

THE WORKING POOR FAMILIES PROJECT

POLICY BRIEF ■ FALL 2019

STRENGTHENING STATE SYSTEMS AND POLICIES TO FOSTER TWO-GENERATION STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES

By Rich Jones¹

THE WORKING POOR FAMILIES PROJECT

Strengthening State Policies for America's Working Poor

Millions of American breadwinners work hard to support their families. But, despite their determination and effort, many are mired in low-wage jobs that provide inadequate benefits and offer few opportunities for advancement. In fact, nearly one in three American working families now earn wages so low that they have difficulty surviving financially.²

The Working Poor Families Project is a national initiative that works to strengthen state policies to improve these economic conditions. Since 2002, the project partners with state nonprofit organizations and supports their efforts to promote actions that can help prepare America's working families for a more secure economic future. WFPF is currently supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and this policy brief is made possible by their generous support.

For more information:

www.workingpoorfamilies.org

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, foundations, nonprofit organizations, local governments and states have worked to promote and employ Two-Generation strategies to foster economic mobility for low-income working families. These efforts, initially described in a Working Poor Families Project (WFPF) 2014 Issue Brief, have encompassed a number of approaches that include working directly on children's programs and building local capacities to better serve families in neighborhoods and communities as well as building awareness of the benefits of family-focused strategies.

The Working Poor Families Project is a national initiative that works with state-based nonprofit groups to strengthen state policies that help low-income working families advance economically. Since 2014, the WFPF has worked with its state partners to promote Two-Generation strategies at the state level with the goal of helping the working poor to escape intergenerational poverty.

Starting in late 2016, with the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the WFPF begun working directly with five WFPF state partners in AR, CO, GA, KY, and NC³ to enhance their state's commitment and ability to serve and support adults and children collectively as well as drive local programs to do so. This 3.5 year initiative calls on these state partners to focus on state systems that are centered on serving adults and connecting them to the state systems and programs that serve children with the idea of bringing complementary and possibly integrated services to the whole family. Notably, the initiative is designed to specifically engage adult-focused state systems to be more mindful of the needs of children and willing to support efforts to serve the family as a whole.

This policy brief reports on the first three years of the initiative by reviewing the efforts of the five state partners. After first providing more background on Two-Generation efforts across

the U.S. in recent years, this brief discusses: 1) the WFPF concept and approach to the initiative; 2) the work of the five state partners, including the state systems identified for this work and specific items identified for improvement within those systems as well as progress to date; and 3) lessons learned and observations of this work with a clear recognition of the challenges and complexities inherent in undertaking systems change work.

BACKGROUND ON TWO-GENERATION POLICIES AND APPROACHES

Even as the U.S. economy has recovered from the Great Recession and unemployment dropped to as low as 3.6 percent in May 2019, a near 50 year low, many Americans are not prospering. According to a 2018 WFPF issue brief, three out of ten working families are poor or low-income and have a hard time making ends meet. Families headed by racial and ethnic minorities are twice as likely to be poor or low-income than are those headed by non-Hispanic whites. Plus, economic inequality is rising. The share of income going to the top 20 percent of working families is now ten times higher than the share going to the bottom 20 percent of working families, levels not seen since the first Gilded Age in the 1920s.⁴

Policymakers are looking for strategies that can help more people advance economically, ensure that low-income working families get a fairer share of the benefits from economic growth and provide a path out of poverty. Two-Generation strategies that intentionally serve low-income parents and children concomitantly rather than through programs that serve either children or adults exclusively, have garnered a lot of attention. The interest in this approach has grown in recent years as research has shown promise in moving families out of poverty.

