



RESEARCH REPORT

Incorporating Two-Generation Approaches in Community Change

Lessons from the Family-Centered Community Change

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Executive Summary

Incorporating Two-Generation Approaches in Community Change

The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched Family-Centered Community Change (FCCC) in 2012 to support three local partnerships seeking to help parents and children in high-poverty neighborhoods succeed together. These partnerships, located in Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas, are each developing a more integrated set of services, including housing assistance, high-quality education, and job training.

Since 2013, the Urban Institute has been evaluating each initiative's design, implementation, and outcomes for families. The theory behind the demonstration is that “two-generation approaches,” or coordinating high-quality programs and services for children and parents, can help break intergenerational poverty and move families with low incomes toward greater economic independence. This paper is one of a series of reports based on what we have learned from five years of observations from our research.

The three FCCC initiatives provide services including early childhood education and child care, partnerships with local elementary schools, after-school care, employment and training for adults, financial education, and coaching to help parents set goals and stay on target. All three initiatives operate within communities where families move frequently and have widely varying needs and within neighborhoods with long histories of racial segregation and systemic racism, changing job markets, demographic changes, and gentrification.

External Forces Affect the Ability to Change Communities

Many factors, including partnership strength, scope of effort, organizational capacity, and changes in funder priorities, affect the success or failure of a community change initiative (CCI). These initiatives are particularly challenging because they do not exist in a vacuum—broader forces affect the community.

This report describes important changes across six key domains: housing, local economic trends, transportation, school systems, early childhood education and child care, and the federal policy context. For each, we discuss major systemic changes, how they have played out in the FCCC communities, and their implications for the initiatives' success.

The Housing Crisis

Rising housing costs are driving FCCC families out of the initiatives' targeted footprints in search of affordable options, making it more difficult for the initiatives to reach them with services and supports. Some of those who are staying in the area are experiencing rising rents, instability, and the threat of eviction, which can ruin their credit and undermine steps they have taken to improve their financial situation. Many face a genuine possibility of being doubled up or homeless.

Local Economic Trends

The low-wage market leaves even some of the most successful FCCC parents struggling with unstable jobs, low wages insufficient to sustain families without government assistance, and hours that are hard to manage. If parents can only access low-wage jobs, they will have difficulty affording the basics, let alone the resources that might improve outcomes for their children. Inflexible school and work schedules undermine their ability to balance work and family.

Inadequate Transportation

Nontraditional and unpredictable work schedules—common for workers paid low wages—compound transportation problems. Parents with several children who attend different schools or child care centers may find transportation especially difficult. Spatial mismatch—the fact that the initiative footprints are far from job-rich areas—makes it difficult to connect people with jobs that pay living wages. Without reliable and affordable transportation, parents cannot take advantage of training or job opportunities or get their children to school or child care on time.

Not Enough Child Care

All three communities have struggled to meet the demand for high-quality, affordable child care and have tried different approaches to increasing the slots available for FCCC families. The inability to support and sustain access to affordable, quality child care, the lack of public resources to address these gaps, and the significant costs associated with efforts to develop such care all create major barriers to

providing the care that families need to improve their economic circumstances and children's long-term development.

Elementary Schools Under Pressure

The added complexity of school choice undermines initiatives' ability to focus on a particular school or geographical area and know the families they serve will benefit from investments in local schools. Instability in school systems, new chronic absenteeism policies, and funding inequity are challenges for FCCC initiatives. However, the FCCC teams' experiences in the smaller Buffalo and Columbus communities also show the potential benefits of strong partnerships with local elementary schools.

A Rapidly Changing Public Policy Environment

The transition from the Obama era to the Trump Administration has brought volatility to the partnerships, with changes to federal funding streams and new policies that will affect these place-based initiatives and the people they serve. Increased uncertainty is creating more significant needs for stability and support. Uncertainty surrounds whether efforts to cut or limit the Affordable Care Act and federal safety net programs will be successful and whether the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act will affect the flow of capital available for affordable housing and community development. The federal move to impose expanded work requirements on recipients of federal assistance could also affect FCCC families and possibly make it more difficult for parents to participate in training and education programs. San Antonio is also feeling the volatility and uncertainty of changes in immigration policy.

Lessons for the Field

The FCCC communities show that even in the current uncertain policy environment, local initiatives can succeed and help families with low incomes thrive. These three communities have all demonstrated the persistence, flexibility, and resilience it takes to create and sustain a comprehensive community initiative in the face of rapid societal and policy change.

The key lesson from the FCCC experience is not to give up in the face of large, contextual challenges, but that any community seeking to create a new two-generation community change initiative needs to prepare for these kinds of shifts. Initiatives must also be ready to address the structural racism that underlies many of these contextual challenges—poor housing, racial segregation, low-wage jobs, lack of quality child care, and struggling schools. Maintaining agility and flexibility is critical for both short-term successes and creating sustainable and lasting change.

