an adult education program coordinates services with Head Start to offer parents classes at the same time children attend the Head Start program in addition to providing quality child care for younger siblings in collaboration with local child care provider.

Activities
Activities are what a program does with available resources that are the intentional part of the program implementation, including processes, events, and actions (Pell Institute 2015).

Career Advancement
The process of increasing authority, responsibility, and compensation in the workplace over time, typically achieved through gaining additional education, training, certification and experience in a particular field, e.g., healthcare. An individual may advance their career through a series of jobs with one or more employers over time.

Career Pathways
Programs that offer adult learners portable, stackable credentials for specific occupations in high demand industries while providing a number of supports services to assist adults in overcoming barriers to their professional success.

Child-Focused
An intervention that is primarily focused on the child, ages birth through 18. For example, early childhood care and education and/or after school care.

Complementary
Serving to enhance or emphasize the qualities of each other. For example, a Reading is Fundamental book distribution is complementary to a summer reading program for young children.

Comprehensive Services
Service delivery systems that identify family strengths and needs and connect families with a wide range of relevant services and supports.

Continuous Improvement
A process of continuous evaluation and learning that practitioners implementing a program use to change and improve programs, services, and outputs over time. Strong performance management and an organizational learning culture are essential to continuous improvement.
Cultural Competency
Culturally competent programs and services are respectful of and responsive to the unique combination of cultural variables—including ability, age, beliefs, ethnicity, experience, gender, gender identity, linguistic background, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status—that the service provider, individual clients and families bring to interactions.

Economic Opportunity
Developing pathways for parents to become financially secure and support their children’s healthy development and academic success. For example, connecting low-income families with early childhood education, job training and other tools such as financial coaching to provide information on how to create and use budgets, manage checking accounts, access credit scores, repair credit, pay off debt, and save for the future.

Economic Security
When families are able to obtain jobs paying good wages and build both short- and long-term assets that allow them to consistently meet their daily living expenses, support their children’s healthy development and academic success, while building assets to enable them to handle unanticipated expenses or a temporary loss of income over time.

Economic Stability
When families can meet their daily living expenses, build and protect financial assets that will enable them to handle unanticipated expenses or a temporary loss of income over time.

Evaluation
For the purpose of two-generation projects, evaluation means the systematic investigation of the implementation and effectiveness of two-generation programs in achieving program objectives.

Evidence-Based
The degree to which an activity, intervention, program or strategy is based on rigorous evaluation research, typically an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation of more than one effort that has been peer reviewed and determined to generate unbiased estimates of the causal relationship between the intervention and the outcomes of interest.

Evidence-Informed
An activity, intervention, program or strategy that has been pilot-tested with a rigorous implementation and outcomes evaluation. These types of evaluations are used to help develop and refine interventions prior to a full impact evaluation.

Family
The definition of family varies for the different health and human services a family may access. The two-generation model views family as a child or children and the individuals parenting the child or children. Individuals in a child’s life who fulfill the parenting role may be grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, step-parents and others.

Family Capacity
The ability of the family to function in any number of areas, e.g., financial, emotional, communication, and problem-solving.
Family Engagement
A holistic approach to incorporating the families’ experiences, capabilities, goals and values into an on-going, strengths-based partnership between the family and service providers.

Family-focused
Primarily focused on the family as a whole.

Family Income
The sum or all cash resources that all members of a family receive in a specified period of time, including earnings, interest, cash welfare, and other sources. Family income does not include in-kind contributions (free room and board, SNAP, or gifts from other family members).

Family Well-being
A measure of how well family members are doing at a point in time, including measures of the stability and quality of relationships between family members, as well as their financial resources, physical and mental health, and housing.

Home Visiting Program
Home visiting, as a primary service delivery strategy, offered on a voluntary basis to pregnant women or families parenting children birth to age 5.

Impact
Impact is the demonstrable effect of an intervention measured relative to a limited or no-services counterfactual. Examples include an improvement in a family’s well-being, household earnings/income, or health status (Pell Institute 2015).

Impact Evaluation
Impact evaluation seeks to determine through experimental and quasi-experimental design the extent to which an intervention changes an outcome for participants versus control or comparison group members. Impact evaluations measure the program’s effects and how well its goals were attained.

Implementation Study
An implementation study describes the process of program implementation, the factors that affect it, and whether the program has been administered as envisioned.

Inputs
Resources available and dedicated or used by the program/services (Pell Institute 2015).

Integration
For two-generation programs, integration refers to the intentional program design that ensures the intergenerational service delivery of supports overlap as often as possible. For example, if a parent enters into an employment program that requires flexible hours, the child care services are also flexible (Corporation for Enterprise Development 2015).

Intergenerational Education
Education designed to achieve intergenerational payoffs by specifically targeting parent/caregiver education in addition to child education (Haskins 2014; Kaushal 2014).
Learning Culture
A set of organizational values, conventions, processes, and practices that encourage individuals—and the organization as whole—to increase knowledge, competence, and performance.

Logic Model
A systematic and visual way to present and share understanding of the relationships among the resources for operating a program, the activities planned, and the changes or results the program hopes to achieve. (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2004). Logic models graphically illustrate the components of a program goal through clearly identifying outcomes, inputs and activities (Clark and Anderson 2004).

Multiplier Effects
Larger, longer-lasting outcome effects produced by the interplay of simultaneous parent/caregiver and child services and their resulting outcomes.

Mutual Motivation
Parents and children experience “mutual motivation” when service delivery systems are integrated to support the well-being and success of both parents and children. For example, when parents experience their child learning and being cared for in a quality early childhood setting, this may motivate parents fulfill their own educational and career goals (Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014; Sommer et al., 2012).

Mutual Reinforcement
Mutually reinforcing activities ensure that the significant efforts and activities of collaborators are aligned towards achieving the common agenda and shared measures (Collaboration for Impact, 2015).

Outcomes
The knowledge/insights, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are targeted and thus expected to be achieved by a program.

Outcome Measure
A systematic way to assess the extent to which a program has achieved its expected results.

Outputs
The direct result of an activity or service provided to a program beneficiary. For example, this may include training of teachers, afterschool mentoring for school age students, or enrollment in an education program (Pell Institute 2015).

Parent
The individuals in a child’s life who fulfill the parenting role including parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, step-parents, and others.

Parenting Capacity
The ability of parents to meet the health, safety, and developmental needs of their children. Parenting capacity is not seen as fixed, but as undergoing constant change dependent on the circumstances facing parents and their children at any given moment in time (White 2005).
Parent Engagement
An on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between parents and a program focused on improving the well-being of their children.

Parent-focused
Primarily focused on the parent/caregiver, e.g., adult education or occupational skills training.

Performance Management
The use of ongoing evaluation of program efficiency and effectiveness through the process of establishing and clearly communicating performance standards and expectations to staff, observing and providing feedback to create efficiencies and to increase effectiveness (UCSF Human Resources 2014).

Pilot Testing
A small study conducted in advance of a planned project, specifically to test aspects of the research design and to allow necessary adjustment before final commitment to the design (Association for Qualitative Research, 2014).

Promising and Emerging Practices
Promising Practices include practices that were developed based on theory or research, but for which an insufficient amount of original data have been collected to determine the effectiveness of the practice. Emerging Practices include practices that are not based on research or theory and on which original data have not been collected, but for which anecdotal evidence and professional wisdom exists. These include practices that practitioners have tried and claimed effectiveness (Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, 2015).

Randomized Control Trials
The primary goal of conducting an RCT is to test whether an intervention works by comparing it to a control condition, usually either no intervention or an alternative intervention. In a randomized controlled trial, participants are assigned to treatment or control conditions at random (i.e., they have an equal probability of being assigned to any group). (Evidence-Based Behavioral-Practice 2007).

School Readiness
School readiness describes the capabilities of children, their families, schools, and communities that will best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component – children, families, schools and communities – plays an essential role in the development of school readiness by promoting the physically, cognitively, and social and emotional healthy development of children (Virginia Department of Education, 2012).

Self-Sufficiency
A measure describing how much income families of various sizes and compositions need to make ends meet without public or private assistance in the communities where they reside. A measure of income adequacy that is based on the costs of basic needs for working families: housing, child care, food, health care, transportation, and miscellaneous items, the cost of taxes the impact of tax credits, as well as emergency savings required to meet needs during a period of unemployment or other emergency (Bell Policy Center 2011).
**Sequence**
The ordering of events and activities in a logical order. For example, a program will determine what sequence outcomes across generations will follow (e.g., access to reliable transportation may come before parent employment).

**Social Capital**
The collective value of all social networks including family, friends, coworkers and others, and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other (Sommer, Sabol, Chase-Lansdale, Small et al., 2015).

**Theory of Change**
A theory of change is a tool for developing solutions to complex problems. A basic theory of change defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify preconditions necessary to achieve the goal.


The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute has campuses in Aspen, Colorado, and on the Wye River on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. It also maintains offices in New York City and has an international network of partners.

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Tackling Intergenerational Poverty: How Governors Can Advance Coordinated Services for Low-Income Parents and Children

Summary
Poverty and long-term unemployment plague many communities across the United States and affect residents of all ages. Families facing economic hardship often have other challenges, including depression, substance abuse, and substandard housing. Rural communities may have limited capacity to meet those needs. Any social unrest, as seen recently in metropolitan areas like Baltimore and St. Louis, exacerbates existing challenges. The complexity of the issues requires coordinated support for low-income families that goes beyond temporary relief from economic stress and includes mechanisms that help children and adults move out of poverty altogether. Key anti-poverty strategies include helping low-income parents find work that provides family-sustaining wages, fostering children’s school educational success, and providing the necessary family support services.

Because they oversee most of the state and federal programs for low-income families, governors are in a unique position to align programs and policies for children and their parents through “two-generation” strategies. Experience suggests that two-generation strategies for low-income families hold promise when services—not just referrals—are provided to both generations, and when the services are intensive enough and of sufficient quality to produce positive outcomes. In addition, research suggests that increasing family income, not solely helping low-income parents find jobs, can lead to improved outcomes for children.