The Two-Generation approach has been embraced by the Ascend Program at the Aspen Institute, the W.K. Kellogg, Annie E. Casey, Gates and W. Kaiser Foundations, the National Governors Association, the Center for Law and Social Policy and others. The core components of a Two-Generation approach include early childhood education, postsecondary

education and employment pathways, health and well-being, economic assets and social capital.^{5 6}

Many Two-Generation initiatives implemented at the local level involve “intentionally linking education, job training and career-building services for low-income parents simultaneously with early childhood education for their young children.”⁷

The idea of serving both children and parents collectively goes back to the launch of the Head Start program in 1965. The idea was to include some self-sufficiency programs for parents in the early childhood education programs for their children. They included efforts to provide adult basic education, GED attainment, and other efforts to help the parents leave welfare. Head Start has consistently included elements to promote maximum feasible parent participation.⁸ However, the adult programs were not “intensive, widely implemented or extensively studied.”⁹

Additional efforts were undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s, aimed at moving young mothers off welfare by providing educational and parenting services to the mothers and child care for their children. However, these programs were not found to be very successful.¹⁰ By the mid-1990s the emphasis shifted from helping low-income parents build skills to pushing them, “into a job, any job.”¹¹

Today, there is great interest in new Two-Generation programs often referred to as Two-Generation 2.0. They build on the lessons learned from the earlier programs and focus on connecting parents to postsecondary education and training that leads to jobs that pay family supporting wages. Rather than pushing them into any job, these efforts emphasize preparing parents for jobs in industries with high growth potential, good wages, and opportunities for career advancement. Many, such as the Jeremiah Project and Tulsa’s Career Advance, also provide wrap-around services to support parents and their children as the parents pursue education and job training.¹²

Most efforts also emphasize providing children with high-quality early childhood education programs that prepare them for success in school

and produce the best return on investment.¹³ Both parents and children have been found to do better when they participate in the education programs at the same time.¹⁴

RECENT STATE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE TWO-GENERATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

In recent years, several states have taken steps to implement Two-Generation policies and apply Two-Generation strategies to programs aimed at helping low-income working families. While these efforts have been spearheaded from the state level they have largely focused on supporting local efforts to coordinate and strengthen family-focused services.

Connecticut¹⁵

In 2014, the Connecticut General Assembly directed its Commission on Children to form a Two-Generation policy work group and develop recommendations for policies that would: 1) promote access to high-quality early childhood education for children from birth to five years old in families with incomes below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level; and 2) provide the children's parents with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma, adult education, and technical skills that improve employability. In 2015, the General Assembly passed legislation promoting statewide Two-Generation policies that created six demonstration sites (one more has been added) to assist parents and children by focusing on early learning programs, adult education, child care, housing, job training and workforce development, transportation, and financial literacy. It sets up an evaluation process and is aimed at implementing policies, systems, and programs with the goal of moving families out of poverty. Budget problems in 2017 resulted in funding cuts for these efforts, but coordinating services for children and adults and work in the pilot communities has continued.¹⁶

Tennessee¹⁷

In 2011, Tennessee engaged in a major effort to examine whether the people served by the state Department of Human Services were better off

because of the assistance they received. This comprehensive review covered many areas but brought specific attention to rethinking the Department's approach to addressing poverty and the potential to incorporate a Two-Generation approach into the policies, practices, and services for Tennessee families.

By 2014-15, the Department had redefined its mission and vision as well as made a key commitment to bringing the Two-Generation concept and approach into its policies and operations. The results over the ensuing years have been many and have included: 1) using the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) resources to serve whole families such as helping parents understand and take action to enroll their eligible children in the Tennessee Promise postsecondary scholarship program; 2) developing a new child care assistance program for parents who are working or pursuing postsecondary education leading to self-sufficiency; and 3) establishing a framework to provide families with multiple services, including education, health, job readiness, and financial literacy.

As Tennessee moved into 2019 and a new administration, the Two-Generation concept and approach was institutionalized within the Department and was widely understood and accepted in other state agencies as well as among stakeholders and providers at the local level. This provided a solid foundation to strengthen additional state policies and practices to benefit Tennessee families.

