

2019-2023



United Way for  
Greater Austin

**AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY 2-GEN COALITION  
STRATEGIC PLAN: WRAP-UP REPORT**



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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

All families deserve access to opportunity; however, systems that perpetuate intergenerational poverty threaten the well-being of Greater Austin’s residents and its economy, leaving far too many families behind. A dual-generational (2-Gen) approach that serves parents\* and children from the same family deliberately and simultaneously can lead to better outcomes for both generations of a family.



Adapted from Ascend at The Aspen Institute

In 2018, United Way for Greater Austin released the [Family Opportunity Roadmap: Austin/Travis County Strategic Plan](#), drafted in partnership with more than 200 individuals, including representatives from local service providers, public agencies, educational institutions, and community members with lived experience of poverty. This plan set common goals and strategies for creating an ecosystem of 2-Gen programs and services that support intergenerational economic opportunity for families living with low income.\*\*

The Austin/Travis County 2-Gen Coalition, together with United Way for Greater Austin, stewarded this plan over the past five years. The following report shares the progress, successes, and challenges of that work and previews what’s next for this community-wide plan and the 2-Gen Coalition.

**\$3.7 MILLION**  
INVESTED IN  
**23 LOCAL 2-GEN**  
ORGANIZATIONS 2018-2023

**67 PARTNERS AND**  
**274 INDIVIDUALS**  
INVOLVED IN THE 2-GEN  
COALITION IN **2023**

**3,577**  
**FAMILIES**  
SERVED BY 2-GEN  
PROGRAMS IN **2023**

\*In this report, the term “parents” is meant to be inclusive of parents as well as grandparents, siblings, or other loved ones who serve as the primary caretaker of a child(ren).

\*\*“Low income” refers to those households with an income at or less than 200% of the federal poverty line. The federal poverty line (100%) only includes families with extremely low incomes, earning significantly lower than a family-sustaining wage. Most city and county programs use incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line as the eligibility cutoff.

## SECTION 2: HOW WE MEASURED PROGRESS

The 2019-2023 2-Gen Strategic Plan identified two primary objectives:

- 1 Increase the number of families in Austin and Travis County who are served by a 2-Gen approach
- 2 Improve family outcomes by strengthening existing 2-Gen programs and services

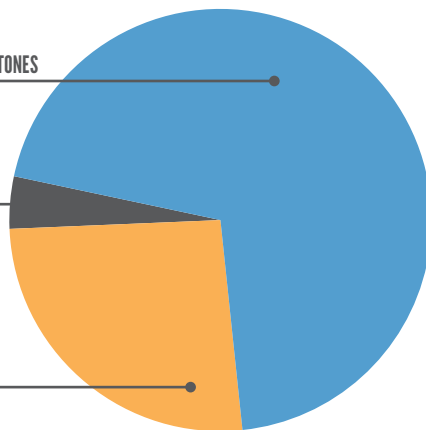
To address these objectives, the plan detailed 23 strategies across five strategy areas:



**70%**  
REACHED SUCCESS MILESTONES

**4%**  
DE-PRIORITIZED

**26%**  
ADOPTED BY ANOTHER  
COALITION BEST FIT TO  
REACH SUCCESS



**OF OUR 23 STRATEGIES, WE REACHED SUCCESS MILESTONES WITH 70%.**

**TWENTY-SIX PERCENT WERE EITHER ADOPTED BY ANOTHER COALITION SUITED TO REACH SUCCESS OR MODIFIED TO BETTER FIT OUR CLIENTS' NEEDS.** *\*See detailed breakdown of original strategies in Appendix A.*

In addition to developing strategies for how to accomplish strategic plan goals, the 2-Gen Coalition developed 17 performance measures across these strategy areas.

All of the measures were developed in collaboration with partner agencies through a data committee. The group examined the goals and strategies of the plan and identified measures that would help measure progress on these. Data was collected annually through surveys to partner agencies.

**2020 data update:** Two years into data collection, United Way and the 2-Gen Coalition Leadership Team refreshed 2-Gen Coalition evaluation measures to make them more relevant and align them with what agencies were actually collecting—while still capturing important 2-Gen concepts. The coalition also broadened who was included in data collection, expanding to include near and emerging 2-Gen approaches.

**COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic heavily impacted the 2-Gen Coalition and coalition partners. Community organizations were unable to serve the same number of families, parents became less engaged as they lost employment or had to focus on family emergencies, and the 2-Gen Coalition had to shift away from longer-term strategies to address immediate needs of the community. 2-Gen organizations maintaining or returning to near pre-pandemic levels of service is a significant success.

