

# OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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November 17, 2015

**To:** County Council

**From:** Stephanie Bryant, Legislative Analyst  
Leslie Rubin, Senior Legislative Analyst

**Subject:** **Two-Generation Approaches to Poverty**

Intergenerational poverty occurs when two or more successive generations of a family continue in the cycle of poverty and government dependence.<sup>1</sup> The concept of addressing the needs of vulnerable adults and children together was officially introduced with the creation of Head Start in 1965.<sup>2</sup>

**Authority, Scope, Organization.** This report responds to the Council's interest in understanding two-generation approaches to poverty implemented in other jurisdictions, factors leading to program success, and approaches to implementing a two-generation approach most successfully in Montgomery County. The Council requested this report on the Office of Legislative Oversight's FY15 work program, adopted via Council Resolution 17-1183.

This memorandum has five parts. Part I summarizes historical two-generation approaches to poverty and how contemporary academic research is shaping new programming. Part II details core components of modern two-generation programs and program case studies. Part III highlights factors that have led to successes and challenges in other programs and spotlights Utah's intergenerational poverty data coordination and evaluation efforts. Part IV presents current two-generation program efforts in Montgomery and recommendations for further implementation opportunities and Part V presents findings and discussion questions. In sum,

- Modern two-generation programs incorporate early childhood education, postsecondary education, social capital, economic supports, and health and well-being. Research shows that programs that do not adequately address each of these components are less likely to help participants escape poverty. In addition, having stable, affordable housing is a companion requirement to any two-generation program.
- Opportunities exist in the County to help lift young families out of poverty. The County's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has capacity to braid together services (e.g., case management, housing, mental and physical health supports, and child welfare services). Together these services would create a whole-family approach directed at family economic stability.
- Strong partnerships in the County between DHHS, the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery College can be enhanced and leveraged to provide two-generation programming. Further, the County has a strong network of employers and employment opportunities to target the sectoral training component of two-generation programming.
- Future opportunities to implement and expand two-generation programs in the County include data integration capabilities, the relationship with the County's new Workforce Development Board, developing innovative solutions to the high cost of housing and childcare for families living in Montgomery County, approaches to target immigrant families' needs, and asset-building strategies.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Workforce Services, "Intergenerational Poverty in Utah," 2012, available at [https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/pubs/Poverty\\_Report\\_web.pdf](https://jobs.utah.gov/wi/pubs/Poverty_Report_web.pdf). This definition does not include situation poverty, which is "temporary poverty traceable to a specific incident or time period within the lifetime of a person; and is not continued to the next generation."

<sup>2</sup> Stephanie Schmit, Hannah Matthews, and Oliva Golden, "Thriving Children, Successful Parents: A Two-Generation Approach to Policy," Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), June 9, 2014.

# OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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**Methodology and Acknowledgements.** OLO gathered information through online research, document reviews, interviews with staff of two-generation programs, and meetings with County stakeholders and department staff. OLO appreciates the information and insights provided by all who contributed to this report, including the staff in the County’s Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and staff from the programs described in Section III.

## I. The History and Theory behind a Two-Generation Approach to Poverty

This section provides background information on the two-generation approach to poverty, a review of frameworks shaping program design, and key components of current programs.

### A. History of Two-Generation Programs

Two-generation poverty programs focus on disrupting the cycle of poverty by serving parents and children individually and together as a family unit. At a minimum, two-generation programs aim to:

- Re-engage parents in education and/or work,
- Nurture parent-child bonds,
- Improve children’s well-being, and
- Connect families with economic, social, and other supports.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1980s and early 1990s two-generation programs focused on two different service delivery approaches – (1) child-focused and (2) parent-focused. Although some program integration occurred for each cohort, these programs were designed to address the needs of children and parents separately.

**Child-Focused Approach.** Parental self-sufficiency services, including parenting and literacy classes and public benefit access, were offered at early childhood education centers. However, the parental programs were closely aligned to the overall mission of the child’s program of achieving positive child development.<sup>4</sup>

**Parent-Focused Approach.** Programs under this umbrella were specifically designed to meet the needs of adolescent mothers receiving welfare. These programs promoted life skills, high school graduation or GED attainment, employment, and reduction in long-term dependency on welfare. Child services offered in conjunction with parent programs were typically underdeveloped, underused, and of unknown quality.

The approach taken in the 1980s and early 1990s fragmented the needs of adult and children participants, often leaving one or the other cohort behind. By the late 1990s, poor program results and “work-first” policies related to receiving federal assistance led to a decrease in the expansion of two-generation programs. Under federal laws, parent-focused programs shifted from education and job training to job search and placement activities under the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWROA) and the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Program participants were required to find employment in order to receive cash benefits for up to five years. These programs resulted in a 60% decline in welfare recipients due a decrease in the unemployment rate (especially among mothers who entered the workforce), an increase in earnings for

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<sup>3</sup> National Human Services Assembly, “Breaking the Cycle of Poverty in Young Families – Two-Generation Strategies for Working with Disconnected Young Parents & Their Children,” (December 2013), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, “Two-Generation Programs in the Twenty-First Century,” *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two-Generational Mechanisms*, The Future of Children, vol. 24.1 (Spring 2014), p. 14.

female heads of households, and a decrease in the number of children living in poverty.<sup>5</sup> However, during this period, increases in employment did not lead to a comparable decline in poverty. As more women went to work, few earned enough to escape poverty, and as a result intergenerational poverty persisted.<sup>6</sup>

In the 2000s, the renewed impetus for two-generation programs was spurred by changing economic conditions, globalization and international economic competitiveness, and the need for a highly educated workforce. Coupled with a national childhood poverty rate above 20 percent and increasing social inequality, two-generation approaches are experiencing a resurgence.

### **B. Frameworks Shaping Modern Two-Generation Program Design**

Current two-generation programs have moved away from the siloed service delivery of programs implemented in the 1980s and early 1990s. (“Siloed” programs are services narrowly organized or funded around specific problem areas or groups that are unable to work together across programs.)<sup>7</sup> Current programs seek to integrate parent and child services with a focus on sectoral training and high-quality early childhood education programs.

*Sectoral training* initiatives focus on training workers for a single industry/job type (i.e., Certified Nursing Assistant) and work closely with community colleges and employers to ensure trainees have the appropriate skills and credentials for employment upon graduation.<sup>8</sup>

*High-quality early childhood programming* is described by the National Association for the Education of Young Children as providing “a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families.”<sup>9</sup> The Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Early Childhood Development developed the Maryland EXCELS program to rate high-quality programs. Criteria used under this system include center licensing, developmentally appropriate curricula (including low student-teacher ratios), staff qualifications and training, a safe environment, and family engagement.<sup>10</sup>

This second wave of two-generation programs is shaped by expanding research and an enhanced understanding of the interrelationship between home environment, parental success, and childhood outcomes. The remainder of this section summarizes contemporary research theories that support current two-generation programs, identifies modern challenges facing low-income families, and presents modern frameworks for two-generation programs.

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<sup>5</sup> Ron Haskins, “Interview: Welfare Reform, 10 Years Later,” The Brookings Institution, available at <http://www.brookings.edu/research/interviews/2006/08/24welfare-haskins>.

<sup>6</sup> Rebecca M. Blank, “Was Welfare Reform Successful?” *Economists’ Voice*, The Berkley Electronic Press (March 2006), available at <http://www.usi.edu/business/cashel/331/welfare%20reform.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Midwest Welfare Peer Assistance Network (WELPAN), “Eliminating the Silos: Or, It’s not Just Welfare Anymore,” January 2002, available at [ww.irp.wisc.edu/initiatives/outreach/welpan/finalsilo.pdf](http://www.irp.wisc.edu/initiatives/outreach/welpan/finalsilo.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Emma K. Tsui, “Sectoral Job Training as an Intervention to Improve Health Equity,” *American Journal of Public Health*, April 2010, available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2837425/>.

<sup>9</sup> Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (New York), “Quality: What it is and Why it Matters in Early Childhood Education,” September 2012, p. 2, available at [http://www.scaany.org/documents/quality\\_earlyed\\_scaapolicybrief\\_sept2012.pdf](http://www.scaany.org/documents/quality_earlyed_scaapolicybrief_sept2012.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Maryland EXCELS, “Maryland EXCELS Standards,” available at <http://marylandexcels.org//olms2/4948427>.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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**Theoretical Frameworks for Two-Generation Programs.** The expansion of two-generation programs is supported by prominent social science theories (i.e., Continuity and Change Theory, Ecological Theory, Risk and Resilience Theory) and emergent research on brain development and executive function skills.