Two-generation efforts at the state level are also gaining attention as governors recognize the need for more effective and efficient government programs. By providing leadership and fostering collaboration across all state agencies that “touch” low-income children and families, governors can streamline practices and develop innovative solutions for promoting the well-being of children and improving family economic stability.

The history of two-generation programs in the United States offers lessons that leaders are applying at both the state and local levels. Those lessons suggest ways governors who choose to can create a policy infrastructure that supports and encourages the development of effective programs and policies for low-income children and their families. The lessons include:

- Experiment but evaluate;
- Clearly define the goals;
- Ensure the strategies are backed by solid research;
- Explore policies and strategies that enhance coordination between effective adult- and child-serving programs or services, such as “no wrong door” approaches; and
- Be both creative and practical—and have stamina.

The Rationale: Addressing the Needs of Low-Income Families
Children who experience poverty have poorer outcomes on average than their wealthier peers. Research shows poor children fare worse on a range of outcomes, includ-

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1 Two-generation strategies may be suitable for other populations, as well—for example, adults caring for their aging parents, families experiencing abuse or neglect, and other non–low-income families. This brief focuses on two-generation approaches aimed at parents and children in low-income families.
ing physical and mental health, school readiness, and academic achievement in childhood as well as workforce participation and economic security in adulthood. Yet, nearly one in five children lives in a family that is at or below the federal poverty level, and about twice as many live in low-income families (at 200 percent of the poverty level or less). In many cases, those families represent the working poor: Among families living at or below the federal poverty level, nearly seven in 10 have at least one parent in the workforce.

The gap in outcomes for poor and non-poor children reflects more than income differences. Economically challenged families experience a variety of stressors associated with living in poverty. Parents in low-income families are more likely to have low educational attainment and to suffer from depression, domestic violence, and chronic health conditions than the general population. Poor children are more likely to be exposed to violence in their neighborhoods, which is associated with lower levels of academic achievement. And although child maltreatment occurs in families at all economic levels, abuse and neglect are more common in poor families than in families that have higher incomes. Poverty appears to have the greatest consequences for the youngest children, a finding that may relate to the period of rapid brain development in the first three years of life. Poverty and its consequences in childhood can have long-term effects on individuals and increase the likelihood that poor children will experience poverty as adults.

Research on the detrimental effects of poverty continues to stimulate discussion among policymakers on how to improve the social and economic well-being of low-income children and families. Historically, programs for low-income children and adults have been disjointed. For example, workforce programs focus on the skills adults need to get and keep a job, but because those programs do not as a matter of practice ascertain whether the adult is a parent, the opportunity to simultaneously plan for the adequate care for his or her children is lost. Yet without quality, reliable child care, worker productivity and job retention can be jeopardized.

What Are Two-Generation Approaches?
The terms two-generation, dual-generation, and multigeneration are defined in many different ways. This brief uses the term two-generation, but the concept is more important than the terminology.

Some view two-generation strategies fairly narrowly, thinking that child-focused programs need to begin offering adult-focused services or that adult-serving

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What Do Two-Generation Approaches Look Like in Practice?

Two-generation approaches at the program and practice levels can take many forms. Here are a few examples of local entities that are implementing two-generation strategies:

- **Community Action Project in Tulsa, Oklahoma (CAP Tulsa).** CAP Tulsa employs multiple programs that aim to prepare young children for educational success and increase the employability, earning potential, and parenting skills of their parents. CAP Tulsa coordinates and co-locates high-quality early childhood education with family financial, career-training, and health services. CAP Tulsa’s Career Advance program provides Head Start and other low-income parents with training in the health care sector, with the goal of helping them secure a good job with a family-supporting wage while filling a critical workforce gap in the local economy.

- **Avance.** A two-generation program model originating in Texas and currently being implemented in 13 communities across the United States, Avance seeks to empower parents to become advocates for their children and families by providing home visiting services, parenting classes, English as a Second Language and General English preparation, postsecondary education for adults, and early childhood education services.

- **The Atlanta Partnership.** The Atlanta Partnership comprises multiple community organizations serving low-income families that work together to coordinate early childhood education providers; elementary schools; and organizations that provide workforce development, asset building, and entrepreneurship programs to adults.

For the purpose of this brief, two-generation is defined as an approach that creates opportunities for achieving better outcomes for both generations by intentionally and strategically developing and linking policies, programs, and services aimed at low-income children and their parents. Rather than enrolling and serving adults and children in silos, two-generation approaches seek to understand the needs of the family as a whole and connect families with services that can address the needs of both generations.

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of the child and the needs of the adults who care for them.

What do two-generation strategies look like? At the program level, two-generation strategies offer child- and parent-focused services in the same program, often under the same roof. At the policy level, two-generation strategies involve strategic collaborations across public programs that serve adults (such as employment and training programs) and those that serve children (such as early childhood education). For instance, such collaborations might involve coordinated eligibility or enrollment, coordinated needs assessments, or employing staff to foster links between programs.

What Is Known About Two-Generation Strategies: Learning from Past Programmatic Efforts

The idea of delivering services simultaneously to low-income children and their parents is not new. Launching the War on Poverty in 1965, federal policymakers believed that efforts to remediate poverty must address the needs of vulnerable children and their parents together. Perhaps the best-known example of a federal two-generation approach is Head Start, which federal policymakers established as part of the War on Poverty. The intention of the Head Start program was to help prepare children for school while also assessing family needs and referring families to broader supports to address those needs. The federal government has initiated many other two-generation programs over the past few decades, including the Even Start Family Literacy Program and the Comprehensive Child Development Center demonstration.

Several evaluations of two-generation programs have been published over the past few decades. In 1996, social scientist Robert St. Pierre and his colleagues published a review of research on the federal Comprehensive Child Development Center Program, Even Start Family Literacy programs, Head Start Family Service Centers, and the Child and Family Resources Program. In addition, the authors included two other programs: Avance, which is still operational in several states, and New Chance, a research and demonstration program operating between 1989 and 1992. St. Pierre’s review revealed a great deal of variation in the design of two-generation programs along with recurrent challenges in their capacity to implement the models well. Although programs were generally successful in increasing the number of services participants used, they had few effects on adult employment or income and “small or no short-term effects on a wide set of measures of child development.”

Although two-generation programs of the past had disappointing results, another body of evidence offers reason to be optimistic. Several studies of welfare-to-work programs and income support programs in the 1990s found that although employment programs by themselves had little or no effect on the children of participants, programs that were able to increase both employment and family income did have significant benefits for children’s development, particularly for the younger children in the studies. Those studies provide evidence that reducing family poverty in and of itself can benefit children. Moreover, decades of research has shown that quality early childhood education programs can improve children’s academic learning, socio-emotional development and health.

Taken together, those strands of research suggest that

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13 R. St. Pierre et al., Regenerating Two-Generation Programs.
programs and policies that are able to increase family income and address children’s developmental needs—that is, adopt a two-generation approach—could hold the greatest hope for improving outcomes for both generations.

**Two-Generation 2.0: Leveraging Lessons Learned to Improve Two-Generation Approaches**

State leaders interested in promoting two-generation approaches should heed the lessons from those bodies of research, which found that prior attempts at two-generation efforts typically involved connecting weak adult-focused programs with weak child-serving programs and did not affect family income. The programs had poor or ineffective workforce strategies or child care or early childhood education of low or unknown quality.

The weak results of prior two-generation efforts suggest that programs that serve families must be sufficiently intensive to drive the outcomes of interest; that is true regardless of whether the goal of a program is to increase adult employment, enhance child well-being, or both. There is reason for optimism regarding the promise of two-generation strategies that can both increase family income and support the well-being of children and families, but there is also caution that programs and policies must be well designed to achieve those goals.

**The Bottom Line: What Can Governors Do to Promote Two-Generation Approaches at the State Level?**

Governors and their staff are in a unique position to help bring disjointed programs for parents and children together to more fully meet the needs of both generations. The promise is great, but the lessons from the past are sobering. Governors who are interested in applying a two-generation lens to meeting the needs of low-income families can play an important role in encouraging the implementation of practices that will effectively improve outcomes for children and their parents. Experience suggests the following lessons:

- **Experiment but Evaluate.** Two-generation strategies are worth further exploration, but governors should not assume that every strategy will be effective, no matter how well thought out. Measure outcomes for parents and children, and track progress. Consider starting on a smaller scale, with a pilot or other test to determine effectiveness, before investing substantial resources.

- **Clearly Define the Goals.** Research suggests that loosely focusing on multiple goals is unlikely to produce the outcomes of interest. Most social programs can do only so many things well. Prioritize a small set of goals, and make it clear to everyone involved that those are the priorities. As strategies are developed and proposed, ask senior staff how those strategies relate to that small set of priority goals.

- **When Possible, Ensure That the Strategies Are Backed by Solid Research.** Using prioritized goals as a starting point, develop strategies that have the greatest potential to achieve those goals. Begin by identifying strategies that have a solid body of evidence to suggest that they may also work in your state, with your population. For example, the U.S. Government Accountability Office cites a set of documented workforce strategies that are more effective in promoting adult employment for families receiving cash assistance: subsidized employment opportunities; modified work-first

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What Are States Doing to Promote Two-Generation Approaches?

A handful of states have launched efforts to promote two-generational strategies across state agencies:

- **Colorado.** Under the leadership of Governor John Hickenlooper’s Executive Director of Human Services, the Colorado Department of Human Services has implemented multiple efforts to move toward more whole family-focused efforts. The department hired a two-generation manager to coordinate those efforts across the multiple child- and adult-serving programs in the agency and is currently working on developing two-generation performance measures, which will allow programs to track both parent and child outcomes. The department continues to work with the state legislature to ensure that families are supported in efforts to improve their economic well-being; for instance, legislation passed in the 2014 session with regard to Colorado’s child care subsidy program now allows low-income parents to receive child care assistance while attending adult and postsecondary education activities.

- **Washington.** Washington State has launched a program that uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to provide home visiting services supported by strong evidence of effectiveness to families receiving TANF cash assistance. The program will track child and family well-being outcomes as well as parental employability.

