FAMILY-CENTERED COMMUNITY CHANGE

supporting families, strengthening neighborhoods

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

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. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at www.aecf.org.

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contents

- 2 Introduction
- 3 Family-Centered Community Change
- 6 Fostering Collaboration and Trust
- 8 A Closer Look at the FCCC Communities
- 16 Reflections
- 19 Looking Ahead
- 20 Endnotes

introduction

All children, no matter their background or where they grow up, should be able to live in a financially stable family and a thriving community that supports their healthy growth and development. They should have the opportunity to discover and realize their full potential — not only for their sake, but for the strength of our communities and the future prosperity of our nation.

Yet in the United States, 30 million children live in low-income families,¹ even though the economy has improved over the past several years. For them, especially youth of color, the daily stresses of poverty push that dream further and further out of reach. Despite valiant efforts from local programs and providers to offer support, isolated approaches have kept many families from breaking the cycle of poverty and building a better life for themselves.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched Family-Centered Community ChangeTM (FCCC) to support local partnerships in three high-poverty neighborhoods as they develop a more integrated set of services — including housing assistance, high-quality education and job training — to help parents and children succeed together in what is known as a "two-generation approach." Rather than creating something new, the Foundation joined these partnerships, located in Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas, and provided technical assistance, trainings and peer learning opportunities to build upon their existing community change efforts — a role the Casey Foundation refers to as a strategic co-investor.

FCCC has required the Foundation to work in new ways and shift toward more responsive grant-making strategies that account for the unique challenges and opportunities each community faces. With the seven-year initiative coming to a close, this report offers reflections from Casey about its role as a strategic co-investor and from the communities about their two-generation efforts. The Foundation hopes that these insights are useful to other national and local funders interested in sustaining similar work and that they provide context for the forthcoming program evaluation slated for release in 2020.



family-centered community change: supporting children and parents together

In 2012, the Annie E. Casey Foundation began searching for partners to implement Family-Centered Community Change, a place-based, two-generation initiative to improve outcomes for children and parents living in high-poverty neighborhoods.

Unlike some of its other whole-family investments, including the Family Economic Success – Early Childhood Education (FES-ECE)² pilots and the Dunbar Learning Complex in Atlanta,³ the Foundation did not want to be the lead funder or program designer, but rather a strategic partner and co-investor in existing community development efforts.

Drawing on lessons from another of its major efforts, Making Connections,⁴ Casey believed that building on established community change initiatives, led by local stakeholders with demonstrated capacity to achieve results, could lead to more effective and sustainable benefits for children and parents.

The Foundation sought collaboratives interested in pursuing two-generation initiatives, with the capacity to improve family well-being in three key areas: 1) family economic stability; 2) parent engagement and leadership; and 3) early child care and education. Casey believed that both parents and children would have significantly better outcomes if communities were able to strengthen and combine these services instead of using only one intervention.

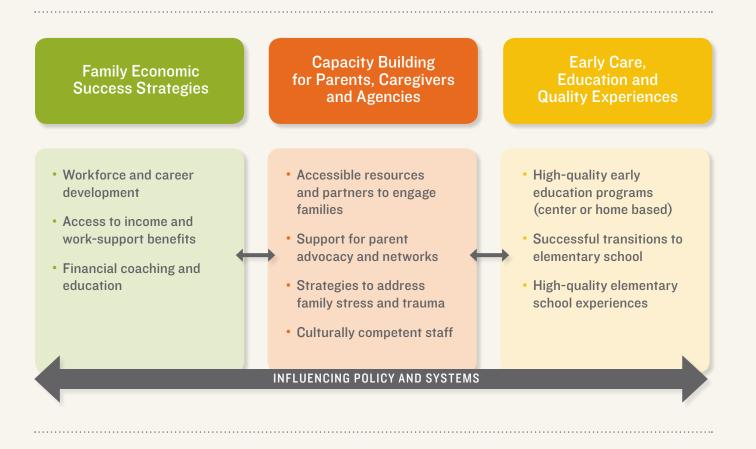
Casey also looked for elements that had proven important in other community-led efforts: a strong backbone organization; buy-in and support from a diverse array of institutions and organizations; a mix of public and private funding sources; sustained affordable housing options; a commitment to resident engagement and leadership; and a focus on data to drive results.