- **Continuity and Change Theory.** This theory suggests that once a young child is on a specific development path (i.e., heightened stress and developmental delays), the child is more likely to continue along the path absent new experiences and opportunities. Additionally, recognizing the role of the home environment in shaping child development, intergenerational programming designed to redirect a child's development path needs to address both the child and home environment. This includes early childhood education programs and promotion of a parent's education, employment, and income.
- **Ecological Theory.** This theory posits that the quality of a child's "close-in" environment highly influences later development. Cognitive stimulation, richness of literacy and numeracy, emotional regulation, role modeling, regular routines, and warmth and responsiveness all affect the quality of a child's environment. A two-generation approach that provides a child with both an enriched home and educational environment will yield better results than a single-generation approach that provides a stimulating educational environment, but fails to substantially address economic instability and limited learning resources at home.
- **Risk and Resilience Theory.** This theory suggest that children can overcome and thrive in the face of short-term adversity (i.e., moving and changing schools), but development may be hindered by chronic and cumulative stress (i.e., family economic hardship, low parental education, and parents' poor mental health). For "young children facing cumulative and/ or chronic risks . . . [two-generation programs] need to be multi-leveled, individually tailored in intensity, targeting multiple domains of competence, and of sufficient length to promote lasting change."
- **Brain Development: Chronic Stress and Executive Function Skills.** A recent field of research has linked the effects of chronic stress from living in poverty with impacts on the development of executive function skills, such as *impulse control* (skills to filter distractions or override impulses), *working memory* (ability to temporarily focus on something while retaining other information in the back of one's mind), and *mental flexibility* (the ability to switch gears or multitask).<sup>11</sup>

Researchers have found that brain development is affected by environmental risk factors such as poor nutrition, prenatal drug use, low social status, stress, and violence. These risk factors affect the areas of the brain associated with analytical decision making (prefrontal cortex) and emotional reactions to environmental stimuli (limbic system). When chronic stress is coupled with near constant struggles to make ends meet, deal with social bias, and protect against future trauma, the brain's cognitive ability to handle multiple problems diminishes, compromising decision quality. Research also has demonstrated that individuals who feel less control over their decisions and their ability to change outcomes often suffered from higher rates of stress, mental illness, disease, and mortality.

Children with parents who experience chronic stress also experience a life that is highly unpredictable and lacks resources and options for improvement, inhibiting the development of executive function skills in children. The difference in brain architecture of children born into homes at opposite ends of the economic spectrum widens over time, with increased brain development and decision-making skills reinforced in high-income families. "Children who do not have opportunities in early life to build strong neural foundations fall behind their counterparts unless intensive efforts are made along the way to help them catch up. . . . Otherwise, childhood disadvantages become magnified over time."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Elisabeth D. Babcock, "Using Brain Science to Design New Pathways Out of Poverty," Crittenton Women's Union, 2014, pp. 5-10.

<sup>12</sup> Babcock, p. 9.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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**Challenges Facing Low-Income Families.** Challenges facing low-income families in today's economy have a shared role in changing siloed two-generation policies. The Annie E. Casey Foundation identified several challenges, including:

- **Inflexible, unpredictable jobs and low wages.** With the disappearance of manufacturing jobs, members of the current and future workforce are increasingly unprepared for the changing employment landscape that demands a highly-skilled, educated workforce. In nearly 80 percent of low-income families (with children under the age of eight), parents lack post-secondary degrees. Unpredictable job schedules, no earned sick leave, and the expense of higher education create obstacles to low-income parents competing for high-wage jobs.<sup>13</sup>
- **Lack of access to high-quality, flexible, and reliable early childcare and education.** Childcare and early childhood education opportunities are limited by cost and job schedules, with options for low-income parents often falling below standards of quality. (See definition on page 3). "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 high-income families."
- **Lack of formal and informal networks.** Social capital/networks allow individuals to develop meaningful connections with people and can assist with building economic security. Families who lack social networks have a lower likelihood of establishing lasting friendships and a higher incidence of depression. Sixty percent of mothers whose children were enrolled in childcare centers formed at least one new friendship. These relationships help mothers reduce the likelihood of experiencing depression and other forms of hardship. Low-income mothers whose children were enrolled in a childcare center had a 40 percent lower incidence of depression compared to mothers who did not enroll their children. Social capital can include school and workplace contacts, family engagement, career coaches, and family and friends.<sup>14</sup>
- **Stress at home, for parents and children.** Low-income families experience higher amounts of daily stress compared to high-income counterparts. Stress resulting from insufficient income, financial uncertainty, and steady housing can cause depression, anxiety, and greater risks for substance abuse or domestic violence. Each of these factors may inhibit the ability to parent effectively. The lack of high-quality child-care and after-school activities combined with the lack of social networks further contributes to the difficulty of creating safe, nurturing home environments.

Low-income residents in Montgomery County face additional challenges related to home affordability and stability. A lack of stable housing can force families to move multiple times or live in overcrowded or unsafe situations. Unstable housing can cause parental stress while high family mobility can negatively impact children's academic achievement. The Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) credits quality rental housing and home ownership with family and community stability.<sup>15</sup> However, with rents (average two-bedroom rent of \$1,660) and home prices (median sale price of \$395,000) increasing faster than incomes, especially for households earning less than 30% or 50% of the area median household income of \$98,221, stable, decent housing is often out of reach for many low-income residents in the County.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Creating Opportunity for Families – A Two-Generational Approach," November 12, 2014, pp. 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Mario Luis Small, Dean of the Division of Social Sciences, University of Chicago, "The Ties that Bind: How Childcare Centers Build Social Capital," November 7, 2013, The Huffington Post, available at [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-mario-luis-small/the-ties-that-bind-how-ch\\_b\\_4228843.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-mario-luis-small/the-ties-that-bind-how-ch_b_4228843.html).

<sup>15</sup> Meeting with Department of Housing and Community Affairs Director Clarence Snuggs and staff on November 10, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Department of Housing and Community Affairs, "2014 Rental Housing Survey," available at <https://reports.data.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat/objective/housing>; U.S. Census Bureau, "State and County Quick Facts – Montgomery County, MD," available at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/24/24031.html>. Mike Murillo, "Median

Taken together, academic research and social challenges faced by low-income families reveal that the siloed nature of prior two-generation programs are inadequate to address the economic stability of family units. As such, the positive impact of high-quality childhood education may not be enough to break the cycle of poverty if the child is coming home to a family economically stressed, looking for employment, and facing food insecurity.<sup>17</sup>

A second wave of two-generation approaches aims to place the whole family on a path of economic security. Research shows simultaneous investments in both children and parents produce immediate, positive outcomes in their stability, health, achievement, and connection to the community.

### C. Practical Framework for Modern Programs

Contemporary two-generation program design focuses on three overarching policy structures – how to define economic stability, create an individualized family approach, and define program outcomes. The following section elaborates on each of these framework structures.

**Defining Economic Stability.** The idea of placing the entire family on a path towards economic stability is at the center of modern two-generation approaches. To fully understand the economic needs of families, researchers developed a “self-sufficiency standard” as a measure of economic need. This standard measure departs from the static nature of the Federal Poverty Level to produce an accurate estimate of income adequacy across time and geographic location.<sup>18</sup>

The self-sufficiency standard defines the amount of income necessary to meet the basic needs of American families, differentiated by family type and geographic location. The standard calculates the full cost of six basic needs (defined in the next table) without factoring in help from public subsidies (e.g., Medicaid, child care assistance) or from private/informal assistance (e.g., unpaid babysitting from a relative or food from a food bank). The standard assumes all adults work to support their families and, thus, includes work-associated costs such as transportation and child care.

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Price of a Home Climbs in D.C., Montgomery County,” WTOP, October 13, 2015, available at <http://wtop.com/real-estate/2015/10/median-price-home-climbs-d-c-montgomery-county/>.

<sup>17</sup> Brigid Schulte, “The New War of Poverty: Tackling Two-Generations at Once,” The Washington Post, May 7, 2014, available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/she-the-people/wp/2014/05/07/the-new-war-on-poverty-tackling-two-generations-at-once/>.

<sup>18</sup> Diana M. Pearce, “The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2012,” Center for Women’s Welfare, The University of Washington, available at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/Resources/Files/pdfs/MD12-SSS-Final-Print-012412.pdf>.

# OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

## Self-Sufficiency Cost Indicators

Cost Indicator	Measurement
<b>Housing</b>	Rent and utilities, excludes cable and phone payments.
<b>Child Care</b>	Full-time family daycare for infants, full-time center care for preschoolers, and before- and after-care for school-age children.
<b>Food</b>	Food for home preparation, excludes take-out or restaurant meals.
<b>Transportation</b>	Cost of owning a car per adult or the cost of public transportation when adequate. Car or public transit based on cost to commute to and from work and for weekly shopping trips.
<b>Health Care</b>	Employer-sponsored health insurance costs and out-of-pocket expenses.
<b>Taxes</b>	Federal, state, and local income tax and tax credits, payroll taxes, and state and local sales tax.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	Clothing, shoes, paper products, diapers, nonprescription medicines, cleaning products, household items, personal items, and telephone service (excludes student loan repayment, internet costs, savings, recreation, and entertainment).