- **Utah.** Governor Gary Herbert signed legislation in 2012 requiring the Department of Workforce Services to collect data on intergenerational poverty. That law was expanded in 2013, requiring annual reporting of those data and creating a commission and advisory committee—comprising leaders of five different state agencies and community stakeholders—to recommend statewide strategies for reducing intergenerational poverty. Although not explicitly titled ‘two-generation,’ that law aims to connect agencies serving adults and children as a means of reducing intergenerational poverty.

- **Connecticut.** In 2015, Connecticut created a two-generational pilot program focused on children’s school readiness and their parents’ job readiness. Outcomes sought include improvements in young children’s literacy and increases in their parents’ use of job training, attainment of education certificates or degrees, and employment. Core service components include early learning programs, child care, adult education, housing, job training, transportation, financial literacy and other support services. Services will be coordinated by an interagency committee comprised of the three branches of government as well as selected non-profits, scholars and philanthropy. A workforce liaison from Connecticut’s Department of Labor will assist with local workforce needs and family supports. TANF funds will be used to support the two-generational programming, and Connecticut’s Commission on Children will oversee the pilot’s implementation and evaluation. The six pilot sites will partner with philanthropy for technical assistance on best practices, program design and evaluation. The pilot will serve as a blueprint for a state-wide, two-generational model for meeting the needs of low-income children and their parents.
strategies; career pathways; and treatment for mental, physical, and behavioral health issues. There is also a substantial body of evidence documenting more effective strategies for promoting early childhood development—for instance, through home visiting strategies or high-quality early care and education programs.

Two-generation approaches should focus on bringing together effective strategies for children and their caregivers. A positive result can best be achieved by attending to the existing research.

- **Implement “No Wrong Door” Approaches Through Enhanced Coordination of Effective Adult- and Child-Serving Programs or Services.** When effective strategies for addressing both adult and child outcomes are identified, the next question is how best to coordinate them. With “no wrong door” strategies, the needs of both adults and children are considered regardless of whether their initial contact with public agencies is through a traditionally child-focused agency or a traditionally adult-focused agency. For example, caseworkers who engage with parents in employment and training programs should inquire about caregivers’ access to reliable, quality early education for young children. Early childhood education providers should be attuned to the family context of the child. Ideally, there are direct mechanisms for linking families to services that address those needs, regardless of their point of entry. For example, workforce and TANF agencies could coordinate with child care agencies to give priority for subsidies to parents in employment and training programs. Early education providers can assess family needs and link parents to services for housing instability, employment, mental health, or other issues. Guided by the set of priority goals developed for the state, each relevant state agency should inquire how the organizations implementing its programs assess family needs and connect families to resources to address those needs.

- **The Design and Implementation of Two-Generation Strategies Will Require Both Creativity and Practicality—as Well as Stamina.** Although family members’ needs are often intertwined, programs and funding streams at both the federal and state levels are typically siloed across different agencies. The unique sets of budgets, regulations, and policy and reporting requirements for individual programs pose challenges to providing appropriate, coordinated, and seamless services to low-income children and their families. By providing leadership and fostering collaboration across all state agencies that “touch” low-income children and families, governors can streamline practices and develop innovative solutions for meeting the developmental needs of low-income children and the self-sufficiency needs of their parents.

**Conclusion**

Adopting a two-generation lens to serving low-income children does not necessarily require new programs and policies; rather, governors can focus on strengthening links among existing programs toward a common set of goals for low-income children and families. Governors should be wary about assuming that two-generation strategies will work without significant attention to the quality of the services each generation receives and to the likelihood that those services will lead to improvements in families’ economic well-being. Governors can help guide that work in the right direction by setting clear and limited goals; selecting strategies that are based on evidence that they can achieve those goals; and coordinating services so that no matter which program serves as the entry point,

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the whole family is served to support and improve children’s well-being (a “no wrong door” approach). By working closely with agency staff, governors can champion changes to state policy and implementation that allow programs and communities to better coordinate their funding, information, and services. That coordination will, in turn, provide communities with the flexibility to design programs that better attend to the interconnected needs of parents and their children. Because research on families in poverty suggests that the well-being of low-income children is inextricably linked to their families’ economic stress and overall economic well-being, two-generation strategies that seek to improve family income may hold the greatest promise for addressing the needs of low-income children and families.18

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The Two-Generation Approach Framework

A CLOSER LOOK AT STATE-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION
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Founded in 1923, the National Human Services Assembly is an association of leading human service providers. It was created by top national executives in the sector who believed their organizations could accomplish more collectively than individually to advance their missions and optimize performance. The Assembly has grown to include more than 70 members, mostly the national headquarters of human service provider organizations. These organizations and their respective national networks collectively engage with nearly every household in America—as consumers of services, donors, and volunteers.
Executive Summary

Building family well-being and maintaining it across the lifespan is one of the most powerful ways that we can ensure that everyone reaches their potential and is able to fully contribute to our communities. The Two-Generation (Two-Gen) approach builds well-being by working with families to create a solid and stable foundation through integrated, intensive, and high-quality services in four areas of focus: early childhood education, elementary education, economic stability, and family engagement.¹

Many families face systemic challenges to reaching their full potential—for example, young parents with children under the age of six may not have access to quality child care that aligns with their work or education schedules. For optimal results, Two-Gen programs are offered simultaneously, in a mutually reinforcing way.²

Like a house needs quality materials to last through generations and survive life’s storms, all parents need social resources, economic assets, and strong family bonds to do well. Two-Gen programs are innovatively designed to help parents access and build these resources. This foundation then provides the environment children need to attain academic success and emotional stability so they can succeed as adults and pay it forward to future generations.³ The policy and programmatic changes that support these interconnected and systemic efforts happen on a continuum, and over time. The Two-Gen approach begins with establishing a new mindset focused on family-centered program design, continues with the alignment of services across multiple organizations, and culminates in providing coordinated services to children and parents together, while tracking family outcomes over the long term.⁴

With generous support from The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Human Services Assembly (the Assembly) sought to explore how three states are developing and implementing a Two-Gen framework in practice and gain insight about how to translate support for an intentional Two-Gen approach into a coordinated implementation strategy. This report identifies key themes and lessons that other states may consider as they pursue the implementation of their own Two-Gen framework.

Research Methods

Based on an environmental scan of all fifty states and consultation with national experts, the Assembly focused its research on three states—Connecticut, Colorado, and Utah. These states have established support for the Two-Gen approach and are beginning to align service delivery at the statewide level to maximize outcomes for both generations together. From this starting point, the Assembly conducted a
series of qualitative interviews with stakeholders in each state aimed at: (1) developing a deeper understanding about the policies supporting the Two-Gen approach that currently exist in each state; (2) defining where programs are aligned; and (3) identifying where ongoing efforts in each state could close the gaps in policy and program implementation that impede statewide systems change. The interviews focused on policies and programs at the state level, but many programs administered by state agencies are aided by federal funding and may be delivered by local agencies. As a result, the interview subjects ranged from state agency officials to local government officials to private-sector stakeholders.

After collecting and reporting the “story” of how each state arrived at its current stage of Two-Gen implementation, the report brings to bear the salient inflection points from the interviews across all three states. These inflection points represent challenges that the three states have faced and, in many cases, the solutions chosen to address them. The Assembly’s analysis of these challenges and solutions is merely the starting point for advocates and practitioners at the state and national level to utilize as they begin, or continue, to further Two-Gen policy and programmatic changes throughout the country.

State Two-Gen Implementation: Connecticut, Colorado, Utah

The Assembly’s report provides: (1) background and context for the Two-Gen approach taken by each state; (2) an overview of Two-Gen programs at the state level; and (3) a “policy map” providing a graphic representation of Two-Gen framework in each state. The Assembly’s research found that the approach in each state can be generalized as follows:

Utah

The state legislature created an interagency commission to explore the extent of intergenerational poverty in the state. Since then, the Commission has developed a work plan to align agency data collection and programs through to the caseworker level to ensure that services are more intentionally and effectively connected. The Department of Workforce Services has also launched demonstration projects which are delivering and evaluating the outcomes of intensive and integrated Two-Gen services at the local level.

Colorado

The state’s agency-driven approach begins with the interagency coordination provided by the Two-Generation Manager at the Colorado Department of Human Services. Each office of the Department of Human Services employs specific strategies, based on that office’s target population, to align services under the Two-Gen framework. In addition, the Colorado legislature recently amended the state’s policy with respect to the child care subsidy program, expanding access and increasing the quality of child care for low-income families.

Connecticut

The state’s Two-Gen framework is administered by the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, which is a non-partisan agency of the Connecticut General Assembly. The Commission is managing a pilot program that will build Two-Gen systems and program models within six communities in the state. Stakeholders hope the lessons learned from the pilots will serve as a template for scaling up the Two-Gen approach statewide.
Utah

In 2012, the Utah State Legislature initiated the state’s approach to addressing two-generation poverty. With bipartisan support, the legislature passed laws in consecutive sessions to identify the target populations and implement strategies to increase the coordination of services to families.

Highlights of Utah’s approach include:

• **Determining the Scope of the Challenge.** The first step in the process was determining the extent to which Utahns experience poverty across generations.

• **Creating a Long-Term Plan.** After identifying the depth of intergenerational poverty across the state, the legislature created a cross-agency commission to develop evidence-based poverty mitigation interventions. The Commission identified four target cohort populations and developed a long-term plan, setting goals and benchmarks to increase the economic stability of each cohort and ultimately cultivate well-being across generations. The plan defines concrete steps for aligning agency services and coordinating case management down to the family level.

• **Statewide Action.** Based on the Commission’s recommendations, agencies have begun sharing data and experimenting with demonstration projects. Agencies are targeting services to each cohort across four focus areas: (1) early childhood development; (2) education; (3) family economic stability; and (4) family health.

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**Assessing the Challenge**

In 2012, State Senator Stuart Reid (R-Ogden) introduced the Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Act (the Act) to determine whether the struggle for family well-being he was seeing in Ogden existed throughout the state, and whether there was a correlation between the likelihood of the use of public assistance programs from one generation to the next. The bill, which passed unanimously, required the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) to assess the level of intergenerational poverty in the state and report its findings back to the legislature.