Having great local programs and services isn't enough. FCCC is about building communities' capacity and infrastructure so that those pieces can be aligned in the ways most helpful to and supportive of whole families.

THE FCCC THEORY OF CHANGE

Hypotheses:

- By serving as a strategic co-investor, the Annie E. Casey Foundation can strengthen existing neighborhood-focused community change efforts by helping to integrate more robust two-generation approaches.
- By combining coaching and other economic services, capacity building for caregivers and high-quality early education, both parents and children will be significantly better off than if these interventions were delivered in isolation.
- Systems and policies must make it easier for parents to access programs and resources for themselves and their children and strive to promote equitable opportunities.



The Foundation identified eight existing partnerships and invited them to submit formal proposals. Five were advanced to the final round, which included site visits from Casey staff.

The Foundation ultimately chose neighborhoodbased partnerships in three cities: Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas. Despite different operating structures and populations, each had a comprehensive community change initiative underway, as well as a history of multisector collaboration and a commitment to resident engagement.

Buffalo's efforts, which stem from a federal Promise Neighborhood⁵ grant, are anchored by a strong partnership with M&T Bank and the public school system. The Dual Generation initiative in San Antonio also was awarded a Promise Neighborhood grant, as well as a federal Choice Neighborhood⁶ grant. The collaborative is supported by a range of partners, including the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, the San Antonio Housing Authority and Goodwill San Antonio. In Columbus, the Weinland Park Collaborative's efforts are bolstered by the Community Properties of Ohio and several other public and private partners. In 2013, the Casey Foundation formally pledged to support the existing efforts of the three communities and help them integrate more robust two-generation approaches over a seven-year period. As part of their grant agreements, each community committed to engaging additional investors to sustain their work beyond the time-limited funding Casey was providing.

In its role as co-investor and strategic thought partner, Casey has helped the communities over the past six years to integrate high-quality educational opportunities for young children with workforce development and financial services, as well as strategies that build parents' capacity to manage the daily stresses of living in poverty and establish the skills and networks necessary to advocate for themselves and their children.

The Foundation has focused on helping the communities improve service delivery, strengthen mechanisms for collecting and sharing data and develop stronger relationships across family-serving systems, including housing and education. Casey also has supported a peer learning network for the communities to explore topics central to their work: equity and inclusion, parent leadership, family trauma and long-term change.

THE CASEY FOUNDATION'S FOCUS ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION

To help all children succeed, the Casey Foundation knows we must do more than simply point out disparities. Every facet of our work must strive to achieve race equity, a state in which all children have the same opportunity to reach their full potential, no matter their race or where they grow up.

Casey's Equity and Inclusion Framework⁷

The vision: All children are able to reach their full potential in life regardless of race, ethnicity or community of residence.

The approach: Employing data-driven, targeted strategies that support children, families and communities with the greatest needs.

The strategy: Provide data and culturally responsive tools to support the implementation of policy and practice changes that increase equitable opportunities and outcomes for all children.

Additional Resources

Additional information and resources from the Casey Foundation about advancing equity can be found here: www.aecf.org/blog/new-resources-help-organizations-advance-race-equity-at-every-step



fostering collaboration and trust

Relationships are key to Family-Centered Community Change. Service providers and other frontline staff must develop rapport with parents to effectively implement two-generation approaches, including understanding the aspirations and priorities caregivers have for their families.

Providers and staff must trust that parents are the true experts on their lives and those of their children and let them take the lead in identifying the tools and resources they need to thrive.

Early in the initiative, the Foundation provided each of the communities with an assessment and planning tool⁸ to help them evaluate how they were doing in this respect and chart a path toward deeper partnerships with parents and caregivers. Casey also offered periodic trainings to help staff, especially new members of the local teams, refine their relationship-management skills and deepen their parent leadership work.

Staff needed not only to develop meaningful relationships with the parents and children they serve but also to work effectively with each other and among the broader two-generation collaborative. Fostering open and honest communication at all levels is critical to developing coordinated plans for families and establishing shared goals and accountability among collaborative partners, including funders.