Most recently in 2012, the Center for Women’s Welfare at the University of Washington in collaboration with the Maryland Community Action Partnership calculated the self-sufficiency standard for all Maryland counties. In Montgomery County a single adult with one preschooler and one school-age child would need an annual income of \$77,933 (\$36.90 per hour) to be economically self-sufficient. For a two adult household, each parent would need to earn \$19.62 per hour (\$82,877 combined annually) to be economically self-sufficient.<sup>19</sup>

### Montgomery County 2012 Self-Sufficiency Standard

Family	Self-Sufficiency Hourly Wage	Self-Sufficiency Annual Wage	% Above Federal Poverty Level (2011)
Adult + Preschooler + School-Age Child	\$36.90 per hour	\$77,933	421%
2 Adults + Preschooler + School-Age Child	\$19.62 per hour per Adult	\$82,877	371%

Compared to other large metropolitan areas, to cover basic needs – the single adult family would need to earn \$6 more per hour than the same family living in New York City (\$30.97 per hour) and over \$5 more per hour than the same family living in Los Angeles (\$31.02 per hour). Similarly, the two adult family would need to earn \$6 more per hour than the same family living in New York City (\$33.30 per hour) and \$4 more than the same family living in Los Angeles (\$34.48 per hour).<sup>20</sup>

The self-sufficiency standard sets a target at which a family would be able to move off public and private assistance. With many families experiencing shrinking wages and growing costs, policy makers use two different approaches to close the income adequacy gap – a reduction in costs or an increase in income.

*Reduction in Costs.* Work supports (e.g., child care assistance, health care, and food and housing assistance) can help families meet basic needs without having to choose between needs. Work supports help families maintain employment and, as parents transition from low-wage employment to a job paying self-sufficient wages, work supports help close the gap between actual wages and the actual cost to meet basic needs.

<sup>19</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2012, p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> Center for Women’s Welfare, “Find the Self-Sufficiency Standard for Your State,” available at <http://www.selfsufficiencystandard.org/pubs.html>.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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*Increase in Income.* Fully closing the wage gap and achieving long-term self-sufficiency (without public/private assistance) requires increasing job skills and asset building in order to raise workers' income levels. Skill building programs include post-secondary education and training programs, basic adult education, sectoral training and employment programs, and career counseling.<sup>21</sup>

These two approaches are not mutually exclusive, but occur in tandem, especially when addressing intergenerational poverty. For example, parents can receive education and training that leads to a new job while continue to supplement their income with work supports until their wages reach the self-sufficiency level.

While the self-sufficiency standard provides a measure of economic stability, research has shown a negative association in current work support programs where increased income (but below the estimated self-sufficiency wage) leads to a reduction in public/private benefits that help families reduce costs. Current work support programs are structured so that benefits either are completely terminated when a family reaches the eligibility limit (known as the Cliff Effect) or gradually reduced as income increases. Some work supports have both elements – such as a gradual increase in co-payments for subsidized child care as income increases with a termination of benefits when the family reaches the income eligibility limit.

The end result for low-income families is that increased costs erode increased wages, thus not improving a family's financial position.

In designing approaches to intergenerational poverty, researchers recommend that public benefit programs reward progress in the workforce and ensure adequate family resources. This may include phased benefits to avoid steep cliffs, raising eligibility limits, increasing the share of eligible families, and coordinating between programs to ensure that families receiving multiple benefits don't lose them based on small increase in earnings.

**Individualized Family Approach.** Utilizing the self-sufficiency standard, researchers and policymakers can pinpoint cost stressors for each family experiencing poverty. One framework example of an individualized family approach is the Crittenton Women's Union Bridge to Self-Sufficiency Model.

The Crittenton Women's Union's (CWU) roadmap is based on research indicating that moving out of poverty is no longer as simple as finding employment, but rather involves a complex process of interweaving sectoral training, executive function skill development, and obtaining self-sufficient wages. According to CWU, to obtain economic independence, low-income families need strong strategic thinking skills to set career goals and optimize outcomes. CWU identified five pillars to the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency: family stability, well-being, education and training, financial management, and employment and career management.<sup>22</sup>

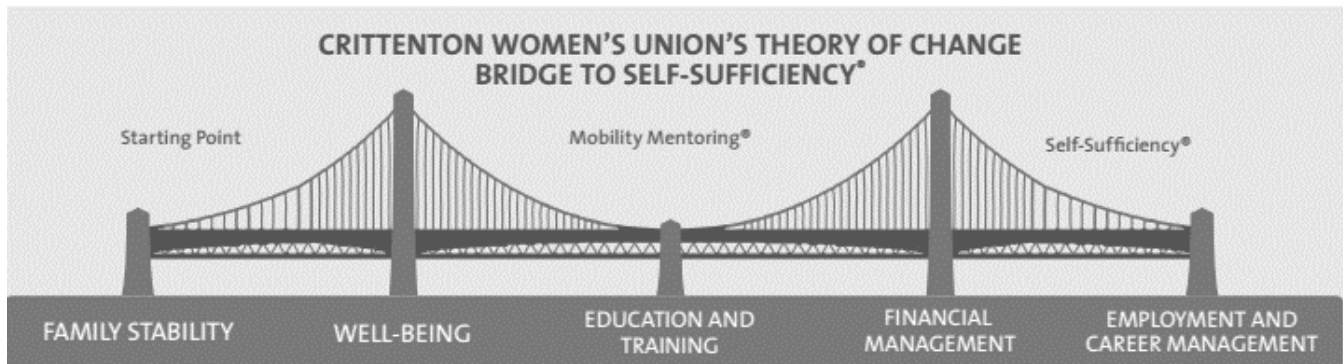
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<sup>21</sup> The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2012, pp. 18-19, 25.

<sup>22</sup> Crittenton Women's Union, "Using Brain Science to Design New Pathways Out of Poverty." See also [http://www.liveworkthrive.org/research\\_and\\_tools/bridge\\_to\\_self\\_sufficiency](http://www.liveworkthrive.org/research_and_tools/bridge_to_self_sufficiency)



## Crittenton Women's Union Bridge to Self-Sufficiency



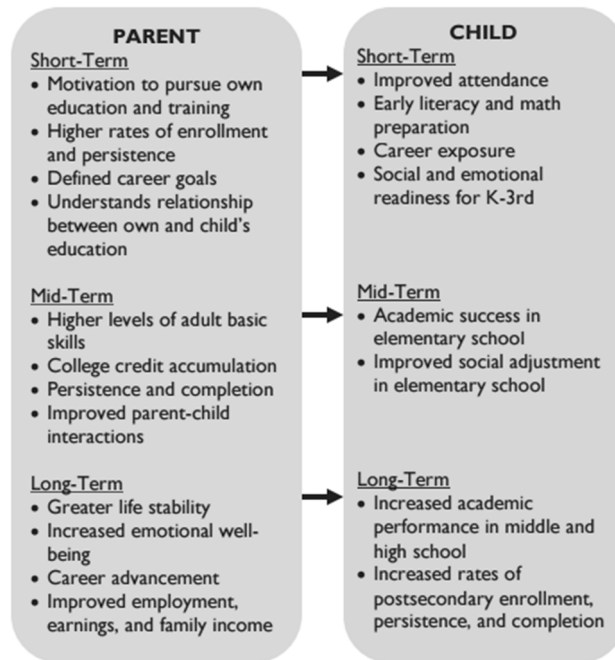
Research conducted by CWU has shown that families experiencing deficits in any one of the bridge pillars are unlikely to reach and maintain economic independence. The five pillars are mutually connected and reinforcing – failure or even unusual strength in one pillar can cause weakness in other pillars.

CWU uses mentoring to help individuals span the five pillars. CWU's mentoring program is based on the assumption that individuals engaged in optimizing outcomes across all five pillars will experience greater economic success than if they address one pillar at a time. The roadmap allows mentors to address families individually, identify families' personal barriers to success, and tailor a unique intergenerational approach for each family.

**Identifying Two-Generation Program Outcomes.** Integrating research theories, definitions of economic stability, and identification of individual family challenges, modern two-generation approaches are formed around a theory of change. Researchers at the University of Texas – Austin posit that the combination of high quality early childhood education (PreK – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade); sectoral, cohort-based job training leading to high-skill/high-wage employment; and supplemental wrap-around family and peer support services will lead to long-term academic and economic success for low-income families.<sup>23</sup> Researchers have outlined a framework that defines a range of short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes for parents and children involved in two-generation programs, with expected outcomes reinforcing each other. The chart on the following page depicts the framework.

<sup>23</sup> Dual-Generation Strategy Initiative, "Dual-Generation Strategy Overview: Research Brief," February 2012, Foundation for Child Development, Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources, University of Texas at Austin, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs.

## Change Theory Framework



The above framework suggests a cause and effect relationship: more education for parents leads to better employment opportunities, an increase in financial stability, less stress, and more effective parenting. Children living in this environment may have better role models, higher education expectations, and more motivation.