DWS defined “intergenerational recipients” as adults, ages 21 to 40, who received public assistance during the current year and who also received public assistance as children. DWS found that, in 2012, 38.8% of all adults receiving public assistance across the state fit this definition of intergenerational poverty. This amounted to 4.2% of the total state population. Further, 67.4% of adults classified as facing intergenerational poverty had at least one child in their household. The data collected by DWS helped establish intergenerational poverty as an important issue impacting Utah, and one worthy of addressing with policy-based solutions.

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**State-Level Action to Address the Challenge**

As a result of the DWS report, in 2013 the Utah Legislature followed up on the 2012 Act by enacting legislation that created the Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission (the Commission). The Commission’s role is to:
Two-Gen Implementation in Utah

KEY
- Data-sharing MOU’s
- "No-Wrong-Door"
- Informal Coordination via Client
- Case Workers

LEGISLATURE
Intergenerational Poverty Act

INTERAGENCY COMMISSION

STATE AGENCIES
- Workforce Services
- Dept of Health
- Human Services
- Board of Education
- Juvenile Courts

PROGRAM EXAMPLES
- SNAP-Ed
- Medicaid
- Model of Care
- Afterschool Grants
- "Homeworks"
- School Readiness Initiative
- "Healthy Utah"
- Community Schools
- Academic Reports
- Judicial Training

Next Generation Kids

TANF

Next Generation Kids Program

Intergenerational Poverty Act

POPULATIONS
- IGP Young Adult
- IGP Kids
- IGP Adults
- At-risk of IGP Kids

Intergenerational Poverty Act

POPULATIONS
- IGP Young Adult
- IGP Kids
- IGP Adults
- At-risk of IGP Kids

Intergenerational Poverty Act

Next Generation Kids

Family Success Coach

Case Management Plan

Early Childhood Development
Education
Family Economic Stability
Family Health

Family

Detail: Coordination of Next Generation Kids Program
Refine and continue the data collection and reporting process initiated in 2012;
Implement data-driven policies and programs addressing intergenerational poverty in the state;
Improve coordination between state agencies down to the case worker level; and
Develop a five and ten-year plan for achieving these goals.

The Commission is comprised of the executive directors of the state Department of Workforce Services, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, the state superintendent of schools, and the head of the juvenile courts system. The legislature also established an Intergenerational Poverty Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee) comprised of advocacy groups, academic experts, faith-based organizations, and local government officials to offer recommendations for how the Commission can best achieve the goals of the Act.

Defining Target Populations and Policy Areas

The Commission was tasked with defining the populations and policy areas to include in the initiative. Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive measurement for the number of Utahns facing intergenerational poverty than had been used up to that point, the Commission defined four Intergenerational Poverty (IGP) cohorts to track changes over time (Table 1).12

With these cohorts in place, the Commission identified four policy areas within which to focus its efforts: (1) early childhood development; (2) education; (3) family economic stability; and (4) family health.

A Five and Ten-Year Plan

As mandated by the Act, the Commission prepared a comprehensive “five and ten-year plan” to serve as a roadmap for the long-term implementation of the intergenerational approach to poverty. While the plan, published in March 2015,14 has not been in place long enough to yield meaningful outcome measures, a summary of highlights and potential challenges may be useful for states that are considering their own Two-Gen poverty mitigation agenda.

In the plan, the Commission sets out policy recommendations, goals, and measurable benchmarks for each of the four intergenerational focus areas. The Commission began collecting data in 2014 to serve as the baseline data points for tracking progress toward the benchmarks and goals over the next several years.15 Table 2 (page 6) summarizes the primary goals for each of the four intergenerational focus areas identified in the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Name</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Public Assistance (PA) Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IGP Adult</td>
<td>Adults ages 21 to 43</td>
<td>Received PA for twelve consecutive months as a child and during the year of measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGP Young Adult</td>
<td>Adults ages 18 to 21</td>
<td>Received PA for twelve consecutive months as a child and during the year of measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGP Children</td>
<td>Children under 18</td>
<td>Children of the IGP Adult cohort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children at-risk of IGP</td>
<td>Children under 18</td>
<td>Children of parents who received PA during the year of measurement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Utah Commission is using data provided by agencies such as the DWS, the Utah Department of Health, and the Utah Department of Human Services to track the cumulative services received by the IGP cohorts. These serve as the basis for the indicators used to measure progress toward the benchmarks established in the five and ten-year plan.

In 2013, agencies began executing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to define the scope of information shared between agencies for data collection and tracking purposes. DWS and the Department of Human Services, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) executed an MOU authorizing the sharing of certain individual records and other, more sensitive data, in aggregate. For example, DCFS must send DWS the aggregate number of individuals within each IGP cohort who have been diagnosed with certain mental health issues, who were victims of abuse, or who were perpetrators of abuse. Even though individual records containing personal information are generally protected under state and federal privacy laws, sharing the information in aggregate, without personal identifiers, enables DWS to determine the extent of IGP enrollment across multiple DCFS and DWS programs. DWS currently has similar MOUs with the Utah Department of Health, criminal justice entities, and the Utah Data Alliance, which is a private collaborative partnership that tracks longitudinal education data.

### Tracking Data Across Agencies

The array of services with the potential to benefit both generations of a family are administered by multiple state agencies. For example, the Department of Health administers Medicaid provisions, while DWS administers job training programs and child care assistance. Unless these programs are coordinated to serve both generations of a family at the same time, the potential cumulative effect of the Two-Gen approach may be lost.

### Coordination of Services

As in most states, the array of services with the potential to benefit both generations of a family are administered by multiple state agencies. For example, the Department of Health administers Medicaid provisions, while DWS administers job training programs and child care assistance. Unless these programs are coordinated to serve both generations of a family at the same time, the potential cumulative effect of the Two-Gen approach may be lost.
Case Worker Level Coordination

The Act mandates that the Commission facilitate improved coordination of intergenerational efforts down to the case worker level. To meet this requirement, the agencies comprising the Commission are in the process of negotiating MOUs to exchange information at the individual program participant level. For some agencies, like DCFS, federal privacy laws have been a significant hurdle to the transfer of individualized data to other state agencies. However, the Commission is currently developing agreements that will create a method for flagging individual records without disclosing confidential data.

This effort will begin with agreements between DWS, the Department of Health, and the Department of Human Services to share whether a family who is engaged with one agency is also engaged with the programs of the other two agencies. While the agreements themselves will not permit the disclosure of specific information about the family, case workers will still have enough information to request a waiver directly from the family to disclose, on a case-by-case basis, additional information as needed to provide the complete range of available services. Although each IGP family may still have multiple case workers assigned to them, these data-sharing agreements will help identify the common pool of prospective clients and develop joint case management plans.

Program Implementation

DWS and other agencies are beginning to target existing programs toward the IGP cohorts and demonstrate the outcomes of a fully-integrated Two-Gen program on a small scale.

Next Generation Kids (NGK) Demonstration Project

In September 2014, DWS launched the Next Generation Kids (NGK) demonstration project to test strategies for leveraging the state’s Family Employment Program (FEP) to address intergenerational poverty. FEP is a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded program providing financial support to low-income parents who are seeking employment.

NGK is being implemented in Ogden. The families invited to participate in NGK are selected from a pool of former participants in the FEP program who have not yet exhausted their time-based eligibility under TANF. NGK utilizes the flexibility permitted under TANF to fill in gaps in services. For example, NGK provides enrolled families with community-based early education, parent employment plans, adult education opportunities, financial stability workshops, and family coaching. These programs are delivered at local schools, community centers, and through in-home visits.

DWS markets the NGK program to the subset of the IGP adult cohort who have at least one child in their household, otherwise identified by the Commission as the IGP children cohort. Eligible parents may then choose to enroll their family in the intensive NGK program or remain with their current DWS case manager. Each NGK site is typically capped at 25 families. Each family who chooses to enroll becomes part of an NGK cohort and is assigned a “family success coach.” Family success coaches are trained in skills such as trauma-informed care and motivational interviews.
A TWO-GENERATION FRAMEWORK

Coaches work with the participating family to create a case management plan incorporating the four intergenerational focus areas to address the obstacles families often face while trying to achieve long-term financial stability.

During 2015, the NGK programs created such plans for 31 families. Of these families, ten adults obtained employment, four received their high school diploma, and ten enrolled in job training. In 2016, NGK will expand to serve two new neighborhoods in Salt Lake County. In time, DWS plans to more broadly incorporate those NGK strategies which have yielded positive results into the statewide case management structure of the Family Employment Program.

Two-Gen Aligned Programs

Utah policymakers are working to more intentionally align existing services and systems for children and adults with the goal of addressing intergenerational poverty. Following are examples of recent policy decisions that either specifically target the Commission-identified IGP cohorts for services, or require that the program align with the Commission’s five and ten-year plan.

SNAP-Ed. Utah’s SNAP-Ed program, Food $ense, uses federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) funds to provide in-person courses about nutrition, budgeting, food preparation, food safety, and the importance of physical activity. In 2015, DWS partnered with Utah State University to ensure that IGP populations are specifically targeted for marketing efforts in order to increase IGP enrollment in the program. In comprehensive case management demonstration projects, like NGK, SNAP-Ed is a required component of the plan for all participating IGP families.

Afterschool Funding. In 2014, Utah enacted the Intergenerational Poverty Interventions in Public Schools Act, also introduced by Senator Reid. The Act appropriated $1 million annually from the state education fund for grants funding afterschool programs targeted to the IGP cohorts. The State Board of Education reviews grant proposals from Local Education Agencies (LEAs) based on: (1) the academic needs and interests of the participating students; (2) the intended outcomes of the program, and how they will be measured; and (3) how the proposed programs will improve the academic achievement of children affected by intergenerational poverty. The State Board of Education is required to provide the Commission with an annual report on the program.