Georgia

The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), the University System of Georgia, and the Technical College System of Georgia have worked to connect the early learning, postsecondary education, and workforce systems at the local level. In 2019, the state awarded four Two-Gen Innovation Grants — three to local technical colleges and one to a county child care program — to either develop or implement strategies that are designed to reduce the barriers that low-income parent students face in completing

their education with an emphasis on expanding access to child care subsidies.¹⁸ Plus, the initiatives focus on linking the parents of children in the early learning system to workforce training and postsecondary education programs.¹⁹ The goal is to help children get high-quality early learning while helping their parents obtain jobs that pay family supporting wages. The grants can be used to explore Two-Generation policy change by communities that

are just beginning to create collaborative efforts. For those with existing collaborations, the grants can be used to expand Two-Generation policies and programming.²⁰ DECAL extended access to child care subsidies to student parents seeking associate's degrees in 2018, which enhances Two-Generation opportunities. DECAL and its partners are also developing outcome measures to evaluate the work of the grantees.²¹

National Initiatives to Promote State Two-Generation Work

In the past five years, Two-Generation efforts have expanded to focus on states as a primary vehicle for this work and have included Ascend at the Aspen Institute and the W.K. Kellogg WFPF Initiative.

One specific example is *The Parents and Children Thriving Together (PACTT) State Policy Network* led by the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP). This effort brought together governors' teams from five states in 2018, and provided funding to expand their work on Two-Generation strategies. The states – Colorado, Georgia, Minnesota, New Jersey and Oregon — developed and implemented state Two-Generation plans and worked to achieve systems-wide change in workforce development, human services, education, health, child care, and early childhood education. PACTT provided governors and their cross-agency teams with funding, technical assistance, and peer networking opportunities. Each state employed a community outreach strategy so that its activities were tied into local needs.

The states took different approaches to expanding the use of Two-Generation strategies. Georgia, Minnesota, and Oregon are focused on supporting and expanding local efforts and then taking the lessons learned to other areas throughout their states. New Jersey is applying Two-Generation strategies to their statewide program that supports parents on the TANF program. Colorado is developing and expanding data systems to better track the results of Two-Generation strategies throughout state government, local governments, and non-governmental organizations. Each state's PACTT plan, except Colorado's, has a strategy that specifically links education systems serving children with adult serving systems that provide workforce development, basic education, or postsecondary education for their parents.²²

Another example is the *Whole Family Approach to Jobs Project*. This initiative brings together stakeholders from the public and private sectors to identify opportunities for policies to promote approaches that serve the whole family and help low-income parents advance economically. It is a partnership between the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Administration for Children and Families Regions 1 and 4 (6 New England states and 11 Southern states) supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.²³ The goal is to identify the barriers that limit parents' ability to move toward employment and economic stability goals and the level of government best positioned to address them. It recently published a policy brief focused on state efforts to address benefit cliffs.²⁴

WFPF STATE PARTNERS' APPROACH TO TWO-GEN POLICY UNDER KELLOGG GRANT PROJECT

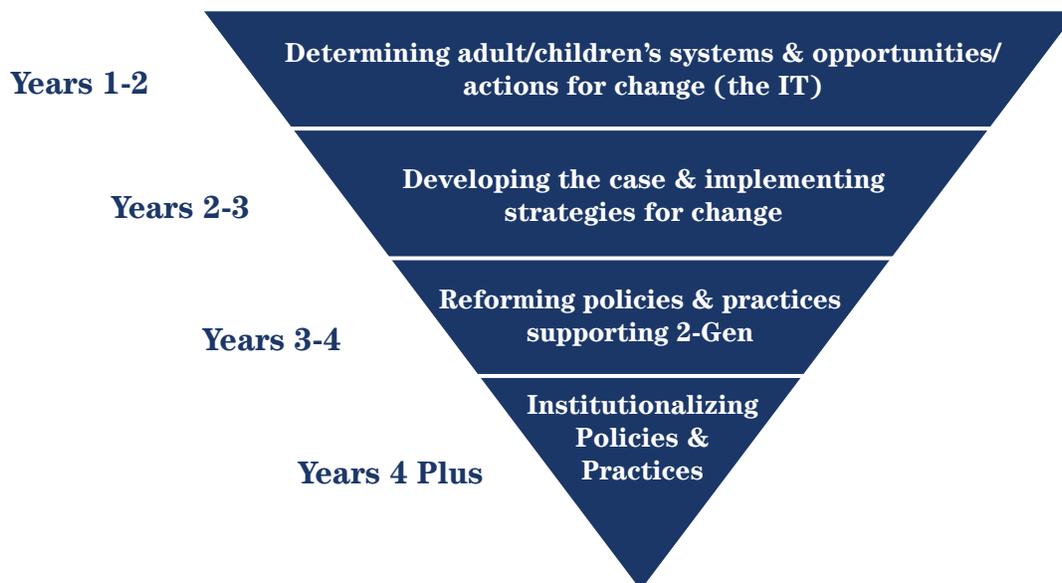
The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) grant to the Working Poor Families Project is designed to increase the capacity of nonprofits in Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina to strengthen state Two-Generation job quality and family support policies, programs, and activities. The goal is to develop and advance robust state policies to implement Two-Generation strategies that will help low-income working families get ahead economically. Work on this project began in September 2016, and is scheduled to be completed on December 31, 2019.²⁵