Introduction and Overview

The Annie E. Casey Foundation launched Family-Centered Community Change (FCCC) in 2012 to support local partnerships in three high-poverty neighborhoods as they developed more integrated sets of services—including housing assistance, high-quality education, and job training—to help parents and children succeed together in a “two-generation approach.” Rather than creating something new, the Foundation collaborated with these partnerships, located in Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas, and provided technical assistance, trainings, and peer-learning opportunities to build on their existing community change efforts—a role the Casey Foundation refers to as “strategic coinvestor.” FCCC is a seven-year demonstration supporting these comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) as they establish partnerships and programming, participate in an evaluation, and develop plans to sustain the work beyond The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s seven-year investment (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2019).

Since 2013, the Urban Institute has been evaluating each initiative’s design, implementation, and outcomes for families.¹ This paper is the first in a series of reports about what we have learned from our research. We describe how the three FCCC communities navigated major trends over the initiatives’ first five years, including an overview of the three initiatives, the external forces that affected their efforts (e.g., the affordable housing shortage, cuts to funding for mental health, child care, etc.), the uncertainty of the current policy climate, and how they have adapted to meet these challenges. These communities’ experiences offer important lessons for the field about the potential of this two-generation approach to strengthen families and communities, even in a changing policy context.

Comprehensive Community Initiatives

Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) are place-based community collaborations that bring resources and new development to underinvested neighborhoods with low incomes and provide opportunities for residents to improve their economic circumstances and overall well-being (Kubisch et al. 2010; Turner 2017). In contrast to standard redevelopment efforts that do not consistently consider existing residents’ needs and interests, these initiatives intentionally focus on resident engagement and empowerment and promote policy and systems change. Though CCIs began as philanthropic efforts, the federal government incorporated elements of this approach in a series of community redevelopment efforts over the past 20 years, including HOPE VI; the Choice Neighborhoods; Promise Neighborhoods; and the Byrne Criminal Justice Initiatives (known collectively as the Neighborhood Revitalization

Initiative); Strong Cities/Strong Communities; and Promise Zones (White House Office of Urban Affairs 2011). Both the philanthropic-funded efforts and the large-scale federal initiatives have at their core partnerships between local government (e.g., housing agencies, public schools), nonprofits (e.g., community development corporations, or CDCs; social service agencies), and community residents. And both types of efforts seek to bring sustainable change to communities with low incomes.

CCIs typically include partners and services that help residents improve their economic circumstances (e.g., workforce programs, training programs, or efforts to attract new programs and employers). Other collective impact initiatives focus on improving outcomes for children. For example, the Harlem Children's Zone and the federal program it inspired, Promise Neighborhoods, are place-based collaborations that create a "pipeline" of services to support children's education from "cradle to career," focusing primarily on services and systems (e.g., schools) to improve outcomes for children (Tough 2008).² To date, evidence on the success of improving economic conditions in communities with low incomes and disrupting intergenerational poverty is mixed, though most evaluations of CCIs have found some success in improving outcomes for individual families and in contributing to systemic change (Kubisch et al. 2010; Turner 2017). Evidence of CCIs' effectiveness is limited because of challenges inherent in their design: they are place-based, reflecting their local context; they are complex, involving multiple partners and interventions, so they generally take years to develop and gain traction. Even with limited data to support conclusions about impact, policymakers, scholars, and foundations continue to believe that CCIs address the challenges of neighborhood disinvestment and empower residents (Kubisch et al. 2010).

FCCC takes an innovative approach, with the Casey Foundation serving as "a strategic coinvestor" (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2019), to support existing CCIs in embedding a "two-generation" framework in their approach. FCCC built on the renewed focus from both philanthropy and the federal government on two-generation "whole family" models, which researchers and policymakers find more effective than isolated efforts to move families with low incomes toward greater economic stability. The underlying theory is that two-generation models that seek to "create opportunities and address the needs for both children and the adults in their lives" can disrupt intergenerational poverty. These programs generally offer services like high-quality early childhood education, home visiting, coaching, and workforce services for parents (Aspen Ascend 2016).³

As with CCIs, evidence on the impact of two-generation models is also limited because many of these programs are relatively new (Sama-Miller et al. 2017). One of the largest studies is the evaluation of the Career Advance program in Tulsa; the early results show significant gains for parents' education and employment and improvements in Head Start attendance for children (Chase-Lansdale et al. 2017).