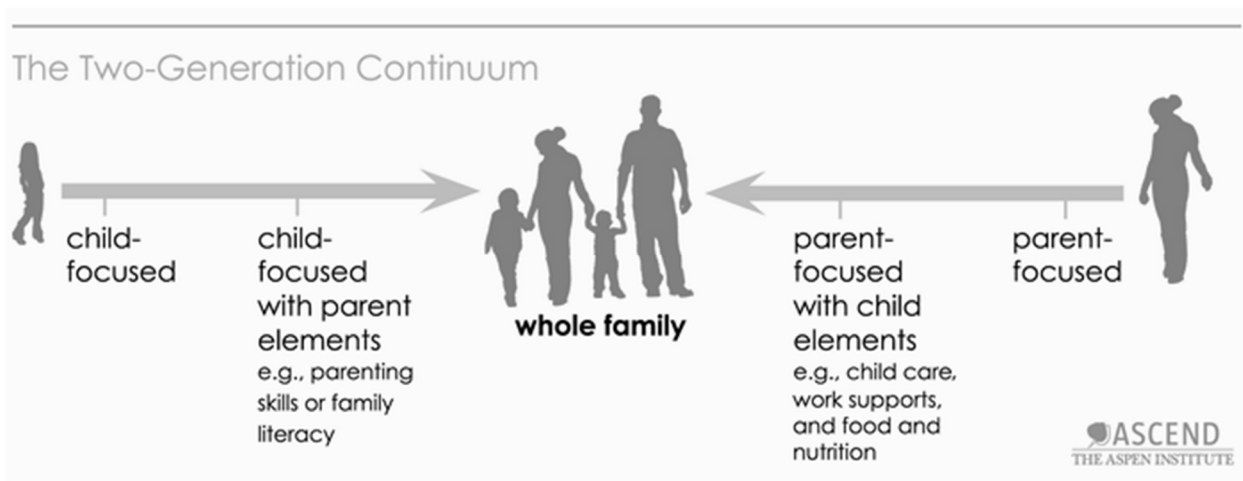
One concern with this framework is that simultaneous advancements for both children and parents may lead to possible negative outcomes. Demands of employment, school, and child-rearing may increase parental stress and decrease family time, both of which may affect family functioning, parenting, and child development. However, contemporary two-generation approaches aim to reduce possible negative effects by offering more intensive, focused programming that is coordinated to remove service barriers and program gaps.

## II. Modern Two-Generation Approaches to Poverty

Current two-generation programs are found along a continuum. The next graphic illustrates the historical progression of two-generation programs, which began with siloed, single-generation programming and moved towards a whole family approach. Along the way, both child- and parent-focused programs develop enhanced and interconnected services, building an approach to place the whole family on a path to economic security.

This section summarizes several key program components on the two-generation continuum and describes four two-generation programs currently providing services in the United States.

## A. Components of Modern Two-Generation Programs



The Aspen Institute, a non-partisan educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC, formed “Ascend,” a policy program using research to develop two-generation program design. Ascend currently is developing best practices, creating a national network of two-generation programs and leaders, and establishing grant funding opportunities. Ascend identified five components of modern two-generation programs, including early childhood education, postsecondary education, social capital, economic supports, and health and well-being.

**Early Childhood Education.** Research has shown that investments in high-quality early childhood education yield a seven to 10 percent return on investment, increase school and career achievement, and reduce social costs. High-quality early childhood education programs have emotionally supportive child-teacher interactions, effective behavior management strategies, and classroom activities that promote student engagement. These programs have smaller class sizes and are led by teachers with strong educational qualifications.<sup>24</sup> Current programs available for possible integration of a two-generation program include Child-Parent Resource Centers, Head Start, and universal PreK programs.

**Postsecondary and Employment Pathways.** Parent education programs focus on local partnerships between private employers and colleges to develop career pathways that lead to high wage employment. Potential services include connections to community colleges, childcare centers, peer support, career coaching, and enhanced student services.

**Social Capital.** Enhanced formation of formal and informal networks build economic security. Networks can include career coaches, cohort models, case managers, family and friends, community organizations, student and workplace contacts, leadership programs, and family engagement.

**Economic Supports.** Financial tools and asset-building strategies are designed to help low-income families move ahead economically and pursue education and career pathways. Supports may include housing, transportation, financial education, tax credits, student financial aid, and food assistance. Highlighting the benefits of increased economic security, research shows that low- to moderate-income children with college savings between \$1 and \$499 are three times more likely to attend college and four times more likely to graduate from college.

<sup>24</sup> Ascend, The Aspen Institute, “Two-Generation Playbook,” January 2014, available at <http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/two-generation-playbook>, pp. 3-6.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

**Health and Well-Being.** Because physical and mental health have an impact on a family’s ability to succeed, health and well-being (including mental health) are emerging components of two-generation programs, including mental health supports, prevention of toxic stress, and access to health insurance.<sup>25</sup>

Emerging two-generation programs incorporate these five components into program design and implementation.

### B. Examples of Two-Generation Programs

Working to incorporate the frameworks and key program components, modern two-generation programs typically have four types of program structures that fit along the two-generation program continuum:

- Adding education and job training programs to early childhood programs;
- Adding early childhood programs to education and workforce training programs;
- Merging separate parent and child programs within existing organizations; and
- Establish residentially-based parent and child educational programs at college campuses or public/mixed-income housing.

This section summarizes four programs – one representing each of the two-generation program approaches – describing the program’s approach to two-generation strategies, targeted audiences, and service offerings. Each organization described is a partner in the Ascend Network.

	Program Type	Program Example
1	Adult Programs Added to Child-Focused Programs	Community Action Project (CAP) Tulsa, Oklahoma
2	Child Programs Added to Adult-Focused Programs	Northern Virginia, Hostos (CUNY), and Miami Dade Community Colleges
3	Adult and Child Programs in Different Organizations Merged	The Annie E. Casey Foundation Atlanta Partnership
4	Adult and Child Programs as Residential Programs	Keys to Degrees Program at Endicott College

#### 1. Adult Programs Added to Child-Focused Programs **Community Action Project, Tulsa, OK**

The Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Oklahoma (CAP Tulsa) focuses on early childhood education and economic security for families. Since 1998, CAP Tulsa has operated as the Head Start program grantee for the majority of Tulsa County and as the Early Head Start grantee since 2000. CAP Tulsa’s two-generation approach began in 2009 as a means to integrate high-quality early childhood education programs with evidence-based education, workforce development, and parenting programs for parents.<sup>26</sup>

**Early Childhood Education Program.** CAP Tulsa provides intensive early childhood education in 13 centers (140 classrooms) in three school districts within Tulsa County. Program teachers have bachelor’s degrees and teach in programs defined by high-quality teacher-child interactions. (External observers from the University of

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Ascend The Aspen Institute, “Two Generations. One Future. An Anthology from the Ascend Fellowship,” available at <http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/resources/c/ascend-publications>, pp. 107 –18.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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Oklahoma perform biannual teacher evaluations based on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System).<sup>27</sup> Eligible CAP Tulsa early childhood education sites are accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAYCE). In collaboration with local school districts, social service agencies, and healthcare practitioners, CAP Tulsa provides services (i.e., mental health care, nutrition assistance, and crisis intervention) to address the needs of children aged 0-5 from low-income families.

**CareerAdvance.** CareerAdvance is a work-readiness program that combines adult education courses and training services into a single program with defined career pathways. Parents are recruited into CareerAdvance by CAP Tulsa staff. Based on academic and skill level, participants are placed in one of four programs: English as a Second Language, Skill Ready (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade), College Bound (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade), and Career Bound (acceptance into college-level certificate or education program).

CAP Tulsa engages CareerAdvance participants through six academic program components:

- Community partnerships with local providers (Union Public Schools, Tulsa Community College, and Tulsa Technology Center) to provide adult basic education and occupational training.
- Sector-based and employer driven career training in the health care, health information technology, and pharmacy technician fields. Career fields were selected based on the local economy. Participants exit the program with an industry-recognized credential allowing for higher wages and career advancement opportunities. Through grant funding, participants receive free or reduced tuition, books, and medical supplies, in addition to childcare and transportation support. Program staff have also been able to purchase an entire class of seats for CareerAdvance participants, allowing them to take a course together and build relationships.<sup>28</sup>
- Individualized career coaching helps program participants develop a career advancement plan.
- Support networks are comprised of program peers and family members. Program peers meet in weekly sessions with career coaches that provide opportunities for personal and professional skill development (i.e., interviewing, resume writing, and study skills) and social capital building.
- Family Supports include required services offered through Head Start and Early Head Start. Additionally, a subset of CAP Tulsa employees are trained to work with CareerAdvance participants, linking them with services including mental health resources and temporary financial supports (i.e. bus passes).
- Participation and performance incentives range from \$75 to \$200 per month, depending on participants' pathway. CAP Tulsa has found that the incentives promote persistence and course credit attainment.<sup>29</sup>

A grant from Tulsa's George Kaiser Family Foundation funded a pilot program of the adult education component from 2008-2010. Since then the program has been supported by the Health Professionals Opportunities Grant (HPOG) program at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The federal grant allowed the program to expand its career paths and provide different credentials that were more attractive to participants.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> CAP Tulsa, "The Evolution of the CareerAdvance Program in Tulsa, Oklahoma," [http://captulsa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/RMC\\_Evolution-of-Career-Advance\\_10-31-2012.pdf](http://captulsa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/RMC_Evolution-of-Career-Advance_10-31-2012.pdf). See also CAP Tulsa website at <http://captulsa.org/families/early-childhood-education>

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Monica Barczak, Director of CAP Tulsa's Innovation Lab, August 31, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> "Two Generations. One Future. An Anthology from the Ascend Fellowship," p. 111.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Monica Barczak, Director of CAP Tulsa's Innovation Lab, August 31, 2015.