Recognizing this, the Casey Foundation set up regular meetings with organizations and funding partners from each collaborative, as well as parents and other community members. In establishing these relationships, the Foundation was careful to balance its perspective as a national funder and the lessons it offered from previous two-generation efforts with the expertise and experiences of those who had already been leading the local work. This collective knowledge helped each community customize its theory of change and the well-being indicators they initially agreed to track, including kindergarten readiness, financial stability and job and career readiness. In addition to a focus on building relationships with families and partner organizations, Casey has emphasized creating opportunities for the three communities to learn from each other and national experts in the field, including the Race Matters Institute and coaches from NeighborWorks America. The FCCC Learning Network gathering, held twice a year for the first three years and then annually, has brought together senior leaders, frontline staff and participating parents from each of the three communities to celebrate successes, solve challenges, review performance and learn from groups engaging in similar work across the country.

What it took for me is simple. It took me having someone in my corner that keeps it real. [My coach] continued to ask what I wanted for me and my kids, and what I was going to do to get us there.

LaTonya Fullum FCCC participant in Columbus

THE FCCC LEARNING NETWORK

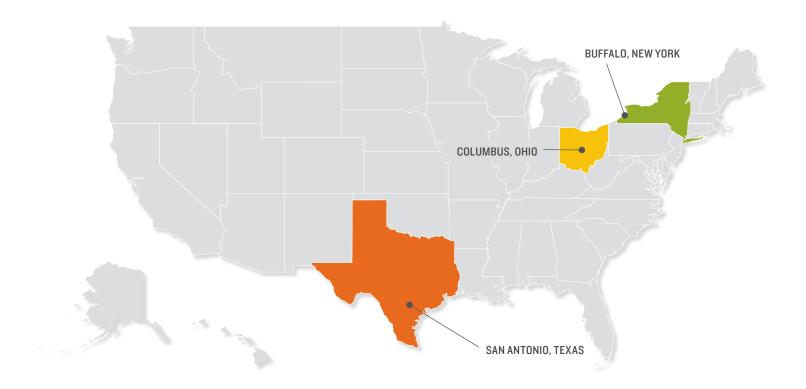
The Casey Foundation has surveyed its FCCC partners annually to understand the areas in which they need support and the topics they are interested in exploring. Casey has used these insights to develop an annual learning agenda, accomplished through in-person trainings and expert-led panel presentations, as well as online tools and webinars.

Past topics have included:

- · Understanding and addressing racial inequities
- · Developing effective messages for two-generation approaches
- Creating trauma-sensitive communities
- · Fostering parent engagement and leadership

Peer learning is a key part of the Family-Centered Community Change approach. The Foundation established three affinity groups to enable partners from across the communities to share their experiences and expertise with others who play similar roles. The FCCC Data and Learning Affinity Group is the longest running of these peer cohorts. Its members — which include data and site leads from each community and Casey's data-focused technical assistance providers — have supported each other in choosing data vendors, designing integrated data systems, disaggregating findings and improving data-sharing policies. There also are affinity groups for partnership leads and frontline workers.

a closer look at the FCCC communities



PERCENTAGE OF RESIDEN	San Antonio			
WHITE (NOT HISPANIC)	59 %	61%	68 %	59 %
AFRICAN AMERICAN	55%	47 %	61%	57 %
LATINO	62 %	50 %	70 %	60%
ALL	59 %	54 %	66%	60 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–17 American Community Survey.



MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME BY RACE

	United States	Buffalo	Columbus	San Antonio
WHITE (NOT HISPANIC)	\$79,837	\$60,343	\$72,805	\$85,631
AFRICAN AMERICAN	\$46,688	\$33,368	\$39,038	\$47,458
LATINO	\$48,932	\$24,916	\$32,441	\$47,883
ALL	\$70,850	\$41,837	\$58,475	\$57,575

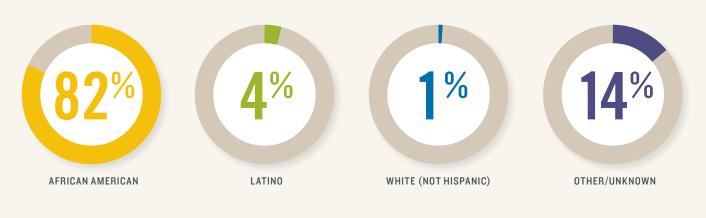
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–17 American Community Survey.