Likewise, a recent study of the LIFT initiative in Washington, DC, found positive impacts on children's behavior and school attendance and increased earnings for parents (Frank 2019). Urban's Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST) demonstration, based in public and assisted housing developments, is one of the only other place-based, two-generation models. Early findings from the evaluation of HOST also showed gains in parent employment, and the implementation study highlighted the case manager or coach's critical role in coordinating adult and child services (Scott, Popkin, and Saxena 2016; Scott, Popkin, and Simington 2016). HOST and other place-based efforts like the Jeremiah program offer important lessons about the potential for using housing as a platform for two-generation efforts (Popkin, Falkenburger, and Haight 2018).

FCCC offers an opportunity to learn about both what it takes to embed a high-quality, two-generation service approach in a broad community redevelopment initiative and how this model affects economic and educational outcomes for families with low incomes. While the three FCCC initiatives differ in many ways, all provide services for families with children from birth to age 10 that include early childhood education and quality child care, partnerships with local elementary schools, employment and training for adults, financial education, and coaching to help parents set goals and stay on target. All are facing the challenges of serving families with varying needs who have children of different ages. And because the initiatives are place based, all three communities are grappling with the broader challenges of implementing a two-generation intervention in communities with long histories of racial segregation and systemic racism, which affect the availability of quality services and systems like public schools, grocery stores, public transportation, parks, and libraries.

Because FCCC is a comprehensive community initiative with complex interventions taking place over a long duration, FCCC leaders must continuously respond to national and local economic and policy contexts. To be resilient, they have had to constantly adapt to shifting conditions, such as changing job markets, demographic changes, gentrification, and changes in school systems and testing requirements. FCCC launched in 2012; a short list of the contextual changes since then includes the economic recovery from the Great Recession of 2008, expanding job market, wage stagnation, high-stakes educational testing, expansion of charter schools, and the nation's worst affordable housing crisis since the Great Depression. The 2016 national presidential election marked a shift in federal policy direction from the outgoing Obama Administration to the incoming Trump Administration and brought profound changes that directly affect the FCCC communities. The changes in immigration policy have been most visible, but other changes including cuts to health care funding and changes to federal safety net programs are still unfolding. Further, it is very unclear what the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 may mean for CCI that rely on tax credits or how the federal government may propose to change

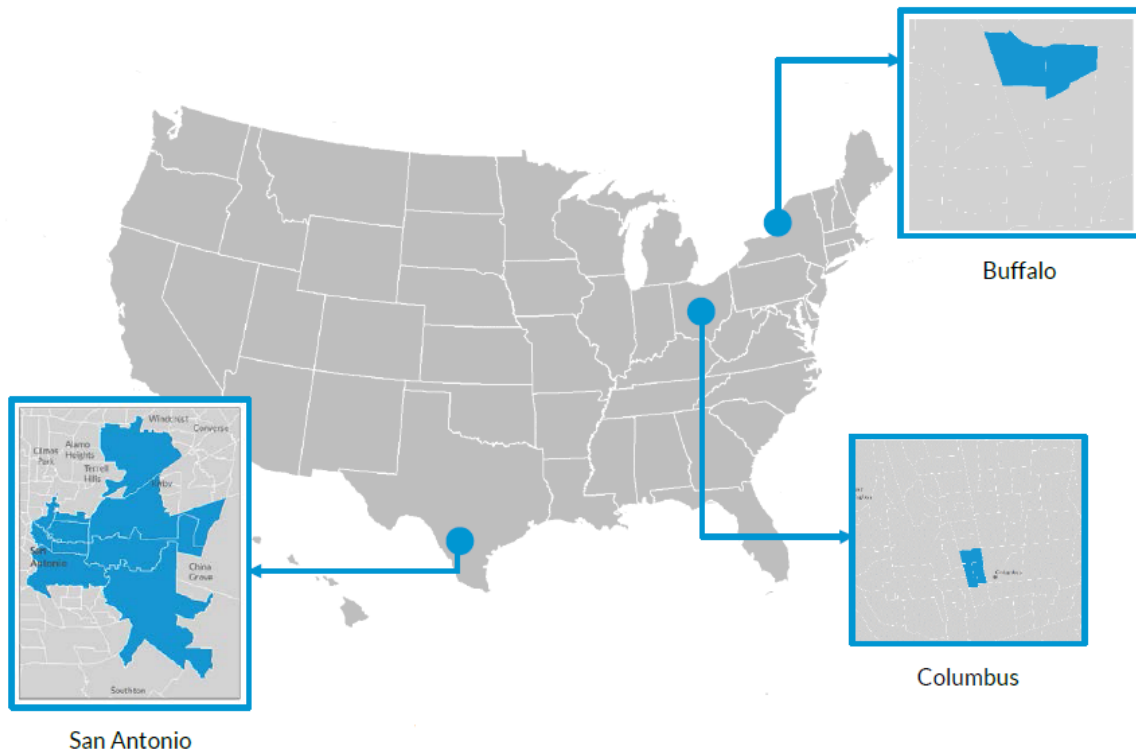
community development block grants. Finally, the Obama Administration (2008–16) pushed for the expansion of CCIs at the federal level; although these programs still have Congressional support, their long-term future is uncertain.