The WFPF partners are focused on strengthening statewide Two-Generation policies to improve support for families so that adults can better access education, job training, and other services while their children receive high-quality services. By serving entire families these policies are designed to help low-income working families get ahead economically with the ultimate goal of eradicating intergenerational poverty.

The five state partners are pursuing a range of activities to implement the goals of this project. The project began with a review of each state's systems that serve adults to identify opportunities to promote Two-Generation policies. The partners then determined how best to connect these adult systems to those that serve the families' children. Finally, they identified specific state policy or practice changes to better align these systems with the goal of achieving change and implementing actions to better serve low-income working families.

Figure 1 below presents a conceptual framework and projected timeline for the WFPF partners work. State partners have used this as a general guide to conduct their work, and at this point have generally completed the steps outlined for the first three years. State partners are currently in various stages of advocating for the endorsement and adoption of reforms to policies and practices supporting Two-Generation strategies. This will be followed with efforts to promote systemwide implementation and institutionalization, which likely will occur beyond the time frame for this initiative.

Figure 1: Description of and Timeframe for WFPF Two-Generation Work



Because many of these adults are also parents, the partners identified the programs that helped their children access early childhood education. Finding opportunities to link these programs together became the focus for systems changes.

After reviewing the various state programs that serve adults, several partners focused their work on programs that help low-skilled, low-income adults gain postsecondary education or improve their job skills. Because many of these adults are also parents, the partners identified the programs that helped their children access early childhood education. Finding opportunities to link these programs together became the focus for systems changes. For example, the Bell Policy Center in Colorado, the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, and the North Carolina Justice Center are working to better link their postsecondary education and early childhood education systems to serve entire families.

The partners then conducted research, published reports, and made the case for implementing strategies to change the systems they identified to better serve the entire family. For example, the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy published a white paper showing that expanding one of the treatment options for parents with opioid addiction would be an important step to help parents overcome their addiction while at the same time creating an opportunity to access other resources to help their children and keep their families together.

Finally, each of the partners is currently reforming policies and practices to support Two-Generation policies. For example, to ensure a consistent and more family-centered approach across systems, the Arkansas Community

Colleges is working to bring a family-centered coaching model developed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (see more below) to case managers in the child care system and the community college systems.

The last stage involves institutionalizing the policies and practices that effectively promote Two-Generation policies in the states. But it is now apparent that this work will take more time and effort beyond the grant period. Below are more detailed descriptions of the actions that each of the state partners has taken to promote systems change to implement Two-Generation policies. In addition, Appendix A summarizes each partner's approach and activities.

WFPF STATE PARTNERS' TWO-GENERATION ACTION PLANS²⁶

Arkansas

Arkansas Community Colleges (ACC), the association representing all 22 community colleges in Arkansas, is the state partner leading the efforts to implement Two-Generation policies in Arkansas. Their work is centered on the postsecondary education system, specifically the state's community colleges. It builds on the nationally recognized Arkansas Career Pathways (ACP) program that provides workforce development and education for families enrolled in the state's TANF program or those whose incomes are under 200 percent of the federal poverty level. All TANF families have children. ACC will link the career pathway program at the community colleges with the state's child care system to better serve the entire family and ensure that low-income student parents have access to child care for their children.