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY RACE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AGES 3 AND 4							
	United States	Buffalo	Columbus	San Antonio			
WHITE (NOT HISPANIC)	66 %	48 %	48 %	61 %			
AFRICAN AMERICAN	64 %	51 %	50 %	51 %			
LATINO	52 %	55 %	45 %	54 %			
ALL	62 %	50 %	48 %	55 %			

Note: These estimates assume that two-fifths of young children (ages 3 and 4) are eligible to enroll in nursery school or preschool. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–17 American Community Survey.

buffalo, new york

POPULATION SERVED



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-17 American Community Survey.

PARTNERS

- Belmont Housing Resources for Western New York provides one-on-one coaching and educational workshops to help parents with children in FCCC partner schools achieve financial and housing stability.
- Highgate Heights Elementary School and Westminster Community Charter School, both part of the Buffalo public school system, serve a majority of families living within the FCCC neighborhoods.
- EduKids Children's Academy provides early childhood education for neighborhood children ages 0-4.
- M&T Bank is the primary investor and leader of Buffalo Promise Neighborhood a nonprofit established to serve local children and families — and the primary convener of the two-generation initiative.
- State University of New York Erie offers one-on-one coaching and soft-skills and job-readiness workshops to parents with a child at one of the two FCCC partner schools.

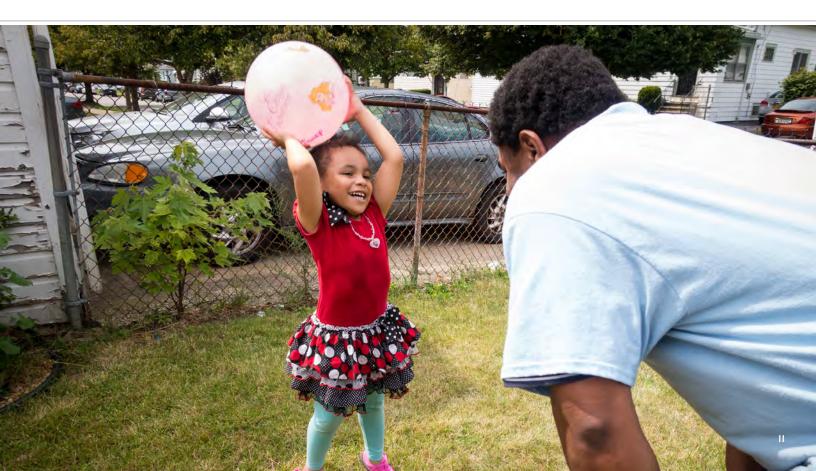
The Buffalo Promise Neighborhood is a public-private partnership led by M&T Bank that primarily serves lower-income African-American children and families on the city's northeast side. Its origins trace back to the early 1990s, when under the leadership of M&T Bank's late chairman, Robert Wilmers, the bank began a coordinated campaign to transform Buffalo's public education system. After spearheading a drastic turnaround in one of the city's lowest-performing elementary schools — known now as Westminster Community Charter School - M&T Bank secured a federal Promise Neighborhood grant to expand its reach and work with more families. Through FCCC, it then built on that work by establishing the two-generation Parent Achievement Zone (PAZ), which offers a more integrated set of programs for caregivers and children.

PAZ operates out of the EduKids Children's Academy and the newly built Children's Academy at Gerard Place — two tuition-free early childhood centers — as well as Highgate Heights Elementary and Westminster Community Charter schools. Parents are paired with a PAZ coach, who works with them one-on-one to identify support services, set personal and family goals — ranging from enrolling in educational and training programs to finding a better-paying job and track progress.

With support from Casey and the FCCC Learning Network, Buffalo has developed new strategies to cultivate parent leadership and strengthened its intake efforts, more than doubling the number of enrolled families from 106 in 2013 to 295 in 2018. The PAZ team went from having one enrollment point — a PAZ coordinator — to using a universal intake form so participants could enroll at any of the partner sites. In addition, the collaborative established PAZ Café, a seminar-style networking event where families come to enjoy a meal and participate in workshops of common interest. The PAZ Café not only has helped parents develop stronger social and support networks but also has served as an effective recruitment tool for other families in the community.

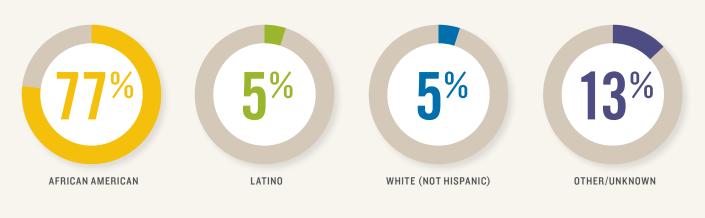
To support family financial stability, the Buffalo partners leveraged Casey funding in 2017 to secure a I:I match grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide PAZ parents with \$4,000 matched savings in an individual development account (IDA).