The FCCC Communities

Casey selected three existing CCI neighborhoods in Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas, for the FCCC initiative (figure 1). As we discuss in this section, the communities vary by size, demographics, and the nature of the partnerships. Buffalo's Parent Achievement Zone (PAZ) builds on the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood (BPN), which targets a square-mile (97-block) community on the city's east side. The anchor organization for PAZ and BPN is M&T Bank, and the initiative is a large public-private partnership.⁴ The Weinland Park Collaborative in Columbus runs the local FCCC program, serving a two-and-a-half square mile area in Weinland Park, a community adjacent to the Ohio State University experiencing rapid development. The anchor organization in Columbus is Community Properties of Ohio, a local nonprofit housing and services provider that owns and manages 273 subsidized apartment units in the community (Community Properties of Ohio 2019). San Antonio is the largest city of the three, and its Dual Generation initiative service area is the largest by far, covering nearly 72 square miles across 10 zip codes.⁵ Dual Generation built on San Antonio's East Side Promise Neighborhood and Choice Neighborhood initiatives to serve the city's entire East Side Promise Zone. The anchor organization for the entire effort is the United Way of Bexar County.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the three communities, including racial and economic breakdowns. The Buffalo and Columbus FCCC communities are predominantly African American; San Antonio is majority Hispanic/Latinx. Most residents in all three communities live at or below the federal poverty level, although the proportion is lower in Columbus than in San Antonio and Buffalo.

FIGURE 1
Geographic Locations of the FCCC Communities



Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2013–17.

FIGURE 2

Demographic Change, by FCCC Community (2013–17)

	2013	2017
Buffalo		
The population within the FCCC Buffalo footprint increased slightly (2 percent) since the start of the project. The share Black residents fell to about two-thirds of the population, but still make up the majority of the community.	11,670 Population	11,994
	71% Percent Black	69%
	73% Families at or above poverty level	76%
There was a slight increase in the percent of families at or above poverty level, and the vacancy rate fell slightly.	17% Vacancy rate	16%
Columbus		
Weinland Park's population increased by 25 percent from 2013 to 2016. The share of Black residents decreased from roughly a third to a fifth of the population, and the share of white residents increased to almost 60 percent.	3,072 Population	3,837
	30% Percent Black	19%
	31% Families at or above poverty level	44%
The share of families at or above the poverty level increased by 13 percentage points. Vacancy rates also fell.	33% Vacancy rate	23%
San Antonio		
The primary reason for the seven-fold increase in San Antonio's FCCC community was the expansion from five Census tracts to ten ZIP codes on the Eastside. Even so, the share of residents who are Hispanic stayed relatively stable between 2013 and 2016.	19,260 Population	157,648
	62% Percent Hispanic, any race	62%
	69% Families at or above poverty level	79%
Almost 80 percent of families in the new footprint were at or above poverty level.	18% Vacancy rate	13%

Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2013–17.

External Forces Affect Ability to Change Communities

Many factors, including the strength of the partnerships, scope of effort, organizational capacity, and changes in funder priorities, affect the success or failure of a community change initiative. CCI are particularly challenging because they do not exist in a vacuum—broader forces affect the community. A CCI that explicitly takes on the issues of helping families and communities with low incomes must navigate not only structural and economic factors and issues around race and equity (e.g., disparities in mortgage lending, access to banks versus payday loans, school spending per student), but also policy and funding shifts that affect services for both adults and children. FCCC has spanned a particularly volatile period of major economic and demographic shifts, including the worst affordable housing crisis since the Great Depression, a dramatic expansion of charter schools, and the uncertain implications of shifting federal policy priorities. And because FCCC is a two-generation initiative, the communities must navigate both changes that affect opportunities for adults (e.g., employers, job training) and those that affect children and youth (e.g., schools, child care, early childhood education). In this section, we describe important changes across six key domains: housing, local economic trends, transportation, school systems, early childhood education and child care, and the federal policy context. For each, we discuss the major systemic changes, how they have played out in the FCCC communities, and their implications for the initiatives' success.