**Who is represented:** Data only represents a subsection of coalition partners or 2-Gen organizations that exist outside of the coalition. United Way successfully collected data from grant-funded community partners and a few additional coalition partners for a total of 10 organizations. Additionally, not all community partners surveyed collected data for all metrics. This often led to small sample sizes for the individual measures that can cause large variability in percentages from year to year.

## SECTION 3: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

<b>OVERARCHING STRATEGIES</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
# of families served through a 2-Gen approach	600	654	696	672	645
# of families served through a near 2-Gen approach	2351	2781	2518	2718	2531
# of families served through an emerging 2-Gen approach	425	440	471	287	401
Total # of families served in any type of 2-Gen approach	3376	3875	3685	3677	3577



<b>EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS/FAMILY OUTCOMES</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
% of 2-Gen programs offering early childhood education (ECE) that meets high-quality standards	69%	75%	75%
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who are enrolled in ESL classes and advanced to the next level	51%	68%	73%
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who earned a secondary credential (high school diploma or equivalency)	41%	12%	23%
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who earned a postsecondary degree	10%	8%	9%
% of caregivers who earned a postsecondary degree or are still on track for the degree	N/A	82%	72%
% parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who earned an industry credential or certification	26%	57%	49%
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who obtained employment	24%	20%	65%
% parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who increased their income over the last year	89%	87%	87%

<b>ECONOMIC ASSETS</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 served who applied for public benefits (health insurance, SNAP, MEDICAID, food assistance, child care subsidies)	51%	51%	N/A
% of parents/caregivers served with children under the age of 12 who participate in an asset building program/- financial education	69%	44%	N/A

<b>FAMILY SUPPORT</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who participated in coaching/case management	91%	85%	N/A
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who participate in evidence/research based parenting classes	80%	97%	N/A
% of parents/caregivers with children under the age of 12 who have access to mental health services	69%	83%	N/A

## SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

To gain more insight into outcomes of the coalition, United Way conducted annual surveys with 2-Gen grantees and coalition partners, distributed polls and hosted discussions during coalition meetings, and tracked projects developed in coalition meetings and in alignment with the strategic plan.

### ALIGNED ACTION

The coalition sees **aligned action** when partner organizations make changes in their programs and practices to align with coalition goals.

2-Gen organizations reported expanding their 2-Gen services and processes through:

- Collecting data on caretaker status
- Understanding specific needs of caretakers
- Training staff on serving whole families
- Providing high-quality services, including child care

In a December 2023 survey:

- 63% of participants reported they did “much” or “a great deal” to be focused on family in addition to the client, compared to 55% in 2022
- 81% of participants reported they provided families with resources and navigation for family enrollment in education/job training and child care, compared to 73% in 2022

“ *When we first reached out to United Way for support, our only thought was increasing child care options for young parents trying to re-engage with education. Becoming involved with United Way’s 2-Gen initiative and the 2-Gen provider network helped us to understand the importance of high-quality early childhood education and how that integrated with our education and training programs to create the greatest impact for the families we work with.* ”

- American YouthWorks



## COLLECTIVE ACTION

The coalition engages in **collective action** when coalition leadership or multiple coalition partners collectively start new projects, develop materials, share best practices, and convene partners to problem-solve big, cross-sector issues.

The 2-Gen Coalition collectively:

- Convened the public and nonprofit sector through workgroups to make progress on priority strategies
- Launched the Family Leadership Council to meaningfully integrate parent voice into coalition strategies
- Increased the capacity of 2-Gen organizations through grant funding, professional development, and networking opportunities to form partnerships
- Released the [2-Gen Toolkit](#) and [Becoming more family-friendly report](#)

“ *Our meetings continue to really be action-oriented and committed to mapping issues and strategies, and I appreciate the support and work of the United Way team immensely!* ”

- *Communities In Schools of Central Texas, ASPIRE Program*

## SYSTEMS CHANGE

The coalition results in **systems change** when changes in systems, policies, investments, and institutional practices affect Greater Austin residents on a large scale. Coalitions significantly contribute to systems change, though systems change is rarely the result of solely one coalition, initiative, or institution.