Since its inception, II parents have participated in the IDA program. The structured savings plans and dedicated financial coaching provided them with a much-needed safety net to support long-term financial stability. For some, it also helped them purchase a home and enroll in postsecondary and vocational training programs.



columbus, ohio

POPULATION SERVED



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-17 American Community Survey.

PARTNERS

- Community Properties of Ohio, which serves as the backbone organization for Columbus's FCCC efforts, is an affordable housing provider that helps families accomplish their long-term goals and achieve self-sufficiency.
- The Columbus Foundation is one of FCCC's primary local funders. The organization has played an instrumental role in reinvigorating Weinland Park's housing and infrastructure.
- Weinland Park Elementary School serves approximately 380 students. In addition to regular prekindergarten through fifth-grade classes, Columbus City Schools provides adult education programming at the facility.
- Columbus Works provides comprehensive job-readiness services, including placements with local employers, for Weinland Park residents.
- Godman Guild Association, a long-standing settlement house in Weinland Park, provides adult education and workforce development services, as well as in- and out-of-school enrichment activities for youth.
- The A. Sophie Rogers School for Early Learning, located within the Schoenbaum Family Center at The Ohio State University, provides high-quality, research-based education to children ages six weeks to five years old.
- Directions for Youth & Families, a comprehensive mental health service provider, has partnered with Weinland Park Elementary School to offer behavioral counseling for students and professional development trainings for school staff on approaches that address trauma and build resiliency.

Located near The Ohio State University in Columbus, the Weinland Park neighborhood — the smallest of the FCCC communities has about 4,800 residents.

Like many communities across the United States, Weinland Park has seen a steady increase in poverty following an exodus of people and jobs that began in the 1970s.⁹ In the midst of this economic decline and disinvestment, residents — the majority of whom are African American — faced multiple educational and employment barriers, along with an uptick in crime.

Hoping to revitalize the neighborhood, concerned community members, business stakeholders and local funders formed the Weinland Park Collaborative in 2010. The collaborative leveraged an initial investment from the Columbus Foundation to focus on multiple factors that it believed would improve community well-being, including housing, education, employment, public safety, health and resident engagement. With Casey's support, the Weinland Park Collaborative then established its twogeneration FCCC initiative in 2013. Next Doors, part of the broader FCCC work, was created the following year to provide intensive coaching for neighborhood families. Community Properties of Ohio (CPO) serves as the backbone organization for these collective efforts.

Parents enrolled in Next Doors are paired with a coach who helps them identify goals — such as securing employment, attaining educational credentials or helping their children do better in school — develop an action plan and stay the course toward achieving their goals. Those with a child enrolled at Weinland Park Elementary also can come to the school to receive support from an engagement specialist, schoolcommunity liaison and school-based family coach. In addition, coaches from Next Doors connect families to resources through other service providers in the FCCC partnership and broader community, including child care at the A. Sophie Rogers School for Early Learning, one of the only high-quality early child care centers in the neighborhood.

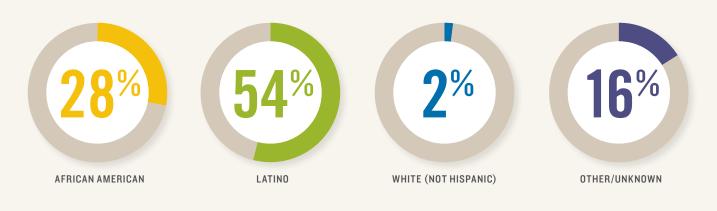
Since its inception, more than 230 families have engaged with some facet of Columbus's two-generation initiative, including through its Family University — a series of events where parents hear from experts on such issues as leadership and advocacy, school data and report cards, financial management and mental wellness.

Through its work with FCCC, the collaborative has strengthened internal relationships, clearly defining roles and responsibilities and developing a set of collective goals. It has also used Casey's support to obtain an Early Head Start grant to expand high-quality early childhood education for I60 children across Columbus.



san antonio, texas

POPULATION SERVED



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-17 American Community Survey.