To promote a more family-centered approach to working with TANF families, ACC is working to transform the case management approach used in each system and improve coordination between them by using the same case management approach. It seeks to have case managers in both systems use the Family

Centered Coaching Curriculum developed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Training for child care case managers and ACP navigators on this curriculum was held in February and April 2019. To further institutionalize these practices, implementation coaching for local ACP and child care personnel to learn to work together will be provided to facilitate collaborative family-centered coaching based on the curriculum across both systems.

Changing the approach to case management will ensure that both systems are coordinating how each serve the entire family. The goal is to ensure that TANF families participating in the career pathways program at the community colleges will get the education and training the parents are seeking, their children will get access to high-quality early childhood education, and that both the community college and the child care provider are working together to support the education goals of both the parents and children.

ACC is working to spread the adoption of the Family Centered Coaching Curriculum across all providers in both systems, using new or existing professional development funds within each system to provide staff training. ACC is also working to secure additional funding, including exploring matching funds through the Education and Training component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), to expand the ACP to a broader population of low-income adults. If they are successful, they will also link parents in SNAP with the child care system so their children can receive high-quality early childhood education.

Colorado

The Bell Policy Center is the WFPF's state partner in Colorado whose Two-Generation policy work is centered on the postsecondary education system, specifically the community college system. The Bell will build on the current Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) project designed to help low-skilled, low-income custodial parents receive training

through the community colleges of Aurora and Denver to prepare them for better paying jobs.²⁷

To promote family-centered services for these students, the Bell is seeking to better integrate the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) and the early childhood education system with the community college system. This will increase the number of students who receive child care subsidies under CCCAP and expand the level of access to child care services that community colleges provide to their student parents. The community college system is the adult-centered system and CCCAP is the child-serving system that are being targeted for intervention.

Based on its work with the SWFI Learning Community, the Bell has identified several core components of the SWFI model that could be expanded to other community colleges in Colorado.²⁸

Bell staff will develop a set of readiness indicators for integrating SWFI's components, identify two to three institutions with high potential to integrate these components and work with at least one of these institutions to develop an action plan for implementing the SWFI core components.

Bell staff will also determine the type and amount of data that publicly funded postsecondary education institutions statewide are collecting on their students who are parents and develop one to two policy options to provide increased incentives for these institutions to collect more robust data.

The CCCAP system in Colorado is a state-local partnership where counties have some discretion in implementing its provisions. The Bell will develop one to two specific policy proposals to expand access to CCCAP for postsecondary students such as removing the counties' ability to prioritize activities funded by CCCAP and providing incentives for counties to provide CCCAP for parents enrolled in education and training programs.

Georgia

The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (GBPI) is the WFPF state partner whose Two-Generation Policy strategy is focused on bringing together Georgia's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and TANF systems to implement a career pathways model for TANF participants. The core idea of this model is to increase the resources available to assist TANF participants to access education and skills training and ensure that the children in these families are cared for properly.

To promote family-centered services for students, this model intends to develop a braided funding mechanism with WIOA and TANF funds to cover the costs of training in high-demand career pathways and providing child care assistance to the parents enrolled in this training. In 2018, the WIOA system officially merged with the Technical College System of Georgia, enhancing opportunities for alignment with postsecondary education. TANF and these systems are the adult-centered systems. The Childcare and Parents Services program, Georgia's Child Care Development Block Grant-funded program with a priority of serving TANF families, is the child-centered system targeted for intervention.

GBPI will convene a new multi-stakeholder workforce advocacy coalition to co-develop and gain consensus on this model. It also will work with the group to develop a conceptual strategy for adopting and implementing the model. These actions will lead to GBPI conducting capacity-building presentations and hosting training for nonprofit providers, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Department of Early Care and Learning, and other service delivery organizations on key steps to implement the model. By the end of 2019, GBPI anticipates that TANF and Office of Workforce Development staff will be working in partnership to train direct-service providers on how to effectively utilize TANF and WIOA resources to maximize support services for low-income families, advancing their model throughout the WIOA network of providers.

Kentucky has been one of the hardest hit states from the national opioid epidemic...KCEP is working on expanding a successful family-focused treatment model that keeps children in the home and provides them with needed services while their parents are undergoing treatment.