The Worst Affordable Housing Crisis Since the Great Depression

Over the past decade, the US has experienced the Great Recession and foreclosure crisis and now faces a growing shortage of affordable rental housing that shows no signs of abating. Many factors have contributed to the rental housing shortage, including homeowners who lost their mortgages due to foreclosure moving into the rental market; the pace of construction of new multifamily housing units (except for high-end housing) not keeping up with demand; and recently, shortages in construction workers and supplies. In many cities, the rebounding economy has meant younger, more affluent people moving back into cities and driving up housing prices, leading to rising rents and a shrinking stock of affordable housing. The number of homes available for families with low incomes fell more than 60 percent between 2010 and 2016 (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University 2018). A

severe shortage of housing assistance also exists; by 2017, after years of flat funding and cuts for public housing and housing choice vouchers, only one in five eligible households received any assistance with rent (Scally, Batko, and Popkin 2018). The recently passed Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is likely to exacerbate the situation, reducing incentives for banks to invest in constructing new or preserving existing affordable housing.⁶

How the Housing Crisis Has Affected the Three FCCC Communities

All three of the FCCC communities have long histories of racial segregation. As in many cities, local policies and real estate redlining meant that property values stayed low, city services were inadequate, and many African American residents were excluded from the rest of the city's prosperity (Rothstein 2017). The FCCC cities are experiencing economic change affecting housing markets and the demographic composition of these long-neglected communities. The effects of the national affordable housing shortage are evident in all three FCCC communities: rental prices have risen, and the number affordable rental homes in all three FCCC cities has shrunk. Jobs available for most FCCC parents do not pay what experts call a "housing" wage (i.e., a wage high enough that renters are not spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities). Figure 3 below shows the hourly wage it would take for a renter to afford a two-bedroom apartment in their community relative to the state minimum wage. In all three communities, and especially in San Antonio, the housing wage far exceeds the state minimum wage.

FIGURE 3

Housing Market Contexts, by FCCC Community



Source: American Community Survey five-year estimates, 2013–17.

The affordable housing crisis greatly affects FCCC families and the three initiatives. Staff and participants from all three communities report more residents experiencing homelessness, housing instability, and increased service needs for eviction prevention, rent assistance, and supportive services. As one partner reported, there is not enough housing assistance, waiting lists for subsidized housing are growing, and the situation is increasing hardships for families in the community:

I think the biggest issue is affordable housing. There are a number of obstacles. The condition of our housing stock is poor. The formulas they use for the credits don't give families enough. The tax credits don't make housing here more affordable for families. (Buffalo service provider 2017)

Buffalo parent participants also commented in 2017 on how their neighborhood was changing, especially with the transition from owner-occupied housing to rentals. They worried that their neighborhood was becoming more transient, affecting the quality of housing and destabilizing the community:

A lot of people that own their house have sold their house and moved down south, or they're renting their house out. Oh, it's a lot of people movin' in and out, a lot of people. Five people just moved out this block in one month. (Buffalo parent 2017)

The Weinland Park community in Columbus underwent a dramatic transition over the FCCC's six years. As in many areas adjacent to downtown and The Ohio State University, there has been widespread redevelopment. New housing, including both tax credit units (workforce housing) and new market rate homes, is replacing vacant lots and older buildings. As in other nearby neighborhoods, younger, predominantly white professionals and Ohio State students are moving in and displacing residents with lower incomes who are mostly Black, many of whom have had deep connections to the neighborhood. The Weinland Park Collaborative partners have worked to support long-time residents in keeping their homes by providing access to legal assistance to obtain relief from property tax increases, and providing loans for home repairs. CPO,⁷ the FCCC anchor partner, is also a nonprofit housing provider and owns and manages nearly 273 housing units in Weinland Park. As the neighborhood transition continues, CPO's properties are rapidly becoming the only remaining affordable housing for families with very low incomes. As one partner told us,

When landlords can see that they can get—I mean, one of houses going for \$1,200/month for rent. We never used to see that, but now that it's become a desirable neighborhood for young professionals and others with the resources to move in. (Columbus service provider 2017)

Another partner commented on the rapid rise in housing prices, saying,

The median price for a home in Columbus is \$154,000. Here, we are in a neighborhood with a 60 percent poverty rate and 10 percent homeownership rate, and someone can come and build a home that sells for \$343,000? Never thought that would happen. (Columbus service provider 2017)

Finally, San Antonio is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States, its population having grown nearly 15 percent in less than a decade.⁸ Texas has lost more than one in five low-cost units over the past 20 years, and the effects of the affordable housing crisis are evident.⁹ Fewer lower-cost housing options means high rent burdens for residents with low incomes. Nearly half of the city's residents spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent, and one in four spends more than 50 percent. Therefore, many FCCC families, like other residents with low incomes in the city, live in crowded and substandard conditions. Our team witnessed entire families living in a single room in a dilapidated house, and staff from the initiative told us this situation was not unusual.

