A Two-Generational Approach
Reaching Workforce Success and School Readiness


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

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

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

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

Dear Colleagues,

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Senator Marilyn Moore

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

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

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

Why is a two-generational approach important?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2016:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In implementing the plan, the State may access Federal TANF funds as permitted.

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

Therefore, a full report of outcomes will be issued in June of 2017.

### Outcomes and funding status in 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>FY16 Awarded</th>
<th>FY16 Actual Received</th>
<th>FY17 Awarded</th>
<th>FY17 Actual - After 2nd Rescission</th>
<th>Total % Cut Due to Budgetary Rescissions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>$202,500</td>
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<td>$202,500</td>
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<td>Meriden</td>
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<td>Colchester</td>
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<td>$24,500</td>
<td>(opted out)</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**TOTALS:** $1,168,750 | $347,446 | $1,046,250 | $760,742

*Note: $19,567 appropriated for consultation and documentation of learnings from Colchester (initiative’s only rural site)*
State of Connecticut partners

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

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

Other partners

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

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

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


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

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

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

- The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities – consultation on local implementation of two-generational practices throughout the state.
The Interagency Working Group is composed of legislators, commissioners, judges, scholars, and members of the philanthropic, business and the nonprofit sectors. Co-chaired by legislators representing the Appropriations and Human Services Committees, it incorporates both parties in representation and leadership.

The core strategies of the two-generational work are:

1) a focus on low-income families,

2) creating a portal or entry that is open to both parent and child,

3) viewing the family as the unit,

4) addressing learning, work and family strength,

5) operating on the principal of service effectiveness and resource efficiency,

6) offering dignity and authentic commitment to diversity,

7) providing ample context for peer-to-peer learning,

8) supporting both fathers and mothers, custodial and non-custodial parents; and

9) valuing the family over stated protocols.

Accountability for the work requires demonstration sites to report out on the overall effort as well as to provide data-driven decision making. An evaluation by the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and the Ray Marshall Center provides both data outcomes and an analysis of the formation and implementation of the state model. National advisory ensures the Connecticut model is addressing the customer and brings to the work national research, resources and team learning.
Two-generational approaches allow the parent/caregiver and child to receive job training, work placement, and education concurrently. Two-generational programming has multiple benefits over single-focus programs by creating opportunities for families through:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bridgeport

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meriden

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

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

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

Meriden two-gen initiative.
New Haven

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

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

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

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

The four New Haven two-generational initiative partners have all committed to:
- Identifying a target consumer population

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

At the program level, the primary goals for participants are (a) educational attainment (including diploma, industry recognized credentials and completion of job training program), (b) job placement, and (c) child development milestones. Infrastructure goals include (a) establishing a governance structure for the project that has parent and cross-sector leadership, (b) developing the technology necessary to support systemic and programmatic goals.

Data and communications management are critical issues to the project’s long-term sustainability and success. To address the complex issue of multiple providers tracking and collecting data, the project is working collaboratively with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT) to develop implement web-based technology, or “middleware,” that can facilitate data collection from all project partners. Based on information collected in the common enrollment process and the outcomes established by the project, the system could be adapted and connected to any partner program that has the ability integrate the technology and the capacity, including training, to use it. The middleware would be able to upload indicated fields from any database that a partner program currently uses, and aggregate that data on an assigned or regular basis. Once the system is in place, the aggregate data for the project will be uploaded to an online dashboard so that all stakeholders can monitor progress and have access to current data that can potentially inform future program design, public policy, and funding decisions.

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

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

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

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

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

**Colchester**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Locally, evaluation outcomes and findings will provide a basis for a continuous quality improvement feedback loop. Parents and community partners will have the opportunity to adjust their strategies and areas of focus. Based on local need, projects can request specific coaching or learning opportunities. The results of the local evaluation process, including accompanying technical assistance and potential program adjustments, will serve to achieve stronger outcomes and potentially inform local and state policy development. By the end of fiscal year 2017, at least one final written report will be presented to the legislature with results of the analysis, recommendations for services, suggestions for sustainability, and possible expansions.
Conclusion: Policy issues and recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2016 Report of the Interagency Working Group,
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