Kentucky

The Kentucky Center for Economic Policy (KCEP) is the WFPF state partner working to implement Two-Generation policy changes to help families affected by the opioid crisis. Kentucky has been one of the hardest hit states from the national opioid epidemic and has seen a large increase in the number of children in foster care as a result. KCEP is working on expanding a successful family-focused treatment model that keeps children in the home and provides them with needed services while their parents are undergoing treatment.

The adult-serving systems targeted for policy intervention are those that serve adults with addiction problems such as the behavioral health system, criminal justice, and court systems. The child welfare system is the child-serving system targeted for intervention.

In an earlier phase of the project, KCEP assessed several local drug treatment programs that deploy Two-Generation strategies to address parental addiction issues while keeping children in the home whenever possible. It published a [white paper](#) laying out their analysis and supporting their determination that the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) pilot is the best initiative for helping affected families and could be expanded throughout the state.²⁹

KCEP is building the case for expanding the START model in more parts of the state including tracking the state's plan for the federal Family First Prevention Services Act and communicating with stakeholders about the opportunities for expanding the START program. This summer they published a blog advocating for action³⁰ and they continue to work with the Department of Community Based Services staff leading the submission of the state plan and providing follow-up on the merits of expanding the START program. In addition, KCEP attended regional convenings that brought together stakeholders and emphasized the value of expanding the START program.

The experiences from the START program can also be used to inform broader systems changes taking place within the state and move them closer to a Two-Generation approach. For example, Kentucky's Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities has developed a recovery-oriented system of care model for families affected by substance abuse. The model is being implemented throughout the state where Community Mental Health Centers are using a holistic approach to help families – adults and children — by coordinating services and supports.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Justice Center (NCJC) is the WFPF state partner working to promote Two-Generation policies within the state's SNAP Employment and Training system and the Early Childhood development programs offered through the Smart Start Initiative. This approach is focused on drawing down federal funding that allows for greater scale in reaching more working families with children as well as working across agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services to recognize their shared goals and the multiple barriers facing working families striving for economic security.

The SNAP Employment and Training program is the adult-serving system targeted for policy changes. The Early Childhood Development

programming offered through the local Department of Social Services Offices' Smart Start Initiative is the child-serving system being targeted. The Smart Start Initiative helps low-income families afford high-quality early childhood education.

The SNAP Employment and Training programs are state supervised but administered by counties in North Carolina. NCJC is working to expand the number of counties participating in this program beyond the nine that currently do so. Key to this expansion is using the relationships and lessons learned in the nine counties to work with DHHS to implement system-level change at the state level. This will involve supporting the Department in revising its SNAP Employment and Training Plan and in aligning data systems. They will also meet with agency staff to support connecting SNAP recipients in job training to the child care programs that their children need to thrive.

By taking these actions, NCJC will catalyze efforts to increase the number of parents participating in the SNAP Employment and Training program that gain access to child care assistance. In addition, the number of parents with children receiving child care assistance who are participating in SNAP Employment and Training programs will also increase. To secure success for the long term, NCJC will work to engage beyond the early childhood and workforce communities to encourage private employers, health care providers, and non-traditional voices to support these actions. NCJC expects these actions could lead to a deeper understanding of a Two-Generation or whole family approach to advancing economic security and will help advocates within these communities to further advance the institutionalization of these efforts in state practice.

Complementing this effort will be NCJC's work to elevate the need to raise pay for early childhood educators in the public debate about the quality of early childhood care and education. The goal is to secure a greater commitment to subsidizing the wages of early childhood workers and a career pathway model that aligns with higher levels of pay for that occupation.

LESSONS ON STRENGTHENING STATE TWO-GENERATION SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Two-Generation work of the five WFPF state partners is now well into its third year. As described above, each of the state partners have made progress in raising attention among multiple stakeholders to the opportunities and needs to address generational poverty by bringing complementary and integrated services to the whole family. They now are advocating for the adoption of specific policies and practices that are fundamental to the implementation of the proposed Two-Generation strategies.