**Data Driven Program Development and Evaluation.** CareerAdvance program implementation, pilot, and expansion were driven by CAP Tulsa’s Innovation Lab.<sup>31</sup> The Lab has an “evidence-oriented” culture dedicated to empirical evidence testing and incubation of new data-driven program offerings and the Lab has lead CAP Tulsa’s participation in national and localized program evaluation studies, including two five-year studies of CAP Tulsa’s two-generation approach – one examining family advancement and one examining life quality/well-being.<sup>32</sup>

Innovation Lab staff also lead research-driven initiatives that work across the agency to strengthen program offerings and training staff on two-generation approaches, including:

- Parents as Partners. CAP Tulsa staff and partnering agencies collaborate to determine how to best engage parents. Based on results, CAP Tulsa launched a tool called the Family Success Plan, which allows each family to have guided conversations with support specialists and map specific family goals.
- Risk to Ready. CAP Tulsa and public school partners are measuring kindergarten readiness in Tulsa County. A mapping tool helps community leaders understand the capabilities of at-risk or ready-for-school children, including language development and socio-emotional and physical well-being.
- Healthy Women, Healthy Futures. In collaboration with the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing, this program improves the pre-pregnancy health of mothers through comprehensive screenings, individualized coaching, and classes at CAP Tulsa early childhood education centers.
- Social Networks. The Innovation Lab conducted a study on how social networks can increase the likelihood of achieving one’s goals, finding that the child’s classroom helps build important parent-parent social connections. The study results helped pilot a parent recruitment program and book club.

**2. Child Programs Added to Adult-Focused Programs**  
**Northern Virginia Community College, VA**  
**Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College, Bronx, NY**  
**Miami Dade College – Single Stop USA, Miami, FL**

## **Northern Virginia Community College**

Northern Virginia Community College’s (NOVA) College Pathways Initiative serves three different cohorts of students, including students and families in pre-kindergarten through eleventh grade, traditional students from twelfth grade through completion of a baccalaureate program, and non-traditional students.<sup>33</sup>

In Fall 2012, NOVA started a two-generation approach within its College Pathways Initiative by establishing partnerships with local childcare centers and home-based childcare providers to support post-secondary education of both lower-income staff and student-parents. This effort is funded through a grant with the Washington Area Women’s Foundation.

Through the grant, NOVA is developing programming to help parents engage in conversations with their kids about attending college. Programming includes take home materials (i.e., books), role playing different careers, and creating a coloring/activity book to begin conversations about future career options. Through childcare center partnerships, NOVA refers student-parents to centers that may have openings or encourages career paths where child care might be available (i.e., early childhood education).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> CAP Tulsa, Innovation Lab website available at <http://captulsa.org/innovation-lab/>.

<sup>32</sup> “Two Generations. One Future. An Anthology from the Ascend Fellowship,” pp. 116-17.

<sup>33</sup> Washington Area Women’s Foundation, Grantee Partners, available at <http://thewomensfoundation.org/grantee-partners/>.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Gregory Bacourt, Grant Project Administrator, NOVA College Pathways Initiative.

## **Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College**

In 2014 Hostos Community College started the College's first "Two-Generation Student Retention and Degree Acceleration Program" with a \$50,000 grant from the Aspen Institute Ascend Fund.<sup>35</sup> Student-parents accelerated their post-secondary degree by enrolling in one seven-week summer course, while simultaneously enrolling up to two children in Hostos' College for Kids Summer Academy, all of which was free of charge. The program kept student-parents connected to campus support services and provided MetroCards to cover transportation costs.<sup>36</sup>

The program was designed to increase student retention rates for fall semester classes. Ninety-three percent of the students from the program's first cohort returned for fall semester courses. Children enrolled in the Kids Summer Academy received high-quality enrichment and educational programming, which helped diminish the effects of the "summer slide" when they return to school in the fall.

## **Miami Dade College – Single Stop USA**

Miami Dade College, in partnership with Single Stop USA (a national non-profit), offers students on campus public benefits screenings. Using technology, staff help students apply for benefits and then follow-up with to ensure that students receive the benefits. All services are provided free of charge to enrolled students. Staff also provide free financial counseling, legal referrals, and tax preparation services.<sup>37</sup>

Since 2012, Single Stop USA has partnered with 18 colleges in seven states to help increase community college retention and graduation rates. By providing coaching and case management services, students are able to overcome barriers (e.g., housing, transportation, child care) many of which impact the student's ability to proceed with postsecondary education.<sup>38</sup>

### **3. Adult and Child Programs Merged within Existing Organizations The Atlanta Civic Partnership – The Annie Casey Foundation, Atlanta, GA**

In 2001, the Annie E. Casey Foundation formed a partnership with Atlanta Public Schools, Sheltering Arms Early Learning and Resource Center, and the Center for Working Families to establish the Atlantic Civic Site Dunbar Learning Complex. The Dunbar Learning Complex, located with an elementary school, incorporates education, family economic success, and neighborhood transformation.<sup>39</sup> The programs at the center provide resources to residents of five Atlanta neighborhoods (Neighborhood Planning Unit Number 5 (NPU-V)) and because all services are combined at one site, children can matriculate from the early learning center to the elementary school and follow a continuous Pre-K through third grade curriculum, while their parents receive workforce service.

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<sup>35</sup> "Hostos Two-Generation Program Blooms into Something Special for Student-Parents," August 11, 2015, available at <http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/Home-Page-Content/News/Hostos-Two-Generation-Program-Blooms-Into-Somethin>.

<sup>36</sup> "Support the Hostos Two-Generation Retention and Degree Acceleration Program and You Will Help a Student-Parent and their Child," May 4, 2015, available at <http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/Home-Page-Content/News/Support-The-Hostos-Two-Generation-Student-Retentio>.

<sup>37</sup> Miami Dade College, "Single Stop at Miami Dade College," available at <http://www.mdc.edu/main/singlestop/>.

<sup>38</sup> Single Stop USA, available at <http://singlestopusa.org/#impact-section>.

<sup>39</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Community Building to Drive Change: Strategies for the Atlantic Civic Site," April 2014, available at <http://www.aecf.org/resources/community-building-to-drive-change/>.

**Sheltering Arms Early Learning and Resource Center.** Sheltering Arms operates 15 early childhood learning centers in the Atlanta metro, including the Atlantic Civic Site Dunbar Learning Complex described above.<sup>40</sup> Sheltering Arms serves children age six weeks through four years and offers family services (e.g., caregiving resources, parent engagement, education programming). The organization works closely with Atlanta Public Schools and Dunbar Elementary School, co-located with the Center, to align curricula, standards, and assessments to keep children on track for reading proficiency by the end of third grade (a predictor of long term success). Sheltering Arms and elementary teachers receive joint training and help children transition from PreK to school by offering opportunities to meet teachers, visit classrooms, and enroll in a summer camp for rising kindergarteners.

**Center for Working Families, Inc.** The Center for Working Families is a community-based non-profit that helps residents achieve financial stability by providing comprehensive education and workforce development services, career coaching, and leadership training.<sup>41</sup> About eighty percent of the children enrolled at Sheltering Arms have parents at the Center and spaces at Sheltering Arms are reserved for parents participating in Center program with the cost of childcare waived. Each family works with a Family Coach to identify services and interventions to help the family thrive and support from community organizations, including the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, lets the Center bundle services for families.<sup>42</sup> The Center promotes three pathways:

- Moving to Work – provides training and supports to unemployed or underemployed adults to achieve employment that has family-sustainable wages and benefits. Programs include an employment boot camp (after completion, participants are paired with a career coach), workforce literacy skills in partnership with the Georgia Piedmont Technical College, and computer training.
- Moving to Wealth – helps residents make ends meet by income-enhancing and assets-building services to help families move toward economic stability and homeownership. The Center has helped connect more than 7,000 residents with public benefits.
- Moving to Entrepreneurship – helps residents start their own businesses, providing more employment opportunities and access to goods and services in the neighborhood.

Since its opening in 2005, the Center has placed participants in more than 1,700 jobs and trained more than 450 residents on leadership skills and community development.

#### **4. Adult and Child Programs as Residential Programs Keys to Degrees Program at Endicott College, Beverly, MA**

Endicott College's Keys to Degrees Program focuses on educating two-generations together by enrolling parents in any of Endicott College's baccalaureate degree programs while enrolling their children in a high-quality early childhood center or area public schools. The Keys to Degrees program began in 1993 and has replicated the program nationally since 2010. At Endicott College, the program houses 10 single parents and their young children, ages six or younger at time of admission. (The program is expected to grow to 20 students by 2017).

The Keys to Degrees Program has nine core components to achieve the education of two-generations at a time, described below. To advance that goal, while student-parents pursue a baccalaureate degree, the Keys to Degrees program pre-screens local child development programs to ensure a high-quality education, including Montessori programs, Creative Curriculum, and centers using blended philosophies. Keys to Degrees also pays the majority of a child's tuition while the family is on the waiting list for state-issued income-eligible childcare

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Leah Austin, Senior Associate, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, October 5, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, at p. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Christopher King, et. al., "Promoting Two-Generation Strategies: A Getting Started Guide for State and Local Policy Makers," p. 5.



## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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assistance voucher.<sup>43</sup> All partnered programs must participate in the voucher program to ensure continuity of care. Babysitting is also available for evening classes or sick care.

The program's core components provide student-parents with numerous on-campus resources, including:

- Safe and Affordable Housing on Campus. Each student and child share a four-bedroom suite housed in a traditional college dormitory with another student and child. Each student and child has a private bedroom, with shared living areas.
- Year-Round Programming. Once accepted into the program, Keys to Degree families live on-campus year-round and attend classes or hold an internship during summer/winter months. An Endicott College-sponsored scholarship covers tuition, fees and housing for winter and summer sessions allowing students to reduce their course work from 15 credits to 12 credits each semester.
- Food Security. Program participants use an on-campus meal plan where children eat free in the dining halls with their parents. Staff also help student-parents receive assistance through SNAP, WIC, and the Free and Reduced-Price School lunch program to help pay for meals outside of the dining hall.
- Monitoring Student Academic Performance. Program staff monitor students' degree progress and progress towards goals. Students can also receive tutoring to help achieve expected goals.
- Assistance with Navigating On-Campus Resources & Community Assistance Supports. Program staff advocate for participants by connecting to campus resources, including career services, health services, scholarships, and public assistance programs.
- Community Building & Support among Students within the Program. By living with other program participants, students build friendships and a support community. Students help each other with babysitting, carpooling, etc. The Keys to Degrees program also hosts programming and family activities.
- Two-Way Mentoring. All program participants participate in mentoring programs with local high schools and service providers to facilitate one-on-one mentoring sessions with Key parents.<sup>44</sup> Keys participants are also connected with a professional mentor either from the community or college.
- Transitional Supports. Program staff help graduates to transition from college to the workplace or graduate school.

**Data Driven Program Development and Evaluation.** In addition to on-campus program offerings for student-parents, Keys to Degrees is working to assist students nationally through research and program replication. Working with the Program Evaluation and Research Group at Endicott College, staff conduct program evaluations and develop national research partnerships with other colleges to assess the potential to replicate a Keys to Degrees program at other schools.

Staff are using this research to develop tools to guide prospective student-parents and to create a best practices toolkit. For example, staff are working to map, nationwide, all colleges and universities that have family housing to help connect students with locally-based programs within the student's home state. The College also sponsors an annual retreat that introduces student-parents to college life (e.g., classroom and dining hall

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<sup>43</sup> Interview with Autumn Green, Director for the Center for Residential Student Parent Programs & Keys to Degrees National Replication Program, September 9, 2015.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* See also Keys to Degrees, "Core Components of the Keys to Degrees Model," received from Autumn Green, Director for the Center for Residential Student Parent Programs & Keys to Degrees National Replication Program, on September 9, 2015.

experiences). Endicott College launched the Center for Residential Student Parent Programs in 2014 to support programming, research, and policies around postsecondary education for two-generation mobility. While each program presented above addresses intergenerational poverty in a different way, all incorporate some if not all of the five components of modern two generation programs described on page 11 of this report, including early childhood education, postsecondary education, social capital, economic supports, and health and well-being. Each program focuses on the specific needs of its served population, utilizes data to tailor services, and develops policies and programs to place whole families on a path to economic security.

### III. Implementing Two-Generation Programs

Two-generation programs vary by regional labor markets, workforce conditions, and opportunities for early childhood education. Successful organizations, however, have used some common approaches to implement two-generation programming. This section presents interview findings on success factors for and challenges to program implementation.

#### A. Common Steps for Implementing Two-Generation Programs

The Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources (University of Texas) and the Foundation for Child Development issued a guide to implement two-generation strategies and programs for local and state policymakers. Acknowledging there are a multitude of program options, the guide presents six common steps that successful two-generation programs have undertaken in their development. These steps, along with a sample of key tasks, are described below.

**Common Implementation Steps and Key Tasks for Two-Generation Programs**

	Step	Key Tasks
1	Conduct an Environmental Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand current policies, programs, and resources in the region.</li> <li>• Define challenges and opportunities to leveraging existing services to implement two-generation programs.</li> </ul>
2	Link Existing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess needs of existing populations to define service offerings.</li> <li>• Interview parents at strong early childhood education programs to determine needed workforce services, and vice versa with adult program participants.</li> </ul>
3	Identify Program Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the environmental scan to identifying program champions, funding sources, and key collaborators such as government leaders, workforce intermediaries, or community organizations.</li> </ul>
4	Identify Funding Sources and Key Collaborators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore public-private partnerships to support two-generation strategies.</li> <li>• Examine existing early childhood, workforce development, and education programs with potential funders.</li> <li>• Identify funding options such as Social Impact Bonds, Place-Based Funding, or braided funding (interweaving public, private, and non-profit funds).</li> </ul>
5	Consider Replicating or Expanding Successful Two-Generation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider replication that best fits the resources, public policies, and other factors in the region.</li> <li>• Leverage existing programs at new sites to speed up implementation and achievement of goals.</li> </ul>
6	Launch a Pilot Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start small to recognize needed changes before large-scale implementation.</li> <li>• Identify measures that reflect long-term desired program outcomes. See CAP Tulsa, CareerAdvance Program (described on page 13).</li> </ul>

These common steps highlight key components to initiating a two-generation approach. To provide a further understanding of program implementation efforts, OLO interviewed key program staff. Their shared experiences are described in the following section.

### **B. Success Factors and Challenges with Program Implementation**

OLO interviewed the following organizational staff:

- Monica Barczak, Director of the Innovation Lab, CAP Tulsa;
- Autumn Green, Director for the Center for Residential Student Parent Programs & Keys to Degrees National Replication Program, Keys to Degrees;
- Gregory Bacourt, Grant Project Administrator, NOVA Adult Career Pathways Program;
- Tracy Gruber, Senior Advisor of the Office of Intergenerational Poverty Initiative, Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission; and
- Leah Austin, Senior Associate, The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

This section discusses six common themes discussed during the staff interviews. Theme Four – describing data collection efforts and corresponding evidenced-based programming, highlights data collection and evaluation methods by the Utah State Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission.

#### **1. Programs with strong leadership support are more successful.**

All staff stressed the importance of having strong leaders who support implementation of two-generation strategies. There needs to be buy-in or a belief that the investment is worthwhile. While funding two-generation approaches can be expensive, the cost is comparatively less than the social and public costs of supporting an individual for a lifetime. The two-generation approach is an investment in human capital. This represents a shift in program and government thinking towards programs designed to help people achieve their potential. Through development of strong two-generation policies, leaders can propel and shape the formation of programs.

#### **2. Needs assessments can help to narrow service offerings and available funding mechanisms.**

Clearly defined programs are central to implementing a two-generation approach. Using data and program evaluation, staff dissuade against a one-size fits all program and recommend defining service offerings by evaluating the needs of people the programs are intended to reach. For example, some programs may provide intensive wrap around services to a small cohort, while in comparison, the decision could be made to provide a broad range of services to reach a larger cohort. Additionally, as a cohort progresses through programming, services initially offered (e.g., weekly meetings) may be less necessary and other services may become more important. Needs assessments work in tandem with program evaluation and funding mechanisms to develop and promote service offerings.

#### **3. Partnerships can be used to bridge funding gaps and provide whole family services.**

Partnerships can be key resources to use when providing two-generation programs and engaging in program evaluation. Staff remarked that coalitions of groups are important, especially when merging services provided by separate organizations. However, staff remarked that although collaboration may sound easy, it requires an intentional effort on the part of program staff. By acknowledging a shared effort to assist families, partnership organizations can be motivated to share resources, time, and information to develop an approach that serves the whole family.

#### **4. Evidence-oriented cultures permit research and data to target areas or populations with the largest need, leverage partnerships, and evaluate program performance.**

The majority of staff discussed the importance of using data to drive policy formation and program development. Further, partnerships with scholars and researchers at area colleges and non-profits are formed by organizations to conduct large-scale program evaluation studies and refine program offerings.

Effective use of data allows staff to determine program priorities. With funding constraints, data driven programs assist staff with determining which projects to scale up, how to effectively allocate funding, and determine service gaps.

One of the challenges with data collection is determining what data to collect and how to measure program performance by evaluating the success of a family. Staff expressed challenges on focusing measures that look at joint outcomes. In some cases, staff need to adapt commonly-defined measures, like enrollment in college classes, to include two-generation program participants like first time freshman and transfer students (two groups traditionally excluded from measures of enrollment).

Several staff indicated that data sharing is complicated when dealing with several partners and across data-systems. Even where data sharing mandates exist, it took leadership to help organizations prioritize collaboration. Further, multiple departments may use unique identifiers for individuals receiving services, making it difficult to track data across organizations. One organization noted success in establishing a joint database across several programs. The joint database permitted staff to develop a single family profile which allowed both organizations to view the progress of the child and parents towards meeting their goals.