Early Childhood Learning Opportunities. The Utah School Readiness Initiative, enacted in 2014, created the School Readiness Board, distinct from the State Board of Education, to award grants to LEAs and private entities for high-quality school readiness programs. While the term “intergenerational poverty” was not included in the original statute, in 2016, the state passed legislation (S.B. 101) that expanded the School Readiness Initiative and added provisions specifically targeting IGP children. For example, new seats created by grants awarded under the expansion provision must be reserved for IGP, or at-risk of IGP students. Further, it provides scholarships to high-quality pre-K programs for IGP or at-risk IGP students.

Community Schools. In 2016, the Utah legislature provided a $2 million appropriation to establish community schools in Utah. Grants will be used to establish partnerships between local school districts and community partners to improve outcomes for low-income students as they progress through school. Grantees will coordinate and align services to students, as well as services to the families and communities of the students. Partners must develop shared goals, outcomes, and measurement practices that align with the Commission’s five and ten-year intergenerational poverty plan.

New seats created by grants awarded under the school readiness expansion provision must be reserved for IGP, or at-risk of IGP, students. Further, the grants provide scholarships to high-quality pre-K programs for IGP, or at-risk of IGP, students.
Colorado

Colorado’s state-level Two-Gen efforts are largely driven by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). Along with this agency-led effort, a grassroots coalition of children’s well-being advocates engaged with the state legislature to recommend improvements to existing public human services funding streams that would increase enrollment and accessibility of federal and state programs that support two generations together.41

Highlights of Colorado’s approach include:

• **State Agency Leadership.** Today, most programs falling within the scope of Two-Gen are administered by CDHS and linked through its Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes. CDHS has used the administrative rulemaking process to focus federal, state, and private funding streams to provide multiple sources of support to both generations of families struggling to sustain economic stability. In addition to the formal administration of agency programs, CDHS has taken the lead on increasing informal coordination across divisions within the agency. CDHS created a dedicated Two-Generation Manager position to oversee the integration of human services within the agency. Significant efforts are currently underway to expand the scope of Two-Gen programs beyond CDHS into other state agencies.

• **State Policy Changes.** Beginning in August 2013, a collaborative of 60 private stakeholders began developing recommendations to expand the state’s child care subsidy program using the Two-Gen lens.42 The General Assembly’s nonpartisan Legislative Council then created temporary commissions during consecutive legislative sessions to solicit public input and inform the legislative debate surrounding the subsequent state-level policy changes, which ultimately became the amendments to the child care subsidy program.43

**State Agency Coordination**

**Colorado Department of Human Services Programs**

This section highlights the Two-Gen strategies in place in Colorado’s Department of Human Services (CDHS) as of spring 2016. CDHS is divided into offices, each serving one of five programmatic areas: (1) Children, Youth, and Families; (2) Economic Security; (3) Early Childhood; (4) Behavioral Health; and (5) Community Access and Independence. Three offices of executive management supervise these programmatic offices: (1) Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes; (2) Chief Medical Officer; and (3) Office of Administrative Solutions.44

In 2014, CDHS created a dedicated Two-Gen Manager staff position within its Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes (OPSO) to: (1) coordinate the implementation of the Two-Gen approach across the Department’s five programmatic offices; and (2) work with each office to develop consistent outcome measures for Two-Gen aligned programs across the Department.

**Training & Outreach**

OPSO has developed an ongoing work plan to incorporate the Two-Gen approach throughout the agency. Because there is no statutory mandate to coordinate the delivery of services, most coordination happens organically, or as a result of periodic intra-agency meetings and training. These trainings are designed to embed the Two-Gen theme across the department. The goal is to foster coordination between staff who are
Two-Gen Implementation in Colorado

STATE AGENCIES

GOVERNOR

STATE BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES

COLORADO DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES (TWO-GEN MANAGER)

STATE AGENCY

LOCAL AGENCIES

POPULATIONS

Community Access & Independence

Children, Youth, & Families

Economic Security

Early Childhood

Behavioral Health

Program Examples

Child Welfare

Child Support

Employment & Benefits

Early Care and Learning

Community Programs

Youth Corrections

Domestic Violence

Food & Energy Assistance

Community & Family Supports

KEY

Coordination via the Office of Performance & Strategic Planning

“No-Wrong-Door”

Two-Gen Special Project

Detail: Role of the Two-Gen Manager

CDHS INTERAGENCY TWO-GEN COORDINATION

TWO-GEN MANAGER

Ongoing Internal Coordination

Training and Technical Assistance

Tracking and Monitoring Progress

Quarterly Interagency Meetings

Coordination with Non-CDHS State Agencies
engaged with the Two-Gen approach to create process-based efficiencies in service delivery where possible.

During the fall of 2015, the Two-Gen Manager coordinated training for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) staff at two, four-hour workshops. These workshops trained home visitors on the additional supports available to families that fall within the Two-Gen framework. CDHS has additional trainings planned for 2016 to further embed Two-Gen approaches into program implementation.

Alignment of Services
Since 2014, OPSO has also organized its intra-agency work plan around the core focus areas of the Two-Gen approach and developed a special project in many CHDS offices, all coordinated by the Two-Gen Manager. Key gaps in service delivery were identified that had the potential to be addressed through increased coordination and data-sharing across two or more CDHS offices. Each office is now coordinating to enhance service integration within its assigned programmatic area under the existing policy framework. The Offices meet with the CDHS Executive Management Team quarterly to benchmark their progress. A summary of the Two-Gen strategy for each office and examples of how each office is meeting this challenge in a unique way are detailed in Table 3.

**Table 3: Two-Generation Coordination Between CDHS Offices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDHS Office</th>
<th>Two-Gen Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Children, Youth, &amp; Families</td>
<td>Division of Youth Corrections will engage the parents of children involved in the corrections system in efforts to strengthen the entire family unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Economic Security</td>
<td>Leverage engagement with child support system to help non-custodial parents gain job skills and employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Early Childhood</td>
<td>Increase percentage of Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) participants who are enrolled in SNAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Behavioral Health</td>
<td>Coordinate with clients of other CDHS offices to increase referrals into “wrap-around care,” a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant-funded program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Community Access &amp; Independence</td>
<td>This office does not have a special project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Office of Children, Youth, & Families, Division of Youth Corrections. The Division, which historically only engaged the child generation of the family, is now working to strengthen the family unit holistically. The Division surveys parents at each state-operated youth corrections facility, on an ongoing basis, to inform its strategy for system improvement. In conjunction, Youth Corrections Client Managers completed a training about the theory behind Two-Gen, the PEAK no-wrong-door portal (detailed on page 13), and effective family engagement. The Division’s strategy is based on the ecological model for public health, which addresses risk factors at the individual, familial, community, and societal levels.

The Office of Economic Security. This Office’s strategy is to shift the child support program from a strictly “enforcement, parent-focused system,” to a mechanism that can meet the needs of noncustodial parents and children “through family-centered assessment and case management.” A subset of noncustodial parents who are currently making child support payments will be assessed based on the “frequency and amount” of payment, and categorized for additional services and benefits. For example, a noncustodial parent making regular but small payments, might be offered additional job training supports. The Office plans to scale up the family-centered approach by the end of 2018.
The Office of Economic Security also oversees the Colorado Parent Employment Project (CO-PEP), which is a National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Demonstration Project “intended to reduce barriers to payment and increase employment among noncustodial parents over a five-year period.”49 The program is administered in six counties, and provides intensive case management, enhanced child support services, 16-hour parenting capacity curriculum, intensive employment services, and other work supports. Based on an evaluation through March 31, 2016, the halfway point for the demonstration, CO-PEP has enrolled 659 participants in enhanced services for at least a six-month period. Child support payments among the group increased by 10%, and 74% of participants were employed after twelve months.

The Office of Early Childhood. This Office is seeking to increase the percentage of SNAP-eligible participants in the child care subsidy program who enroll in SNAP benefits. The goal is to ensure that families who participate in the child care program also receive proper nutrition to bolster the child’s physical and cognitive health to increase early-learning outcomes. The Office of Early Childhood is working with the Office of Economic Security to share data to determine which families receiving the child care subsidy are not enrolled in SNAP. The Office is presently conducting outreach to eligible families, both directly and through the county offices where the greatest number of applicable families currently reside.

The Office of Behavioral Health. This Office is focused on increasing the efficiency of the referral process into the Office of Behavioral Health from the population of clients currently engaged with other CDHS offices. Referred individuals will receive “trauma-informed wraparound” services to reduce case manager case-loads, serve both generations, and create individualized plans that address cultural, social, emotional, cognitive, and economic needs. This cross-office client identification system will be integrated in the twelve communities where wraparound care is currently funded by a grant from SAMHSA.50 OPSO is working with the Office of Behavioral Health to apply for additional federal funding to expand wraparound services in the state.

Cross-Agency Partnerships
As the lead Two-Gen agency, CDHS has begun working with other state departments to begin applying the Two-Gen approach to their programs, as well.

Colorado Opportunity Project
The Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (HCPF) is leading a collaborative partnership with the Department of Health and Environment and CDHS to solicit proposals for community-based interventions to remove barriers to economic stability at each life stage, from birth to adulthood.51 The goal of the Project is to deliver evidence-based initiatives and community-based promising practices that remove roadblocks for all Coloradans, so that everyone will have the opportunity to reach and maintain their full potential. The project is based on the idea that opportunities (or obstacles) are presented at each stage of life, from family formation to decline and end-of-life, requiring a focus on interventions shown to make a difference in creating pathways and removing obstacles at each life stage. The coalition of state departments, in partnership with local agencies and private partners with expertise in each programmatic area, will seek to implement such identified evidence-based initiatives and community-based promising practices.

Access to Success Project
The U.S. Department of Labor recently awarded a grant to the Community College of Aurora through the Strengthening Working Families Initiative. In partnership with the Office of Early Childhood at CDHS, Access to Success aims to help parents obtain entry-level jobs in high-demand, high-growth career pathways, while assisting them to overcome child care, academic, and financial barriers as they pursue career advancement. The project was designed with the Two-Gen framework in mind to assist both parents and their children reach positive education and economic outcomes.