In engaging in this work, the WFPF state partners have identified and confirmed a number of important lessons in promoting such change. These include:

- **Applying a Two-Generation lens to state intergenerational poverty efforts helps surface equity and effectiveness issues in state systems, policies, and programs that are adult- and child-serving.** This opens the door to introducing the concept and ideas for adopting family-centered strategies that can strengthen both adult and child serving systems concurrently.
- **The focus on systems and policies can (and should) lead directly to thinking about how families can be better served with available resources and providers.** This necessitates addressing both how provider practices can be improved and possibly integrated to serve the whole family and how state policies and actions can drive and support such change.
- **The goal of advancing systems change is conceptually appealing, but the complexity and attention required to gain support and achieve progress is formidable.** Focusing the work on specific and tangible ideas for change within and across systems compels the identification of the opportunity and need for change, a proposed solution or model to carry out the change, a realistic plan of actions for implementing the solution or model.
- **Offering a proposed solution or model for change encourages cross-system stakeholders to join deliberations designed to strengthen state policies and practices.** The opportunity for collaboration, especially around the goal of more effectively serving families, is often readily embraced. This builds cross-agency interest at multiple levels, thus avoiding a potential pitfall of having support for an idea tied to only one stakeholder.
- **Collaboration, however, does not come easily and, in fact, often involves costs in both time and money.** Services providers and other stakeholders need to know that they will be supported to participate in the deliberations to determine new strategies and practices as well as subsequent efforts to change and strengthen their operations accordingly.
- **Moving from an idea to a proposal for change requires an acute awareness of the political, budgetary, and policy environment that is often shifting.** Such efforts also benefit from a proposal that is grounded in evidenced-based practices and incorporates funding that comes from numerous sources including federal, state, and local governments. This ensures that each system is invested in, committed to, and more likely to act to implement the necessary changes.
- **Finally, a sound vision for system change must include a plan for getting proposals adopted as well as implemented and ultimately institutionalized.** This process needs to start with a common vision, general consensus about the needed Two-Generation changes, and detailed planning on how to implement them. Such progress is unlikely to be realized in a short-time frame of several years. Progress also requires attention to the actions, resources, and supports needed for providers and frontline workers to make thoughtful and smooth transitions in their approach and actions for delivering family-centered services.

Changing the approaches and practices of long-standing and established programs, agencies, and systems is hard. There is a strong tendency to continue to do what always has been done. Much like trees that snap back after being bent over in a windstorm, there is a penchant for agencies and providers to revert to established approaches even after Two-Generation practices have been implemented.

The successful institutionalization of new Two-Generation strategies often begins by having the adult-centered and child-centered systems come together to address specific problems and opportunities with an expectation or preferably an intent that such actions will build trust and commitment over time. This also requires an openness to replacing old approaches with the new as well as redirecting existing resources to support the new ways of delivering services and supporting families. Implementing Two-Generation strategies takes time and is dependent on a willingness to make systemic changes that can benefit the entire family.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Apply a Two-Generation lens to state intergenerational poverty efforts to help strengthen both adult and child serving systems concurrently.
2. Focus on systems and policies that can lead directly to thinking about how families can be better served with available resources and providers.
3. Target the work on specific and tangible ideas for change within and across systems in order to lead to the identification of the opportunity and need for change, a proposed solution or model to carry out the change, and a realistic plan of actions for implementing the solution or model.
4. Encourage cross-system stakeholders to join deliberations designed to strengthen state policies and practices.
5. Ensure that services providers and other stakeholders know that they will be supported to participate in the deliberations to determine new strategies and practices as well as subsequent efforts to change and strengthen their operations accordingly.
6. Be aware of the political, budgetary, and policy environment when working on systems change.
7. Know that success can require a common vision, general consensus about the needed Two-Generation changes, and detailed implementation planning.

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Table 1: Summary of WFPF Partners Approaches to Two-Generation Policy Implementation