As programs develop, data needs change. In these cases, staff remarked about the difficulty of needing MOUs for each database. However, one caveat to this, staff remarked that it takes time to build a robust database and having the ability to integrate new sources of data leads to better evaluation. As described below, the state of Utah began data collection efforts in 2012. During its first year, the Intergenerational Poverty Welfare Reform Commission used data sets to develop defined cohorts. Since then, the Commission has worked to develop a more robust database, worked to incorporate other agencies, and developed a state-wide approach to implement evidence-based two-generation strategies.<sup>45</sup>

#### **SPOTLIGHT: The Utah State Intergenerational Poverty Data Coordination and Evaluation Efforts**

In 2012, the Utah State legislature adopted the Intergenerational Poverty Mitigation Act (IPMA). The goal of the Act is to “measurably reduce the incidence of children . . . who remain in the cycle of poverty and welfare dependency.”<sup>46</sup> To meet this goal, the Act requires the coordination of five state agencies that serve the needs of vulnerable children and their families, including the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Workforce Services, Juvenile Courts, and the Utah State Office of Education. These agencies form the Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission. The Act requires the Commission to coordinate data-driven policies to produce evidence based results, including determining where needs exist, ensuring financial resources are properly expended, and defining measurable outcomes.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Tracy Gruber, Senior Advisor of the Office of Intergenerational Poverty Initiative, September 18, 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Utah Code §35A-9-303.

<sup>47</sup> Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission, “Utah’s Fourth Annual Report on Intergenerational Poverty, Welfare Dependency, and the Use of Public Assistance,” 2015, p. 6.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

The Act requires the Department of Workforce Services to provide an annual report on the status of individuals experiencing intergenerational poverty (IGP). The Commission collects and reports data on five cohorts of Utah residents, described in the next table.

**State of Utah Intergenerational Poverty Cohorts**

	<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Adults</b>	Public Assistance, Non-Intergenerational Poverty Adults	Adults utilizing public assistance in Utah for whom there is no record of participation in Utah public assistance programs as children.
	Intergenerational Poverty Adult	Adults utilizing public assistance and utilized public assistance as children.
	Young Adults	Individuals between the ages of 18 and 21 who are experiencing intergenerational poverty.
<b>Children</b>	Intergenerational Poverty Child	Children of adults in the Intergeneration poverty adult cohort.
	At-Risk Child	Children of adults currently receiving public assistance who did not receive public assistance as children.

For a child or adult to be included in the intergenerational poverty cohort, the adult must have received assistance such as childcare subsidies, financial assistance, Food Stamps, and Medicaid/CHIP for at least 12 months as a child and the Department of Workforce Services has data going back to 1989. The adults included in the 2015 annual progress report are 43 years old or younger.

In 2014, the Commission defined four areas of child well-being as a means of measuring progress towards the Act’s goals. The indicators include early childhood development, education, family economic stability, and health. The Commission developed a five-year and ten-year plan to develop measures to address intergenerational poverty based on evidence-based findings. The Commission established benchmarks and the Commission’s annual report tracks both families experiencing intergenerational poverty and those in the at-risk cohort to determine if goals are being met. As an example, the table on the following page details the Commission goals, benchmarks, availability of data, and benchmarks for the Early Childhood Development indicator.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission, “Utah’s Plan for a Stronger Future: Five- and Ten-Year Plan to Address Intergenerational Poverty,” Department of Workforce Services, 2015, available at [https://jobs.utah.gov/edo/intergenerational/igp5\\_10yearplan.pdf](https://jobs.utah.gov/edo/intergenerational/igp5_10yearplan.pdf).

## State of Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission Tracking of Early Childhood Development

IGP Area of Child Well-Being	Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission Goals	Benchmark	Data Available	Progress
<b>Education</b>	Align systems assisting with educational outcomes to ensure efforts are focused in schools disproportionately impacted by intergenerational poverty. These systems include all levels of government, local schools, communities, business, and non-profits (5 year goal)	95% of IGP children are enrolled in full-day kindergarten or Optional Extended Day Kindergarten (OEK)	Yes	28% of IGP enrolled in kindergarten participated in full-day or OEK
		Full Day or OEK kindergarten is available at 100% of schools serving high concentrations (10% or more) of IGP children	Yes	
		Language Arts proficiency scores equal to or better than statewide rate	Yes	IGP: 58% At-risk: 69% Utah: 79%
	Children at risk of remaining in poverty as they become adults graduate from high school at the rate equal to the statewide rate (10 year goal)	Math proficiency scores equal to or better than statewide rate	Yes	IGP: 45% At-risk: 58% Utah: 73%
		75% of teachers are “highly qualified” in schools with high rates of students experiencing IGP		
		100% of schools with high rates of student mobility develop plans to address needs of students who enter and leave schools frequently		
		Reduce all chronic absence rates in K-3 among children at risk of remaining in poverty to the state wide rates for each grade	Yes	K: 39% (IGP); 25% (At Risk); 17% (Utah) 1 <sup>st</sup> : 31%; 18%; 12% 2 <sup>nd</sup> : 28%; 16%; 11% 3 <sup>rd</sup> : 25%; 16%; 10%
		Graduation rates equal to the statewide rate.	Yes	IGP: 57% At Risk: 63% Utah: 81%
		Number of moves in a 12-month period	Yes	

### **5. Current funding mechanisms can inhibit the implementation of two-generation programs.**

Several staff remarked about the challenges of using current funding streams to fund two-generation programs. Current funding mechanisms are traditionally siloed, meaning that funds can typically be used for only certain types of programs or target audiences. Silos exist primarily due to separate federal funding streams and different Congressionally-authorized committees for each stream. State and local governments typically follow the federal format for funding programs, often resulting in siloed funding across all three levels of government.<sup>49</sup> For example, CAP Tulsa, as the Tulsa County Grantee for Head Start and Early Head Start, has a consistent stream of funding for children's programs; however, when the federal grant used to provide the adult education component changed its requirements, the organization is left with a decision to alter the current program design or raise additional outside funds in order to maintain the same service offerings.

Funding for organizations takes a variety of forms, from grants to current operating expenditures. Staff remarked that because two-generation strategies span multiple government agencies, there is a defined need to change funding streams to allow for integrated approaches. One approach recommended by contemporary research is known as a braided approach, which pulls together funding from public, private, and non-profit funding streams to meet the needs of program participants.<sup>50</sup>

All staff recommend that regardless of funding challenges, the integration of data assists with allocating resources to areas where they can make the most impact. By using data, program staff can define populations, identify needs, and allocate resources.

### **6. Program replication depends on scalability and needs.**

Once programs are established, staff indicated various challenges with replicating programs at different sites. Combining a data-driven approach with an understanding of a cohort's needs allow policymakers to develop programs that are adaptable to different geographic locations and funding sources. Where one cohort may need intensive wrap-around services, other cohorts may need referrals for childcare or housing. Replication also depends on whether there are existing efforts to build on support services. According to staff, it is easier to build on program components and package those with more coordination and a social work approach, than to start from scratch with no existing support programs. Staff recommended monitoring replication efforts based on performance benchmarks in order to ensure compliance with funding and program goals.

## **IV. Two-Generation Programs in Montgomery County**

Roughly 18 percent of Montgomery County residents (184,759) live below the Federal Poverty Line, with female-headed households comprising 48 percent of the households in poverty.<sup>51</sup> It is estimated that to meet the costs of basic needs, a single adult family with one preschooler and one school age child would need to earn at least \$77,933 to be considered economically self-sufficient – higher than other large

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<sup>49</sup> Promoting Two-Generation Strategies, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> The Montgomery County Community Action Board, "Faces of Poverty 2014 Montgomery County MD," available at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/CAB%202014%20Faces%20of%20Poverty%20Report.pdf>.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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metropolitan areas such as New York City and Los Angeles.<sup>52</sup> Families living in poverty in Montgomery County often live in over-crowded situations, struggle for basic necessities, and may need behavioral health services, domestic violence assistance, and disability services.<sup>53</sup>

As described in Section One, families at-risk for experiencing intergenerational poverty often face unemployment, domestic violence, health and mental health challenges, incarceration or substance abuse, and homelessness. The Department of Health and Human Services identified six population subgroups in the County who could benefit from a two-generation approach to poverty, including young homeless families, veterans, pregnant teenagers, disconnected youth, grandparents raising grandkids, and refugee and immigrant families living on the margins.

One program in Montgomery County that employs elements of two-generation programming is DHHS' Neighborhood Opportunity Network. In 2009, DHHS and the Montgomery County Office for Community Partnerships partnered with leaders from faith-based communities, social service non-profits, and grassroots organizations to deliver critical emergency and safety net services to County residents. The partnership formed the Neighborhood Opportunity Network to merge traditional service delivery with neighborhood organizing. The Partnership secured commitment of three large non-profits (i.e., Family Services, Inc., Mary's Center, and Catholic Charities) to serve as anchor sites for the new Neighborhood Services Centers in three zip codes that had the largest need for emergency assistance programs.<sup>54</sup> In the first year of operation, this program initiated over 1,341 one-on-one conversations with County residents from over 63 countries.

However, while this program works across policy silos and builds social capital in high-need areas in the County, fully implementing the Neighborhood Opportunity Network as a true two-generation program would require additional resources and program infrastructure. At OLO's request, the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services provided recommendations on implementing a two-generation approach in the County. DHHS drafted a portion of this section (pages 25-26), which describes current two-generation opportunities in the County, current Department strengths that could allow implementation efforts to succeed, and current and future opportunities for utilizing a two-generation strategy to eliminate poverty in the County.