PARTNERS

- United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, the FCCC backbone organization, supports meetings and collaboration, data collection, finance, communications, technical assistance and program performance.
- · San Antonio Housing Authority provides family-centered coaching and subsidies for families living in public and Section 8 housing.
- Goodwill Industries of San Antonio offers career development and job-placement services.
- · Alamo Colleges District is the lead partner for the Eastside Education and Training Center, a one-stop adult education and training facility.
- San Antonio Department of Human Services provides funding and professional development services to child care centers that serve FCCC families.
- · Family Service Association, a nonprofit, offers financial coaching to FCCC and other parents.
- San Antonio Independent School District offers meeting space in local schools for family coaching sessions.
- Urban Strategies provides case management and wraparound support to families involved in the Choice Neighborhoods initiative.
- PreK4SA offers high-quality professional development and capacity-building support for partnering child development centers.
- · Workforce Solutions Alamo, a local workforce board, offers industry-specific training and credentialing opportunities.
- Depelchin Children's Center is a nonprofit provider of children's mental health, prevention and early intervention services.

Led by the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, the Dual Generation initiative was established in 2012 to complement work that was underway as part of a federal Promise Neighborhood grant. It primarily serves families living in public housing in San Antonio's UC Eastside, as well as those eligible to participate in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Dual Generation includes a wide range of public and private partners working to improve children's healthy development, growth and education. The initiative helps low-income parents get good jobs that enable them to provide for their families and achieve financial stability. The Casey Foundation's funding and assistance, coupled with grants from the Promise Neighborhoods and Choice Neighborhoods initiatives, as well as a federal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant, have enabled the partnership to significantly expand and strengthen early childhood and career development programs and take a more comprehensive approach to supporting families.

Among other services, Dual Generation provides financial coaching and tradespecific certifications and training for parents and a full-day, full-year early care and education program for eligible children from low-income families. Partners in the network also offer support on a variety of other day-to-day needs, including assistance for utilities, rent and school uniforms. Expanding access to high-quality early child care programs has been a key focus of the Dual Generation initiative's FCCC work. The partnership offers professional development and coaching support to local providers to help them attain the necessary certifications, navigate the state's quality rating system, upgrade their facilities and improve their curriculum.

Over the past several years, the collaborative has broadened its service area to reach more families. The original four-square-mile area, known as EastPoint, remains a priority, though residents from IO other surrounding ZIP codes are now eligible for Dual Generation services — an increase from approximately I9,000 children and parents to more than I56,000.

I got involved with Dual Generation because I wanted to make a difference in my life, which would in turn better my family's life, as well. I can definitely see a brighter future now. My daughter is more social and learning new things every day, and I have found a career that I am very much fascinated and pleased with.

> Chanice Scott FCCC participant in San Antonio

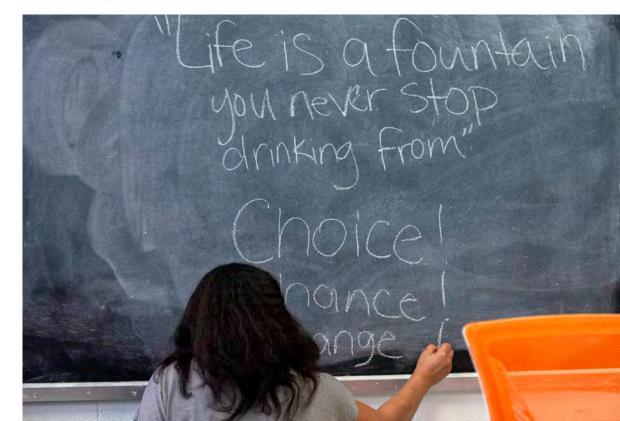


reflections

Entering a community as a strategic co-investor in an existing two-generation effort was a new way of working for Casey. The Family-Centered Community Change initiative has enabled the Foundation to examine the ways it engages with grantees, residents and other local funders to create the best possible outcomes for families.

Below are some reflections from the last six years.

Before shifting focus to integration, two-generation partners must first ensure quality services are being delivered. During the initial FCCC planning stages, the Casey Foundation thought it could bring the most value to the communities by helping them deliver services in a more integrated way. After a few months on the ground, however, it became clear that more work was needed to strengthen the portfolio of child- and adult-serving programs being offered, which delayed the actual implementation process. Those pursuing a two-generation approach should expect potential setbacks and be prepared for a nonlinear process.