Strategies Supporting Two-Generations
Colorado has a number of programs that support the Two-Gen framework across state agencies. Many of these programs are small in scale, and are intended to generate data about the potential for better outcomes by targeting both generations together under the existing umbrella of programs. Others are state policy-level changes that are designed to increase access to high-quality services for low-income families statewide. Under both strategies, stakeholders are taking steps to leverage the salient change in culture at the agency level to continue coordinating efforts to a holistic approach to family well-being.
It is critical to provide low to moderate-income families with access to high-quality, affordable child care that fosters healthy child development and school readiness, while at the same time promoting family self-sufficiency and attachment to the workforce.

**PEAK**

PEAK is Colorado’s online portal to check eligibility and apply for a variety of public benefits programs. This inter-Department online public benefits application tool eases the burden of coordination by providing Coloradans with access to food assistance, cash assistance, early childhood education, child care programs, and Medicaid.

**Employment First (SNAP E&T)**

Colorado is working to increase utilization of SNAP Employment & Training, called Employment First, in the state. During fiscal year 2015, Employment First operated in 28 of 64 counties but has since expanded to 46 counties and further expansions are being planned. Employment First was recently rebranded using the tagline “Support, Connect, Succeed” to convey the essential purpose of the program to participants. The new tagline makes Employment First more appealing to parents who are otherwise exempt from the program. Although the precise number of participants with dependents is not available, evidence suggests that a significant number of families with children are participating in the program.

**Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP)**

In 2014, Colorado adopted changes to its child care subsidy, the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) to more fully align the program with the state’s broader Two-Gen strategy by:

- Providing $9.9 million in state funding, independent of federal block grants, for the 2014–15 fiscal year;
- Raising the income limit for enrollment;
- Revising the reimbursement rate methodology for child care providers;
- Providing incentives for providers to improve the quality of care;
- Providing continuous, twelve-month eligibility before redetermination is required; and
- Increasing the flexibility for each county to determine what qualifies as an eligible activity.

Support in the state legislature for the changes to the CCCAP program was generated, in part, by leveraging the value of the Two-Gen approach. For example, while CCCAP had been previously positioned as a work support for parents, advocates argued that improving access to high-quality child care would lead to positive outcomes for both children and parents by: (1) fostering healthy early childhood development; and (2) promoting economic stability by supporting parents’ employment and education goals.

Legislators added the following language to the legislative declaration of the law, acknowledging the importance of this approach:

> It is critical to provide low to moderate-income families with access to high-quality, affordable child care that fosters healthy child development and school readiness, while at the same time promoting family self-sufficiency and attachment to the workforce.

In 2014, the Colorado legislature also bolstered the policy changes to the CCCAP program with two laws designed to increase families’ access to high-quality child care and promote economic stability.

**“Cliff Effect” Pilot Program.** The CCCAP “Cliff Effect” Pilot Program seeks to mitigate the adverse incentive created when a parent begins earning wages that raises that family’s income above the eligibility threshold for child care subsidies. The Bell Policy Center found that nearly one-third of the families participating in CCCAP have taken actions to limit their income to remain below the income threshold for the subsidy. Rather than immediately withdrawing all child care support, the pilot program allows counties to gradually withdraw child care benefits by increasing the parent co-payment as family earnings increase. The Cliff Effect pilot was initially limited to ten counties. In 2016, the legislature amended the program to allow additional counties in the state to participate at the discretion of CDHS.

**Child Care Tax Credit.** The legislature also de-coupled the state’s child care tax credit from an individual’s federal child care tax credit to increase the number of low-income Coloradans eligible for the benefit. This tax credit will permit more families who receive the CCCAP subsidy, but still pay significant out-of-pocket expenses for child care, to recoup some of their out-of-pocket costs.
Connecticut

In 2015, the Connecticut General Assembly budgeted $3 million in state-funded grants to test Two-Generation strategies across six communities in the state. With guidance from the state’s Two-Generational Interagency Working Group and private partners, policymakers hope the pilot sites will lead to “a long-term plan to adopt a two-generational model for the delivery for services … on a statewide basis.”

Highlights of the Connecticut Approach include:

- **Legislative Agency Leadership.** The Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors, an agency of the Connecticut General Assembly, serves as a liaison between government and private groups and provides recommendations to the legislature and the governor for systems changes and model policies that will improve child outcomes in health, safety, and learning. The Commission helped establish Two-Gen as a priority for the state after an extensive research and planning process.

- **Pilot Communities.** Policymakers in the state have embraced the view that keeping the family at the center of the program will result in service choices that will lead to better outcomes for the families. The State Legislature established a pilot project to implement Two-Gen in six communities across the state. Policymakers in Connecticut expressly aim to use the information gained from the six pilot communities to replicate an integrated Two-Gen framework statewide that braids federal TANF funds with state and local resources.

Identifying the Two-Gen Need in Connecticut

The Commission’s 2013 annual report was the first government publication to propose examples of potential state systems changes using the Two-Generation approach to more efficiently reduce poverty in the state. The following year, the state budget implementation bill was the first law in the state to include explicit Two-Gen language. The 2014 Act required the Commission to develop “a two-generational school readiness plan” that provided recommendations about supports for high-quality early childhood learning coupled with “intensified workforce training” and other programs serving the parent population. The Act required that the plan prioritize families with children ages five and under who live at or below 185% of the federal poverty guideline.

The Two-Gen plan was submitted to the legislature in December 2014. The plan focused on increasing simultaneous delivery of services to parents and children that provide quality early learning, pathways to work for parents, and related support services. The plan explains the challenges facing low-income families across the state as a means to encourage political support for the Two-Gen approach. The Commission suggested that much of the benefit of Two-Gen-friendly policies could be achieved without extensive new funding, and, instead, through “an assessment of how funds are being used, with redesign for improved program and policy alignments that support ‘family outcomes.’”
Two-Gen Implementation in Connecticut

**STATE AGENCIES**
- Early Childhood
- Social Services
- Education
- Housing
- Labor
- Corrections
- Public Health
- Transportation

**INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP**
- Court

**COMMUNITIES**
- Meriden
- Norwalk
- Bridgeport
- New Haven
- Colchester
- Hartford

**POPULATIONS**

**KEY**
- Interagency Coordination

Detail: Example Pilot Project Framework

**United Way of Conn. (Fiduciary)**
- Family Advisory Panel
- Lead Agency Coordinator / Administrator

**Local Govt. Agency**
- Navigator
- Early Learning
- Adult Education
- Job Training
- Housing
- In-kind Service from Private Partners
- Transportation

Family
The plan highlights a few examples of how other states have moved forward along the Two-Gen continuum, and provides high-level programmatic shifts for the legislature to consider in advancing the Two-Gen framework in the state. These recommendations are summarized in Table 4.

The Commission also recognized that developing long-term support for the Two-Gen approach would require a culture shift at the legislative and agency levels to embed the concept of Two-Gen as a means of producing measurable outcomes and greater return on investment of taxpayer dollars.

### Two-Gen Pilot Program Planning

The Connecticut General Assembly established the “two-generational school readiness and workforce development pilot program” in 2015. The 2015 state budget implementation bill created the Two-Generational Interagency Working Group (Working Group), which includes the state executive agencies, court system, members of the legislature, and private partner organizations, to oversee the pilot program design and implementation. The Commission on Children is responsible for administrative support to the Working Group. The bill designates six communities for the pilot locations and requires that the program “shall be funded by state and available private [funds],” though the bill does not provide a specific appropriation. The Working Group is tasked with planning, designing, and evaluating outcomes for the projects.

The Working Group released a guidance document in January 2016 outlining the framework and mission of each pilot project and the timeline for implementation. The principal criterion for evaluating each community’s proposal was how the program design “intentionally links, coordinates, and aligns high-quality services for children with high-quality service and supports for parents [, or ] caregivers.”

The Connecticut General Assembly ultimately provided approximately $2.76 million in total funding for the pilot program to be divided among the pilot sites based on project type, geographic location, and the number of families served. Implementation plans were due to the Commission on Children by March 4, 2016, and the original grant period was set to run from April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. As of May 2016, each pilot community had received a letter approving its project, subject to ongoing minor revisions to project design.

### Pilot Program Implementation

#### Target Population and Goals

The Working Group guidance directs the pilot communities to target families with household earnings that are 75% of the state median income or below, or equivalent to 300% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. The guidance proposes the following systems changes to intentionally link and coordinate services to both generations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Implementation Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Add adult programs to existing child services</td>
<td>Integrate adult English language learning (ELL) into children’s preschool ELL program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add child program to existing adult services</td>
<td>Provide high-quality child care at adult education and training facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merge child and adult programs at existing service locations</td>
<td>Community-based, case managed program to integrate workforce development, subsidized housing, and infant care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide both child and parent services at “intentional hub site”</td>
<td>Locate services for parent and child at community college, housing program, or family resource center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale up programs from demonstration projects</td>
<td>Employ pilot sites to create “system designs” incorporating Two-Gen strategies for larger scale replication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Bring the family back to the center of service delivery through strong parent involvement strategies;
• Bolster the quality of services by streamlining services and establishing a community-state partnership; and
• Provide concurrent work opportunities to parents and high-quality child-learning through grade three through: (a) co-location of services; (b) “no-wrong-door” intake; (c) referral networks; and (d) virtual or remote service delivery.

Each pilot is expected to report on outcomes achieved through the project and to participate in a statewide evaluation of the project.

Grant Application Criteria
Each pilot community was invited to submit one implementation proposal after interested stakeholders had the opportunity to collaborate. Each proposal was required to include a description of the poverty issues facing the community, the target population, project design, recruitment strategy, project goals, data collection, and budget. The pilot communities were also advised to include ways for the project design to transition to the statewide level using TANF funding. The proposals were evaluated on, among others, the following criteria:

1. How well does the proposal target low-income families?
2. How were parents involved in the program development process?
3. Are the enrollment guidelines clear?
4. How does the lead, or backbone, agency have the unique capacity to coordinate and facilitate the various stakeholders?
5. How well are specific outcomes defined?
6. How does the program intentionally connect adult and child services?
7. How is the pilot project different from coordinated services already in place in the particular community?
8. How does the project reflect “a commitment to equity?”
9. How will data be collected, monitored, and evaluated?