- Aligned community coalitions have incorporated 2-Gen strategies to address whole families. The Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition now intentionally incorporates support for parents in coalition strategies, in addition to support for children. Multiple aligned community coalitions are also now bringing parents into leadership positions.
- Austin Community College continues to invest in parenting students by expanding funding for child care scholarships and participating in [Generation Hope's 2022-2024 FamilyU Cohort](#), dedicated to supporting student parents.
- Travis County promotes the 2-Gen Coalition Strategic Plan through its workforce development community investment strategy by gathering information about how grant applicants incorporate child care and family support resources into their workforce development services.
- United Way launched ConnectATX, an online database built to enhance 2-1-1 and connect more Central Texans with resources that improve health and wellness, in 2020. The launch of ConnectATX addressed a priority strategy in the original 2-Gen strategic plan, and 2-Gen organizations continue to use and inform ConnectATX.



## SECTION 5: PILOTS AND INITIATIVES

The 2-Gen Coalition Strategic Plan catalyzed many innovative pilots and initiatives in partner organizations. Below are the pilots and initiatives in which United Way was directly involved.

### FAMILY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Family Leadership Council elevated the voices of families to inform the 2-Gen Coalition and Success By 6 Coalition strategic plans, provided advocacy skill development to parents living with low income, and created a pipeline of community leaders to serve on local leadership committees and boards.

Family Leadership Council members were compensated to undergo professional development around effective communication, centering equity, problem-solving, trauma-informed care tactics, civic engagement, and leadership skills. Family Leadership Council participants went on to serve in leadership roles in the 2-Gen Coalition, the City of Austin Community Engagement Committee, and several nonprofit boards. Many became spokespersons for their organizations and received awards for their work in the community.

### EARLY BIRD

Early Bird was a health system-integrated scholarship pilot program for children in poverty, led by the Impact Factory at UT Austin.

As families with low income achieved program milestones, such as attending well-child visits or enrolling in pre-Kindergarten, Early Bird put up to \$500 in their child's 529 savings account for higher education. Early Bird aimed to improve families' health, education, and financial outcomes and was evaluated by a randomized control trial. Early Bird served 260 mothers and children and provided nearly \$30,000 in college savings.

### PACES

The Preventing ACEs through Collaboration and Economic Supports (PACES) project, led by Foundation Communities, aimed to reduce financial strain and promote protective factors against Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) for families. The key intervention was increasing the receipt of federal tax credits.

#### Key findings include:

- Staff who participated in training on ACEs and tax credits were more likely to share information about tax credits and refer families to Foundation Communities' free tax prep services.
- Participants claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) reported lower levels of hardship and higher levels of family functioning and support than non-filers.

## ADVANCE TOGETHER

Advance Together is a Texas-wide initiative led by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas that accelerates the progress of regional cross-sector partnerships tackling workforce and education challenges in lower-income communities. Through training, coaching, technical assistance, and external funding, Advance Together dramatically increased the effectiveness of the 2-Gen Coalition.

Some key improvements include:

- A refreshed governance structure that includes two compensated seats for parents with lived experience of poverty
- Investment in policy research that will lead to increased coalition engagement in advocacy
- Intensive skill development for United Way staff in facilitation, evaluation, understanding context, inquiry and building trust, improving United Way's effectiveness as the backbone organization of the 2-Gen Coalition

## EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Expanding Opportunities for Young Families (EOYF) is a multi-year effort led by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that aims to bolster the educational and economic success of young parents.

EOYF in Austin has moved through several stages of development over the last five years.

Bright spots include:

- Launch of an EOYF Leadership Council to align young parent needs to coalition strategies and provide advocacy training to young parents.
- Implementation of a workforce pilot that linked young parents to short-term credential programs in health care, skilled trades, and IT. Young parents received free training and access to wrap-around supports like laptops, child care, and case management.
- Implementation of a higher education pilot, as the Parenting Students Project.



## PARENTING STUDENTS PROJECT

The Parenting Students Project, led by United Way and in partnership with Austin Community College, supports parenting students with young children living with low income and attending Austin Community College.

Students receive a \$500 monthly stipend, peer networks, leadership and advocacy opportunities, academic counseling, child care scholarships, and other wrap-around support.