The end of this section provides additional information about affordable housing in the County.

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<sup>52</sup> Self-Sufficiency Standard for Maryland 2012, p. 64.

<sup>53</sup> Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, "Presentation on A Two Generation Poverty Strategy," October 11, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Metropolitan Policy Program, Brookings Institute, "Montgomery County: A Collaborative Model for Meeting Challenging Needs," available at [http://confrontingsuburbanpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Brookings\\_ToolKit\\_CaseStudies\\_MoCo.pdf](http://confrontingsuburbanpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Brookings_ToolKit_CaseStudies_MoCo.pdf).



## **Current Opportunities for Implementing Two-Generation Approaches**

While the Neighborhood Opportunity Network is a program that we are proud of and has served the community well, we do not see it as the singular approach that fits the definition of a two-generation approach to eliminate poverty. Many families are served by this non-traditional service delivery, but it typically only addresses one dimension of poverty, financial assistance. As a help and referral center, the NON's have evolved into centers that largely serve immigrant populations many of whom are undocumented. The customer base does not represent a true microcosm of the total customers with whom we work. Many of these families would not be eligible for typical benefits that might be packaged for a two-generation approach, especially with regard to federal funds. Having said that, we don't want to under-estimate the impact that the services have for those families that use the centers. In addition, the use of outreach strategies and potential attaching community health workers or other outreach personnel could position this resource to be highly impactful in the community around two generation poverty for residents in those neighborhoods. It is existing infrastructure that when modified could be leveraged.

The department also wants to focus on specific areas such as young homeless families, pregnant teenagers and teen mothers with significant barriers. Some of this work will occur in our young adult rapid re-housing program and in a secondary preventative program focusing on pregnant teens.

## **Current Strengths to be applied Towards a Two-Generation Approach to Eliminate Poverty for young parent households:**

- HHS operates a rapid re-housing program providing services to families with minor children who are homeless. It should be noted that the commitment for this program currently is 18 months to two years however, research shows that the two generational approach can take as many as five years to demonstrate results.
- Strong linkages between HHS, other public agencies, other nonprofits, HOC, and public school system.
- We are in early stages of discussion of data sharing with Montgomery county public schools.
- We have the capacity to braid together the following services:
  - case management,
  - stable housing,
  - education and workforce attainment,
  - mental and physical health supports,
  - financial literacy,
  - child welfare involvement, and
  - engagement and supportive services.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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- With recent changes coming to the Working Parents Assistance program (WPA), we will be able to support a two generational approach by helping more low income families access quality childcare.
- Montgomery County has a strong network of employers and employment opportunities. We have been able to achieve employment opportunities above minimum-wage placements through our TANF employment program for a large percent of our mandatory TANF population.
- Montgomery College has proven to be a good partner for post-secondary education and other job training opportunities. They have been a partner in several targeted job training programs for the healthcare industry, construction industry, and automotive mechanics.

### **Current and Future Opportunities for Implementing a Two-Generation Approach to Eliminate Poverty**

- While we currently do not have an integrated case management system, we are only approximately one year away from having an integrated enterprise wide case planning and data collection system within HHS.
- We need to establish strong relationships with the new Workforce Development Authority in the county and make sure that we take advantage of recent changes from the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA is now mandating that the social services agency are a mandated partner and that they share funding, but the state has not released the plan on this.
- The cost of Housing in Montgomery County limits the amount of work that we can do within our current budgets to provide long-term and substantial assistance to housing costs. Creative solutions such as Medicaid Waivers need to be pursued and unique landlord/tenant relationships.
- We need to find creative approaches to support full-day programming for children enrolled in the head start program, so that their families can participate in programs that support up two-generational poverty elimination approach.
- Many of our low income families have dual citizenship status within the family. For example, the child may be a citizen and one or more of the parents may not have legal status. In the latter situation, the parents may not be eligible for some of the supports necessary for a two generational approach. This presents some unique blending and braiding opportunities with flexible local funds. We need to figure out the policy and practice permissions and waivers that are needed to facilitate this work.
- HHS has not established a program that includes the creation of asset development. It should be noted that in a partnership with HOC, we do provide case manager support to Low income families who, through an asset development program, are able to purchase housing and or cars at the end of a five-year program. We believe that funders would be interested in supporting an asset development model.

## OLO Memorandum Report 2016-2

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**Housing Programs in Montgomery County for Low-Income Residents.** As DHHS mentioned above, one area for possible future expansion of a two-generation approach in the County is home affordability programs. Home affordability and stability is one of the many building blocks of a multi-faceted two-generational approach. Within the County, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs' programs help produce and preserve affordable housing for low and moderate income families. OLO met with the Director of DHCA and his staff to discuss housing challenges and opportunities related to two-generation approaches in the County.

DHCA's housing programs target both low-income and moderate-income residents. DHCA programs to help residents rent and purchase housing is targeted toward people who earn 60 percent or more of the area median income (AMI) (about \$58,000 for a family of four). However, DHCA staff report that County resources alone are not sufficient to reach residents who earn below 60 percent of AMI – the County requires private, federal and state resources to help supply housing for these lower-income residents. DHCA reports that its community and private sector development partners often have to braid together multiple funding sources to develop affordable housing projects that reach these residents (e.g., low-income housing tax credits, land donations, foundation grants, and County funds).

At the same time, Montgomery County's decades-old policy of "inclusionary zoning" means that the County spreads low and moderate income and affordable housing opportunities throughout the County, rather than concentrating this housing (and effectively concentrating poverty) in a few smaller areas. This disbursement of low-income residents presents an added challenge for service providers (such as DHHS) because there may not be a single, easily-accessible location to reach high concentrations of people in poverty, which increases the cost of providing services.

DHCA staff emphasized that stable, affordable housing is a key component to helping low-income residents rise out of poverty. But as highlighted in the literature on two-generation programs, housing is only one component of household stability that jurisdictions must address to help families escape from poverty.

In addition to DHCA, the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) of Montgomery County provides housing assistance to low-income County residents – it acts as the County's public housing agency, a housing finance agency, and a housing developer. Unlike DHCA, HOC is an independent agency from the County Government. County Government funding to HOC does not support any two-generation programs.

HOC administers at least one program that follows a two-generation approach – the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.<sup>55</sup> The FSS program is a five-year program available to families in the federal Housing Choice Voucher program or Public Housing residents. In addition to the federal housing assistance that program participants already receive, the FSS program provides mentors and coordinates child care, transportation, education, job training, employment counseling, financial literacy, and homeownership counseling for program participants.

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<sup>55</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Develop, "Family Self-Sufficiency Program", available at [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/fss](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fss).

## V. Findings and Discussion Questions

This report provides information on the history of and current programs employing a two-generation approach to poverty. Research has shown that successful programs, which target the needs of parents and children simultaneously, develop enhanced and interconnected services that places the whole family on a path of economic security. Based on research and interviews, OLO found:

### Program Design

- Modern two-generation programs incorporate early childhood education, postsecondary education, social capital, economic supports, and health and well-being. Research shows that programs that do not adequately address each of these components are less likely to help participants escape poverty. In addition, having stable, affordable housing is a companion requirement to any two-generation program.
- Organizations use data-driven results to tailor services to designated populations and to address program scalability. Using data, program staff can connect funding mechanisms with program services, evaluate programs, and incorporate current research theories into program design.

### Strengths and Opportunities to Leverage a Two-Generation Approach in Montgomery County

- Opportunities exist in the County to help lift young families out of poverty. DHHS has the capacity to braid services (e.g., case management, housing, mental and physical health supports, and child welfare services) to create a whole-family approach to economic stability.
- Strong partnerships in the County between DHHS, HOC, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery College can be enhanced and leveraged to provide two-generation programming. Further the County has a strong network of employers and employment opportunities to target the sectoral training component of two-generation programming.
- Future opportunities to implement and expand County two-generation programs include data integration capabilities, the relationship with the County's new Workforce Development Board, developing innovative solutions to the high cost of housing and childcare for local families, targeting immigrant families' needs, and asset-building strategies.

Below are questions to help the Council examine the benefits of and opportunities for developing two-generation programs in Montgomery County.

1. What opportunities exist to expand the use of data to understand the needs of families experiencing intergenerational poverty in Montgomery County? How can data be used to drive program design and the geographic location of services?
2. On October 13, 2015, the Council enacted Bill 40-15 establishing a non-profit Workforce Development Corporation. Would focusing current and future workforce development programs on sectoral training and stackable career credentials benefit County residents in poverty? This includes opportunities to foster partnerships with early childhood education centers, Montgomery College, and expansion of existing programs, such as the Rx for Employability Program started by the Montgomery Business Development Corporation.
3. The Office of Legislative Oversight currently is working on a study examining paid family leave in Montgomery County. How would paid family leave impact low-income families living in the County?
4. What funding mechanisms are available for the establishment of programs in the County to address two-generation poverty (i.e., partnerships, Social Impact Bonds, grants)?