Table 5: Overview of Pilot Sites, May 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Lead Agency</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Estimated # of Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>United Way of Coastal Fairfield County</td>
<td>Young parent families of children 3 and under, with a particular focus on families where the mother is age 18–21.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colchester</td>
<td>Collaborative for Colchester’s Children</td>
<td>Families with children 8 and under who are enrolled in, or receive support from, specified programs.</td>
<td>Not publically available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Hartford</td>
<td>Move UP! Collaborative</td>
<td>Families with at least one child age 8 or under, where at least one parent is unemployed, underemployed, or seeking further education.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>United Way of Meriden and the local Board of Education</td>
<td>Families who meet the eligibility guidelines established by the Working Group.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven</td>
<td>United Way of Greater New Haven</td>
<td>Custodial to noncustodial mothers and fathers; grandparents caring for young children.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwalk</td>
<td>Human Services Council of Connecticut</td>
<td>Eligible families living in the Colonial Village public housing apartments.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Pilot Site Proposals
The six communities plan to take varying approaches to certain aspects of each program’s design. For example, some communities will target specific housing communities, while others will receive referrals through the public school system or through existing parent education programs. Table 5 provides summaries of each pilot site, some of which may have undergone minor revisions since they were first presented to the Working Group in March 2016.72

The Working Group has already gained insights from the pilot project about how the Two-Gen approach must be adapted when moving from a theoretical model to practical implementation. For example, stakeholders have found that greater attention to planning and process evaluation is vital to overall program success. Further, parent engagement has been one of the most valuable tools in developing programs, and Two-Gen, in reality, often involves a “third generation,” where a grandparent acts as the primary caretaker of a grandchild. As such, programs should also be tailored to fit the unique needs of these circumstances.

Pilot Site Evaluation Process
As provided in the grant application guidance, the evaluation of each pilot program must include both a formative and consequential element. Moreover, the General Assembly passed legislation to revise the outcomes that will be measured.73 The program, as amended, requires that the design of each pilot project is informed by “technical assistance in best practices” and by “members of low-income households” in the community. The bill also amends the reporting provisions to require the Working Group to consult with “state and national evaluators” to develop outcomes that measure “the areas of school readiness and school success” and “workforce readiness, work success, and family support outcomes.”

Given the relatively short, fourteen-month, window for service delivery, the formative evaluation will focus on determining: (1) the nature of any systems changes at the state and local service-delivery level; (2) the extent of parent involvement throughout the process; and (3) how the pilot programs differ based on their unique demographic and geographic makeup. To ensure the evaluations are consistent and robust across the pilot communities, the Connecticut Association for Human Services is providing technical assistance to the lead agency at each pilot location.

Two-Gen Alignment
While the primary locus of the Two-Gen approach in Connecticut is the pilot program, this section highlights the state agency-level opportunities that Two-Gen stakeholders are hoping to leverage moving forward.

Culture-Change and Data-Sharing
Promoting professional development and best practices through the Two-Gen lens is one way to embed a methodology that considers Two-Gen ideals when creating policies and service-delivery processes. This became clear when feedback from the pilot communities showed that one of the most significant hurdles to program development was closing the gaps in services that result from disparate application, eligibility, and receipt of services between and among the array of local, state, federal, and private human services.74

Another approach to fragmented and siloed service provisions that Connecticut is evaluating is “middleware” data-sharing processes to link agency data sets. Middleware solutions allow two operating systems to share data without requiring expensive, and complex, complete systems integration. For processes such as identifying common clients, middleware can be a cost-effective way to increase service integration and efficiency.

Expanded Eligibility for Child Care Assistance
In 2016, The Connecticut legislature expanded the list of activities for parents to qualify for the child care subsidy, Care4Kids. Enrollment in a two or four-year degree program will now qualify as an employment activity for participation in the child care subsidy program.75 The Commission on Women, Children and Seniors gave testimony in support of the bill as a means to close an “opportunity gap” for poor families. This policy change aims to increase parental autonomy, and provide access to high-quality learning for children with the greatest need.76
Recommendations: Overarching Policy Opportunities, Challenges, and Lessons

The Assembly’s extensive review of the efforts underway in the three states revealed overarching opportunities and lessons for other states to consider as they develop their Two-Gen approaches.

Cultivating Political Leadership

All three states profiled in this report benefited from having government institutions and policymakers as strong Two-Gen leaders and allies.

- **Utah:** The first two phases of the Intergenerational Poverty agenda in Utah were shepherded through the legislature primarily by the efforts of former Senator Stuart Reid. Senator Reid generated bi-partisan support for Utah’s Two-Gen legislation using the story of the intergenerational poverty he witnessed in his own community. Governor Gary Herbert has also been a vocal proponent of the state’s efforts to address intergenerational poverty, connecting it to his goal to develop a skilled workforce by improving education outcomes. In 2016, Lieutenant Governor Spencer Cox joined the Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission as its chair. One of his key responsibilities is to facilitate the ongoing dialogue between Utah’s lawmakers and the Commission. The Lieutenant Governor’s role as a liaison to the legislature alleviates concerns raised by Senator Reid’s retirement in 2014. Two-Gen advocates feared that without Senator Reid to champion the effort with his colleagues, support for the approach in the legislature might eventually erode.

- **Colorado:** Reggie Bicha, executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), is a nationally recognized Two-Gen leader. In 2012, he was named one of Ascend at the Aspen Institute’s inaugural fellows. The fellowship program is intended to “fuel their work with a two-generation approach that invests in children and parents together”. Under his leadership, CDHS has taken actions to establish Two-Gen as a long-term priority, including by overhauling its administrative rules to increase program efficiency and by creating a Two-Gen staff position.

- **Connecticut:** The General Assembly created the Commission on Children in 1985 to promote the coordination of public programs and provide recommendations about legislation to increase well-being for children. On July 1, 2016, the Commission on Children merged with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Aging to become the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors. The Commission is a trusted resource for lawmakers, known for its ability to identify research-based policy solutions. The new Commission is specifically required to incorporate the Two-Gen approach and recommend systems innovations intended to reduce family poverty.

Ensuring Program Sustainability

The success of the Two-Gen approach hinges on a sustained, long-term commitment that withstands political cycles and trends. State-level stakeholders expressed concern that the initial enthusiasm for the Two-Gen approach could wane after demonstration projects end or temporary funding streams dry up. The following are some approaches states have taken to promote the long-term sustainability, and expansion, of Two-Gen programs:

- **Seek Statutory Authority.** Establishing statutory authority for the Two-Gen approach provides state agencies with a higher degree of security in the long-term viability of their efforts and provides a level of assurance that their efforts will survive leadership and staffing changes. This fosters stakeholders’ ability to focus more on aligning and coordinating services.
In a state where the legislature is less willing to provide a binding mandate for the state to apply the Two-Gen approach, legislative declarations may create non-binding, yet still persuasive, mechanisms of similar effect.

than on continually reinforcing the value proposition of the Two-Gen approach to lawmakers.

- **Pursue Legislative Declarations.** In a state where the legislature is less willing to provide a binding mandate for the state to apply the Two-Gen approach, legislative declarations may create non-binding, yet still persuasive, mechanisms of similar effect. For example, a legislative declaration in Colorado’s law changing its child care subsidy policy reframed the focus of the program as Two-Gen by emphasizing increasing children’s outcomes through access to high-quality early education, in addition to the more traditional framing of child care as a support to foster the parent’s employment outcomes. Although a declaration doesn’t have binding force of law, the precedent for what the legislature cares about can serve as a reminder to policymakers about the purpose of the program, even in subsequent sessions.

- **Develop Long-Range Plans.** Developing long-range plans that provide state-level goals and benchmarks can help maintain a focus on the effort over time. For example, the Utah Commission has set progressive five and ten-year benchmarks to guide agencies’ development of the best Two-Gen practices for their state.

- **Leverage and Bolster Existing Resources.** Many federal and state programs are flexible enough to leverage for Two-Gen efforts. For example, Utah utilized its TANF program to develop the Next Generation Kids demonstration project. Colorado is drawing on the flexibility of the SNAP Employment & Training to increase the number of parents participating in the program. States are allowed to transfer up to thirty percent of their TANF funds directly to the state’s Child Care Development Fund, which can help to more directly link parental employment and child development efforts. States can also appropriate state funds to these programs as a signal to federal policymakers that these programs are vital to family well-being in the state.

- **Embed Sustainability Into Program Design.** During the planning phase, consider how training and culture change can foster the long-term sustainability of Two-Gen strategies. For example, pilot program administrators can train existing staff in case management techniques that can be replicated after the pilot period has ended.

- **Leverage the Success of Small-Scale Programs.** Small scale programs can be used to incentivize permanent, incremental changes at the local or state level. For example, the Two-Gen pilot in Meriden, Connecticut is using grant funds to create “navigator” positions that will work directly with pilot program families and connect with the local offices of state agencies to ensure that both generations of enrolled families are receiving services and engaged with programs that align with the family’s goals. The goal is that local agencies will recognize the administrative and process benefits of the new position during the grant period and opt to continue funding the position.

- **Realistically Define Expectations.** Two-Gen research suggests that systems change happens over time, and on a continuum.80 The early stages of program alignment on that continuum are likely to produce modest outcomes for families. As a result, advocates face the challenge of selling the value of the Two-Gen approach, while also managing expectations about when the programs therein will produce tangible results.

### State-Level Management and Oversight

States adopting the Two-Gen approach need internal support and oversight to coordinate the state-level systems changes necessary to progress along the Two-Gen continuum. Dedicated staff positions and interagency work groups or commissions can provide momentum and guidance toward integration and more efficient delivery of human services within the Two-Gen framework. In either case, ownership of the day-to-day responsibilities should be firmly established to facilitate the ongoing coordination, planning, and implementation of the Two-Gen approach.

- **Dedicated Agency Staff.** One approach is by creating a dedicated Two-Gen staff position within an agency. Like the Two-Gen Manager in the Colorado Department
of Human Services, this approach facilitates informal networking among divisions within an agency, and can help to embed the Two-Gen lens in decision-making processes throughout the agency.