The San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) is a core partner for the Dual Generation Initiative, and the agency has been actively working to develop some affordable housing in the community. The agency has a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant to redevelop the former Wheatley Courts community and previously redeveloped another community with HOPE VI funds. Through Choice, SAHA is also buying up land for nonprofits or developers to build affordable housing. But a senior housing official told us in 2018 that, in reality, San Antonio's affordable housing crisis is "huge":

It very much was closer to downtown, but you could see homes that were priced at \$120,000 five years ago are now selling for \$250,000, and these are dilapidated homes. Refinished homes are now selling for \$350–\$400,000. Developers are buying up housing stock, creating a challenge. (San Antonio service provider 2017)

He also told us,

When you look at the situation, we don't necessarily have a shortage of affordable housing—we have a shortage of quality affordable housing. People may be living in affordable housing, but maybe the roof leaks and maybe all of the systems in the house aren't working. (San Antonio service provider 2017)

These comments from staff and participants from all three communities clarify the challenge that the lack of quality, affordable housing creates for a place-based two-generation initiative. Housing plays a critical role in promoting health and well-being and providing a platform for helping families improve their circumstances (Popkin, Falkenburger, and Haight 2018). The shortage of quality, affordable housing in the three communities makes it much more challenging for these initiatives to help families achieve their goals. Rising housing costs are driving families out of the targeted footprints in search of affordable options, making it more difficult for the initiatives to reach them with services and supports. Some of those staying in the area are experiencing rising rents, instability, and the threat of eviction—which can ruin their credit and undermine any steps they have taken to improve their financial situation (Desmond 2016). Many face a genuine possibility of being doubled up or becoming homeless. The Columbus team is considering broadening their target area to reach families who can no longer afford

Weinland Park. Absent a sustained effort to address the national lack of affordable housing, the shortage of quality, unsubsidized units will continue to be a challenge for the three FCCC communities.

Changing Job Markets

FCCC aims to help participating families improve their economic circumstances. All three communities include partners who offer workforce programming and educational services for adults, and two of the three offer high-quality financial coaching to help participants improve their credit scores and build assets. Although the three FCCC communities have benefited from the economic expansion of the past decade, the jobs available to FCCC parents generally are entry level, and the wages they earn make it difficult for them to move up the economic ladder, especially in the face of rising costs for housing, food, utilities, and child care.

As in the rest of the country, overall unemployment rates in FCCC communities have dropped in recent years, and by winter 2018 they ranged from a high of 4.1 percent in Buffalo to a low of 3.2 percent in San Antonio.¹⁰ However, these unemployment rates do not tell the full story, because they do not reflect the rates of people who have become discouraged and stopped searching for work. These people are disproportionately Black and Hispanic/Latinx. As table 1 shows, if we look at the “employment-population ratio,” which measures employment for the entire pool of working-age adults (25–64 years old), *including those who have stopped looking for work*, we see that Black and Latinx people are substantially less likely than white people to be employed.¹¹

TABLE 1
Employment-to-Population Ratio, Ages 25 to 64

	Buffalo	Columbus	San Antonio
Total population	65%	76%	72%
White, non-Hispanic	61%	68%	60%
Black	47%	61%	57%
f	50%	70%	60%
Moms with children under age 6	65%	73%	60%

Source: ACS, 2013–17; *ACS uses the term Hispanic.

Further, the most common occupations across the three communities, and those most accessible to FCCC parents, mostly pay low wages and have minimal requirements for formal education. As of May 2017, retail salespersons; food (including fast food) preparation and service workers; and customer service representatives were among the top five most common occupations in all three communities.

Retail sales person and food worker occupations generally pay less than \$30,000 annually on average and require no formal educational credential for entry, while customer service representatives are paid around \$35,000 annually on average, and the position requires a high school diploma or equivalent for entry. Paying around \$70,000 annually on average, registered nurse is the only top occupation that offers wages at or near the living wage in each of the three communities (for a family with one adult and two children: \$56,264 in San Antonio; \$57,727 in Columbus; and \$72,876 in Buffalo), and it requires a bachelor's degree.¹²

How Local Economic Trends Have Affected the Three FCCC Communities

Not surprisingly, FCCC parents across the three communities are most likely to be employed in the top occupations in their metropolitan areas. In Buffalo, these top occupations are personal care aides, certified nursing assistants, and school bus drivers. In Columbus, the top jobs are customer service representatives, cashiers, child care workers, and housekeeping and janitorial workers. And in San Antonio, the list looks much the same, although Dual Generation also offers training and placement for administrative assistants. Other research on two-generation models shows that helping people access higher-wage jobs takes more time and resources than can be supported through the programming these three initiatives provide (Chase-Lansdale 2017). The only two-generation model that has successfully created a career ladder for parents is CAP Tulsa, a very well-resourced model that couples Head Start with Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) funding and other wraparound services to provide long-term support.