- Long-term planning must be a focus from the start. When multiyear grants are given, like the seven-year FCCC commitment Casey made, it is easy for organizations to focus their energy on day-to-day operations instead of creating a sustainable plan for their two-generation efforts. Foundations should provide grantees with targeted assistance to help them assess what they will need including funding, staff, policies and infrastructure to keep their work going and identify potential sources to fulfill those needs. Doing so helps community partners to establish a clear vision for their work 10, 15 or 20 years in the future, and not just the end of their grant cycle.
- National funding can help spur additional investment at the state and local levels. An investment from a national foundation — which many interpret as a vote of confidence — can help partners secure additional funding from federal and state government, local funders or other national philanthropies, allowing them to spend less time raising money and shift to strengthening their capacities and improving programming.
- Flexible funding opportunities allow partners to do their best work. The Foundation has largely deferred to local leadership to decide how grant dollars should be spent in service of children and families. The FCCC teams know their communities best, and Casey has always tried to value and support the choices they make. This flexibility has enabled local partners to cover operating costs when necessary, support strategic planning processes and foster cross-system learning.
- Peer learning is key. Local partners credit the FCCC Learning Network as a crucial source of information and support to improve policies and practices that lead to better, more equitable outcomes for children and families. Hearing the challenges and opportunities others are facing on the ground can lead to innovation and deeper collaboration.
- There should be a clear and coordinated plan for technical assistance and support. Providing tools, resources and trainings is an important role for national funders to play, but it must be done in a coordinated manner. Just as twogeneration partners must work with families to identify goals and customize a support plan, funders must work with the community leads to understand their needs and tailor technical assistance to ensure seamless, holistic support — even when it comes from multiple sources.
- Lifting whole communities out of poverty requires both systemic solutions that address structural barriers and targeted interventions with families and their children. Local leaders cannot "service" their way out of poverty. Chronic disinvestment and a long history of local, state and federal policies that have discriminated against people of color created the impoverished conditions in

which too many families are forced to live. Turning this tide will require comprehensive policy solutions that create more equitable pathways to opportunity, coupled with services and resources that help both children and their families to achieve stability and succeed.

Much of FCCC's success hinges on the partners' ability to establish working relationships with each other and with the communities they aim to serve. Below are some of the lessons partners shared about their FCCC work.

Listen to the families you serve, respect their knowledge and expertise and leverage them as partners in advancing the work.

"Parents have everything they need to be good parents before they even walk through our doors. They're in the driver's seat, and it's our job to listen carefully to where they want to go."

- Caitlin Lenihan, former director of the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood

Build consensus on what success looks like and how to measure it. This is a critical conversation to have with both partners and funders — and it is a process.

"We want the data to drive us. We track the progress of each child toward kindergarten readiness, grade-level achievement and economic self-sufficiency. If we are not effective, we will revise our plans until we get it right."

- Alex Barkley, collaborations manager at Community Properties of Ohio Management Services

Train frontline staff on how to productively coach participants while addressing and managing their trauma, and ensure frontline staff have tools to manage their own stress and emotions.

"As the ones implementing the family-centered practice, frontline staff experience the traumas, challenges and joys right alongside the families they support. Make sure they have the training and support they need to weather the ups and downs and remain focused on serving families."

- Henrietta Muñoz, senior vice president of research and evaluation at United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County

looking ahead

As the Casey Foundation's investments wind down and the evaluation phase comes to a close, the partnerships are looking toward the future.

M&T remains committed to providing funding and staffing for the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, which now includes its newly built child care center, the Children's Academy at Gerard Place. The Columbus partnership is working to expand into other local schools to provide a complementary suite of services that help families address nonacademic barriers, such as housing instability and trauma. The Dual Generation initiative in San Antonio has a commitment from the city and partners such as Goodwill to continue working to improve outcomes in the Eastside Promise Neighborhood, expanding its service area and influencing public systems across the city.

For Casey, the most rewarding aspects of the initiative have come from helping the community partners approach the work differently and begin providing more integrated services. The Foundation is eager to share results from the program evaluation in 2020 and offer recommendations about how aspects of FCCC might be replicated to support other families throughout the United States.

ENDNOTES

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