State	WFPF Partner	Approach	Adult System	Child System	Stakeholders	Goals/Actions
Arkansas	Arkansas Community Colleges	Link the community college system and child care system to better serve TANF families in the career pathway initiative.	Community College System	Child Care System	Department of Higher Education and Department of Human Services Families in Career Pathways Initiative	Implement the WKK Family Centered Coaching model in both systems to replace traditional case management model. Conduct joint training for staff in both systems and identify policies and strategies to institutionalize the model.
Colorado	The Bell Policy Center	Link the community college system and child care and early childhood education systems to better serve low-income students.	Community College System	Child Care Assistance and Early Childhood Education Systems.	Community College System; Department of Human Services; Early Childhood Leadership Councils; Strengthening Working Families Initiative's (SWFI) Learning Community	Identify at least two community colleges where core components of SWFI model could be integrated; Work with at least one to develop an action plan for implementing the core components; Identify and promote at least two policy changes to expand access to CCCAP for students who are parents.
Georgia	Georgia Budget and Policy Institute	Implement a career pathways training model for TANF parents while providing high quality child care for their children.	Technical College System and TANF systems	Child Care System	Technical College System; Division of Family and Children Services; Office of Workforce Development; Department of Early Care and Learning	Engage WIOA and TANF leaders in a multi-stakeholder coalition, develop a capacity-building presentation, host a training for service providers and demonstrate how to implement a career pathways model using WIOA and TANF funds that pairs training for adults with high-quality child care for their children.

State	WFPF Partner	Approach	Adult System	Child System	Stakeholders	Goals/Actions
Kentucky	Kentucky Center for Economic Policy	Provide drug treatment to parents while providing services to children to reduce the number of parents incarcerated and keep families together.	Behavioral health, criminal justice, and court systems.	Child Welfare System	Department for Behavioral Health Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID); Department of Community Based Services (DCBS)	Encourage the statewide application of the successful Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) model to treat parents addicted to opioids. This model serves the whole family, keeps children in the household, and provides them with needed services while the parents receive treatment.
North Carolina	North Carolina Justice Center	Work with the Department of Health and Human Services to draw down federal funds to expand the county administered SNAP E&T program to more non-metro counties, provide training to more adults and provide child care services to more children as their parents undergo training.	SNAP E&T program and Community College System	Early Childhood Development System	Department of Social Services; Department of Early Education and Development; Community College System; early childhood education and hunger advocates	Better link education programs for children and their parents by expanding participation in the child care system's early childhood education programs by children whose parents are enrolled in SNAP E&T programs. Plus, expand participation in SNAP E&T programs by parents whose children participate in the child care system's early childhood education programs.

ENDNOTES

¹ Rich Jones is the former Director of Policy and Research for the Bell Policy Center where he was part of the project team working on Two-Generation policy analysis and research. He is currently a private consultant in Colorado specializing in public policy analysis and research. He would like to thank the following individuals for providing background information and insights about their efforts to implement Two-Generation Strategies in their states: Mike Leach, Arkansas Community Colleges; Tyler Jaeckel, The Bell Policy Center, Colorado; Alex Camardelle, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute; Ashley Spalding, Kentucky Center for Economic Policy; and Brian Kennedy II, North Carolina Justice Center. In addition, he would like to thank Marissa Guananja and Paula Sammons of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Christopher T. King with the University of Texas at Austin for reviewing a draft of the brief and providing helpful comments on it.

² Working Poor Families Project, generated by Population Reference Bureau, analysis of 2016 American Community Survey. In this reference, low-income means a family with an income below 200% or double the threshold for poverty as defined by U.S. Census Bureau. <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/indicators>.

³ Working Poor Families Project partners in the five states are Arkansas Community Colleges, The Bell Policy Center in Colorado, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, and North Carolina Justice Center.

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⁵ Considering Two-Generation Strategies in the States, WFPF Issue Brief 2014, <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/WFPF-Summer-2014-Brief.pdf>.

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⁹ Two Generations in the 21st Century.

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¹¹ Considering Two-Generation Strategies in the States.

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²⁵ 2018 WFPF Evaluation Report to W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

²⁶ The descriptions of the WFPF Partners plans are taken from their grant applications submitted for the 2019 project year.

²⁷ SWFI is a partnership funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, that allows the Community College of Aurora and Community College of Denver to help parents access jobs in high-demand industries (Healthcare, Information Technology, and Advanced Manufacturing), while addressing a common barrier parents face such as access to child care, <https://co-swfi.com>.

²⁸ The SWFI Learning Community is comprised of community members including representatives from local businesses, local government officials and staff, state agency staff, members of local early childhood education leadership councils, funders, and other community leaders.

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