Each FCCC initiative offers training, certification programs, and adult education, mostly aimed at entry-level jobs. In Buffalo, one partner specifically offers training for sustainable-wage careers (e.g., pharmacy technician, medical coding). However, those jobs require high school-level literacy and math skills that many PAZ parents lack, so few parents have been able to pursue this opportunity. PAZ parents also have access to other high school equivalency/GED programs and other workforce training, but credentialing is only one part of the equation. Even when there are openings for higher-paying jobs in areas like manufacturing, those industries are traditionally male dominated and have difficult schedules for parents with children (i.e., second and third shifts).

In Columbus, two core partners, the Godman Guild and CPOWorks, offer training in areas such as health care, food distribution, property management, child care, and GED and adult literacy. In 2017, the team formed a new partnership with Columbus Works, which allowed them to access the agency's large network of employer partners, supportive placements, GED and adult literacy program, and

certificate programs. The team hopes this new partnership will provide participants with opportunities for career entry and advancement.

San Antonio's Dual Generation initiative offers opportunities at the Eastside Employment and Training Center (EETC), including both its Goodwill training program and certificate programs through Alamo College. Like CAP Tulsa, Alamo has a Health Profession Opportunity Grant, which means they mostly offer health sector certificates (e.g., medical assistant) on site. Alamo also offers Child Development Associate (CDA) certification; some Dual Generation parents have taken the courses and been hired at the local child care centers. Finally, Goodwill also offers on-site trainings for certified nursing assistants and administrative assistants.

Although all three initiatives offer quality workforce and adult education services, the FCCC teams still worry about the long-term prospects for the families they serve. The low-wage market leaves even some of the most successful FCCC parents struggling with unstable jobs, low wages that cannot sustain families without government assistance, and hours that are difficult to manage. Program staff in Buffalo told us they are concerned that Buffalo's economic resurgence leaves PAZ parents behind, because they cannot access the new opportunities.

Further, the nature of the low-wage job market affects the FCCC initiatives' ability to achieve their mission for whole families—thriving parents and children. If parents can only access low-wage jobs, they will have difficulty affording the basics (i.e., shelter and food), let alone the resources that might improve outcomes for their children. Without FCCC programs' support, parents may no longer be able to afford quality child care, school fees, or academic enrichment opportunities as their children age. And parents across all three communities told us how inflexible school and work schedules undermine their ability to balance work and family.

One San Antonio parent, who had a steady but relatively low-wage job and aspired to return to school and train for a higher-paying one, discussed how difficult it would be to juggle returning to school and looking after her kids:

I've been wanting to go back to school. It's hard. I have to go to the office every day. It's just kind of crazy, because I have to work at the office, get out at 4:00, go pick up the kids. Then just get home, make dinner, do this, help them out with their homework. I'm, like, "if I stop working and go to school, how can I do it?" (San Antonio parent 2017)

Likewise, a Columbus parent said,

I work for [a fast food restaurant]...I only have my sister. My child's father, he works. My mom, she works. It's not like that I can get help and support like I want to, because everybody's workin' them schedules. We either clockin' in at the same time, or that person's clockin' in right behind

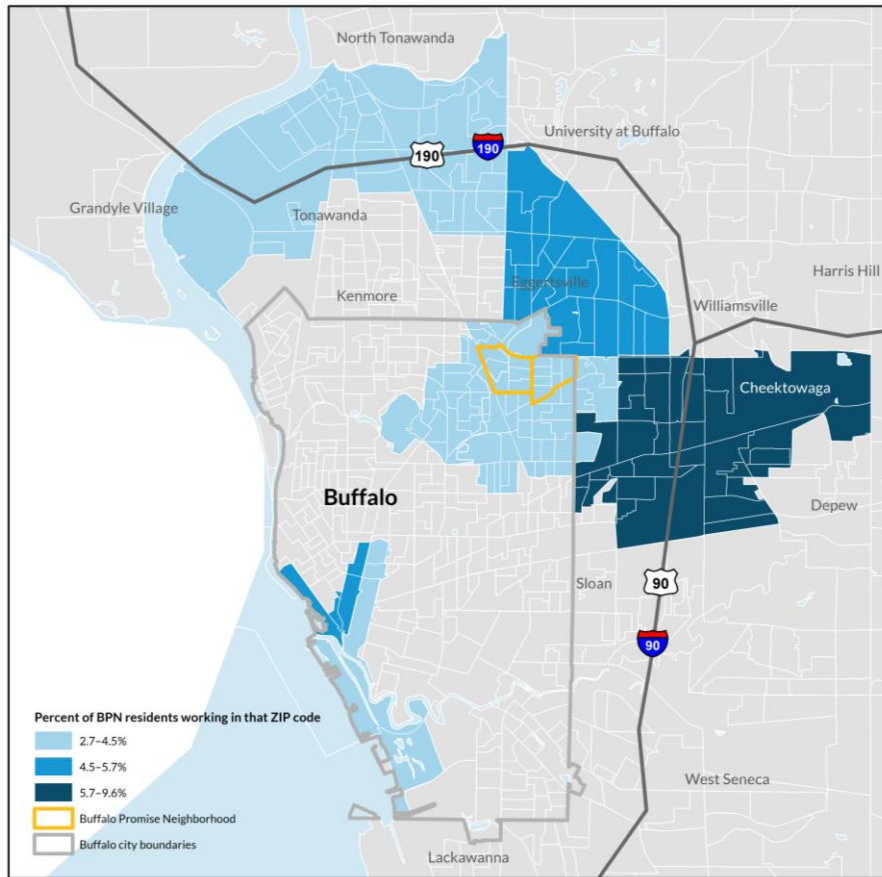
me, or clockin' in before me, but they still don't get off until late. It's just like I still have myself...I had to tell them that, so they set me up with a schedule where I get off exactly at 3:30, so I could make it to get here. I get off exactly at 3:30, so it takes me about ten minutes to walk to her school. Sometimes I get there about like 3:45 at the latest, but they let [my daughter] sit in the office. (Columbus parent, 2017)