From fall 2021 - spring 2023, the Parenting Students Project supported 76 parenting students and 103 children. On average those parenting students:

- Passed 8.3 credit hours per semester, compared to 5.9 credits for the general ACC student population
- Earned a term GPA of 2.9, compared to 2.8 for the general ACC student population
- 38% have earned a degree or certificate, with an additional 38% continuing on in the fall 2023 semester
- Earned credentials in high-wage, high-demand careers, including nursing, IT, and manufacturing

## SECTION 6: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED AND WHAT'S NEXT

### WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

Through five years of dedicated, collaborative work, we came away with some lessons learned:

- The definition and understanding of 2-Gen approaches has evolved since our original strategic plan launched. We have progressed from a focus on increasing individual 2-Gen programs to building a mindset that engenders whole family well-being in programs, practices, and systems.
- Formal 2-Gen programs are currently reaching only 7.7% of families in Travis County at or below 200% of poverty level with children under 18\*. Expanding our scope beyond organizations offering 2-Gen programs to any system or institution that could become more family-friendly allows us to reach more 2-Gen families.
- Each strategy in the original plan deserves years of dedicated work. We are most effective when we focus on one or two strategies and when those strategies align with the expertise and energy of our coalition partners.
- We have made significant progress in spreading the 2-Gen mindset and have multiplied community champions for 2-Gen. We see opportunities to support 2-Gen strategies being addressed by other community coalitions, partners, and initiatives by empowering them to lead.
- Parents are a solution to filling high demand jobs in our area, but free training is not enough. Training and education opportunities must be paired with wrap-around support, direct financial assistance, and family-friendly employment benefits that enable parents to take advantage of advancement opportunities.

\*Source: 2022, 1 year ACS data; S1702, 200% FPL

## WHAT'S NEXT

With these lessons learned, we will narrow the scope of the next three years of our coalition's work to focus on advancing postsecondary success and strengthening employment pathways for parents and guardians of children, while continuing to spread 2-Gen methods and family-friendly services and policies. We are leaning on a few core intentions:

- When parents and guardians of children achieve economic advancement through family-sustaining employment and postsecondary education, we unlock economic potential and well-being for whole families.
- When we center parents and guardians of children, we create solutions that positively impact individuals, while ensuring whole families and children benefit.
- When parents and guardians of children can address the needs of their children and family members, they are more likely to be successful in employment and postsecondary education.
- We will support aligned community coalitions and partners as they work to advance other core elements of 2-Gen, including early childhood development, physical health and mental health, and K-3 education.
- We will periodically revisit this coalition's key strategies throughout and beyond the next three years to ensure we are centering community priorities, making progress on outcomes, and collaborating effectively across community coalitions.

## ALWAYS WITH COMMUNITY

2-Gen Coalition leadership presented the above lessons learned and recommendations for next steps in the September 2023 2-Gen Coalition all-partner meeting. We polled attendees to make sure we're on the right track:

- 92% of meeting attendees strongly believe this coalition is on the way to creating systemic change for families and individuals in poverty in Greater Austin
- 92% of meeting attendees are personally excited by what this coalition is going to do next

We continue to move forward with deep trust in the collective wisdom and leadership of our coalition partners and strong belief in our ability to bring about collective impact and change.

*“ Being part of the coalition means working together for better opportunities for our broader community. We're grateful to collaborate with amazing partner agencies on multifaceted strategies to dismantle barriers and foster conducive environments. We know we can't fix everything overnight, but every little step we take, from learning opportunities and networking to advocacy work groups, helps parents and guardians go after their dreams, whether it's getting more education or moving up in their careers for a stable life. ”*

- Goodwill Central Texas

## SECTION 7: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the funders of the 2-Gen Coalition and aligned United Way pilot programs:



Thank you also to generous United Way donors who make this work possible, including community members, corporate partners, and corporate partner employees.

Thank you to the partners who have served in leadership roles since the development of the strategic plan in 2018. This transformational work is not possible without deep community commitment:

- Parent leaders:
  - Alma Ruiz, Andromeda Vega, Cristina Guajardo, Michael Rayos
- Andy Roddick Foundation
- Austin Community College
- Austin Community Foundation
- Austin ISD
- Austin Public Health
- Austin Urban Technology Movement
- Capital IDEA
- Center for Public Policy Priorities
- Child, Inc.
- City of Austin Equity Office
- Community Advancement Network
- Del Valle ISD
- Dell Medical School
- Dream Come True Foundation
- E3 Alliance
- Goodwill Central Texas
- Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
- Housing Authority of the City of Austin
- Huston-Tillotson University
- Manor ISD
- Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
- Paradigm Shift
- Saint Louise House
- Todos Juntos Learning Center
- Travis County Health and Human Services
- United Way for Greater Austin
- University of Texas, Dept. of Human Development & Family Science
- University of Texas, Ray Marshall Center
- Workforce Solutions Capital Area
- Year Up Austin

Attachment A: Progress on original strategies  
[2023 Plan Wrap Up - Strategies.xlsx](#)



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