• **Interagency Commissions and Work Groups.** The Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission in Utah utilizes a coalition of members who hold existing positions in state agencies to develop a comprehensive, high-level, Two-Gen plan for agency actors to follow. The Commission is staffed by the Department of Workforce Services, which provides the day-to-day administrative support needed to keep the initiative moving forward. Similarly, the Interagency Working Group in Connecticut is helping to ensure that the Two-Gen pilot program is designed and implemented to effectively meet the diverse needs of participants. The Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors provides the administrative support to the working group.

**State-Level Planning and Implementation**

The early stages of state-level Two-Gen planning and implementation often focus on determining how to focus the effort and develop processes to coordinate services for families.

**Identifying/Defining Target Populations**

The Two-Gen approach promotes programs that maximize outcomes (high-quality, integrated, intensive) for a specific subset of the population (low-income families). States may begin the Two-Gen implementation process by identifying the specific populations and/or communities to target with programs. For example:

• Utah identified Intergenerational Poverty cohorts to track at the state level and has designed policies specifically targeted at one or more of the cohorts.

• Connecticut is focusing on six communities. The communities have some flexibility to determine how they will target their efforts, as long as participants meet the eligibility threshold set by the state. For example, one pilot community is focusing on residents of a specific public housing apartment building. Other pilot projects may target non-working families who may not otherwise be eligible for certain existing statewide programs.

**Fostering Full Engagement in Existing Programs and Services**

States are applying a variety of tactics to ensure services are delivered to families for maximum impact. This can include taking the burden of coordination off of the families, and ensuring that families are accessing all the services for which they are eligible.

• **Case Management Coordination.** Recognizing that families may interact with multiple state agencies and departments, states are implementing processes to coordinate services for families behind the scenes. Formalized agreements to share client information is one approach to increase program efficiencies through the identification of common clients. These agreements may involve both inter and intra-agency memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to address the constraints of state and federal privacy laws. Informal coordinated case management is an alternative data-sharing method in situations where certain client information has not been collected, or cannot be shared, through formalized agreements. In this circumstance, case managers for each program should communicate directly with clients and other case managers to determine the needs of the family and coordinate enrollment in all appropriate services.

• **Utilizing Navigators.** “Navigators,“ like the ones being utilized in the Connecticut pilot communities, serve as liaisons between families and the partner organizations. They work with families to map out a success plan and then work with the partner agencies to identify the services and supports that are available to meet the family’s unique circumstances.

Formalized agreements to share client information is one approach to increase program efficiencies through the identification of common clients. These agreements may involve both inter and intra-agency memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to address the constraints of state and federal privacy laws.
• Establishing No-Wrong-Door Portals. Many states now employ a “no-wrong-door,” or the similar “universal” application process for many available public assistance programs, such as PEAK in Connecticut and myCase in Utah. Over time, states should continue to include more programs, from across agencies, into these web-based platforms.

• Targeting Outreach. States can also utilize targeted marketing of under-utilized programs such as SNAP-Ed. In Utah, participants in Next Generation Kids demonstration program are offered SNAP-Ed as part of their “family plan.” Leveraging known Two-Gen target populations can increase the likelihood that families will enroll in multiple programs simultaneously. Further, programs like SNAP-Ed are flexible enough to be delivered at locations where Two-Gen families are already engaged.

Addressing Policy Barriers

States should identify and address where existing policies can be improved to better align with the Two-Gen approach. For example:

• Child Care: Small policy changes to a state’s child care subsidy program can improve access to quality programs. Broadening the scope of eligible activities to include job training and higher education increases the available opportunities for parents to acquire the skills and training needed to earn higher wages. Similarly, de-coupling eligibility from parents’ work schedule to increase continuity of care recognizes the reality of sporadic or fluctuating work schedules faced by many low-income parents.

• Recognizing the Role of Grandparents: All three states have recognized that the adult generation of a family is often a grandparent, or “third generation,” and not a parent. Nearly 21% of these families live below the federal poverty guideline. States planning new Two-Gen initiatives should ensure that policies recognize the role of grandparents as caregivers by ensuring that programs consider the needs of older adults in the home—such as transportation, health care, and legal services. Further, states should continue to implement policies that eliminate barriers to accessing state and federal programs that serve both generations of the family.

Maximizing Existing Resources

Two-Gen stakeholders should consider the needs of the target populations in light of the existing framework and programmatic assets and constraints. For example, some stakeholders reported challenges with reconciling differences between new Two-Gen grant requirements and the design of existing programs. Rather than having local providers develop new systems to fit the grant requirements, policymakers can maximize outcomes by integrating with existing systems to the extent possible. Further local-level practitioners may have variable degrees of background knowledge about Two-Gen and require additional assistance from state-level stakeholders. While state-level stakeholders are generally cognizant of these challenges, better lines of communication between practitioners, policymakers, and agency executives will facilitate a more complete understanding of the baseline circumstances in each community where the Two-Gen approach is being modeled.

Evaluation

All three focus states have incorporated some form of formative and outcomes-based evaluation into their Two-Gen approaches. This evaluative process has the potential to lead to important findings and insights into what is still a relatively new approach to addressing the needs of families. However, practical barriers often limit consistency and robustness of evaluations from location to location. For example, funding limitations and grant periods often constrain practitioners from methodically implementing a sound logic model that lends itself to measuring outcomes for both generations of a family consistently, and over the long-term.

Policymakers may consider a state-led evaluation process to increase consistency and allow practitioners to focus on implementation. For example, Connecticut recently changed the evaluation process for the state’s Two-Gen pilot initiative by shifting much of the responsibility to the state level through a grant-funded, public-private partnership. This approach to outcome evaluation will lessen both the fiscal and administrative burden on the lead pilot site agencies. These agencies can now commit the funding originally dedicated to program evaluation directly to service provisions.
Conclusion

The Two-Generation approach has the potential to fundamentally transform state policies, systems, and programs to more effectively build family well-being. Colorado, Connecticut, and Utah are on the vanguard of state implementation of the Two-Gen approach, developing innovative solutions to the structural barriers and challenges that have traditionally kept services for children and adults in silos. In doing so, the three states are making significant contributions to the field’s understanding of how to best translate support for the Two-Gen approach into tangible policy solutions.

Additional Resources

A growing body of Two-Gen resources are available to policymakers, advocates, and practitioners as they seek to apply the framework at the local, state, and federal level.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation provides resources to inform both practitioners and policymakers about the Two-Gen approach, including:

- The *Creating Opportunities for Families* policy report details the three key components of a well-developed Two-Gen strategy—work supports for parents; access to high-quality early childhood education for their children; and parenting skills training with emotional well-being support.

- The *Kids Count Data Book* for 2016 focuses on key trends in child well-being and family opportunity including the Two-Gen approach.

- The Foundation also provides a growing *Collection of Resources on Two-Generation Approaches*.

Ascend at the Aspen Institute has developed a number of resources to elevate innovative Two-Gen solutions, including:

- The Ascend Outcomes Working Group’s *Making Tomorrow Better Together* report is a valuable resource that can help policymakers think through the intended outcomes for the two-generation programs they are supporting.

- The *Top Ten for 2Gen* provides practical policy solutions to guide systems change at the federal, state, and local level.

- The *2Gen Outcomes Bank* collects and organizes the “outcomes, research, tools, and evidence base for two-generation approaches, strategies, and programs.”
Part 164).


3 See id. at 13.
4 See id. at 6.
6 Interviews conducted with staff from the state agencies comprising the Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission (Feb. 17–25, 2016) [hereinafter Utah Interviews] (responses from these interviews have been synthesized to facilitate the narrative format, and to the protect confidentiality of respondents).

7 UTAH DEPT. OF WORKFORCE SERVICES, INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY IN UTAH 7 (2012) [hereinafter 2012 Annual Report].
8 See id. at 12.
9 See id. at 12.
10 See id. at 15.
13 See id. at 15 (Public assistance includes any of the following means-tested programs: direct financial assistance, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), child care subsidies, and Medicaid.).

14 INTERGENERATIONAL WELFARE REFORM COMMISSION, UTAH’S PLAN FOR A STRONGER FUTURE: FIVE- AND TEN-YEAR PLAN TO ADDRESS INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY (March 31, 2015) [hereinafter Utah Plan].
15 See 2015 Annual Report, supra note 12, at 17.
16 See Utah Interviews, supra note 6.
17 See id. (Note that social security numbers are used for agencies that do not prescribe to the uniform personal identification number (PID) system.).
18 See id. (Agencies include: Dept. of Health; Dept. of Corrections; Dept. of Human Services, Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health; Dept. of Human Services, Division of Juvenile Justice Services; and the Utah Juvenile Courts system.).


21 See Utah Interviews, supra note 6.
23 See Utah Interviews, supra note 6.
24 See id.
26 Primary Care Network health coverage is a Medicaid demonstration project permitting expanding health coverage to those otherwise ineligible for Medicaid or CHIP; ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION, STATE COVERAGE INITIATIVES, PROFILES IN COVERAGE: UTAH’S PRIMARY CARE NETWORK, http://www.statecoverage.org/node/484 (last visited Mar. 31, 2016).

46 See Colorado Interviews, supra note 41.


48 See Colorado Interviews, supra note 41.


55 See Colorado Interviews, supra note 41.


57 See supra note 42 at 5.

58 See CCAP Amendments, supra note 56 at 2.


64 CONN. COMM’N ON CHILDREN, COMM’N MANDATES, https://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/mandates.htm (last updated May 15, 2013) (ANote, as of July 1, 2016 the Commission was merged with two other legislative commissions to form a new agency, the Commission on Women, Children, and Seniors).

65 Interviews conducted with staff from the Conn. Commission on Children, the Two-Generational Interagency Working Group, and other organizations (Mar. 1–May 5, 2016) [hereinafter Connecticut Interviews] (responses from these interviews have been synthesized to facilitate the narrative format, and to the protect confidentiality of respondents).


68 See id. at 7.


71 See Connecticut Interviews, supra note 65.


74 See Connecticut Interviews, supra note 65.


80 See, e.g., Ascend Report 2015, supra note 2.


82 See id. at 3.

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