Inadequate Transportation

The FCCC initiatives all seek to ensure children get high-quality educational opportunities and to help parents find and keep good jobs that will support families as they strive to move out of poverty. But in all three cities, transportation challenges create a significant barrier to success. Inadequate public transit systems, high transportation costs, and the cost of reliable cars all leave households with low incomes struggling to juggle work and training schedules with inflexible school and child care drop-off and pick-up times. Nontraditional and unpredictable work schedules—common for workers paid low wages—compound these problems. Parents with several children who attend different schools or child care centers may find transportation more difficult. And as we discuss below, school choice and the expansion of charter schools means that children in the same household may attend different elementary schools in different parts of the community.

FIGURE 4

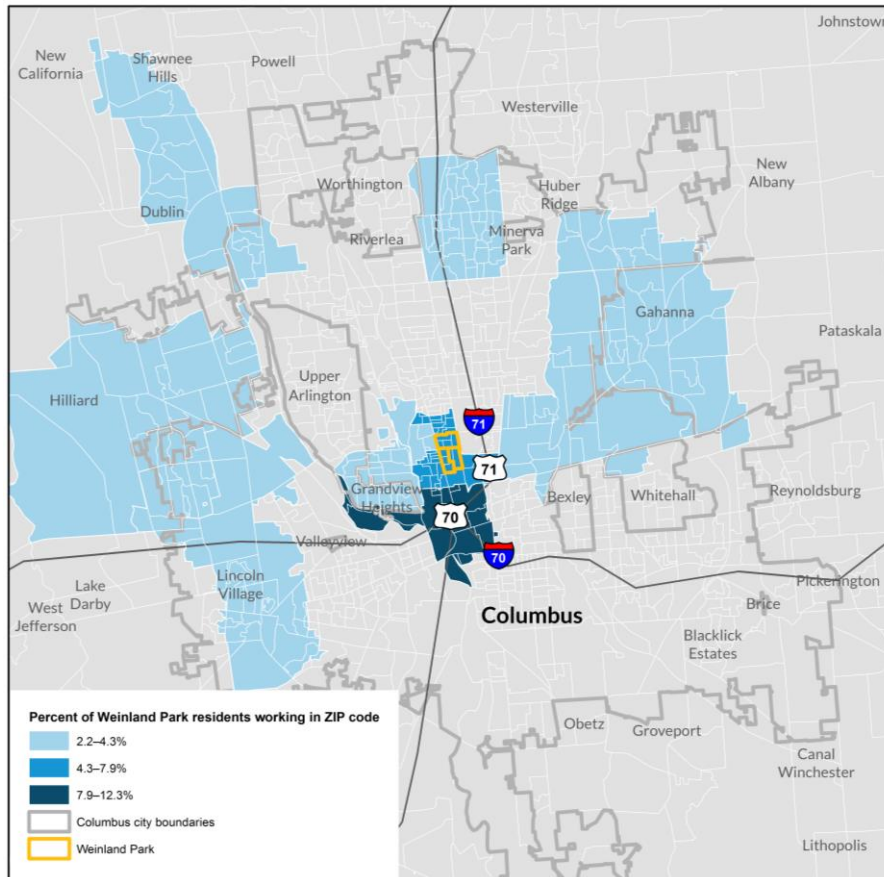
Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Residents More Likely to Work East of the Footprint



Source: US Census Bureau. 2018. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-15). Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program. Accessed in June 2018 via OnTheMap.

FIGURE 5

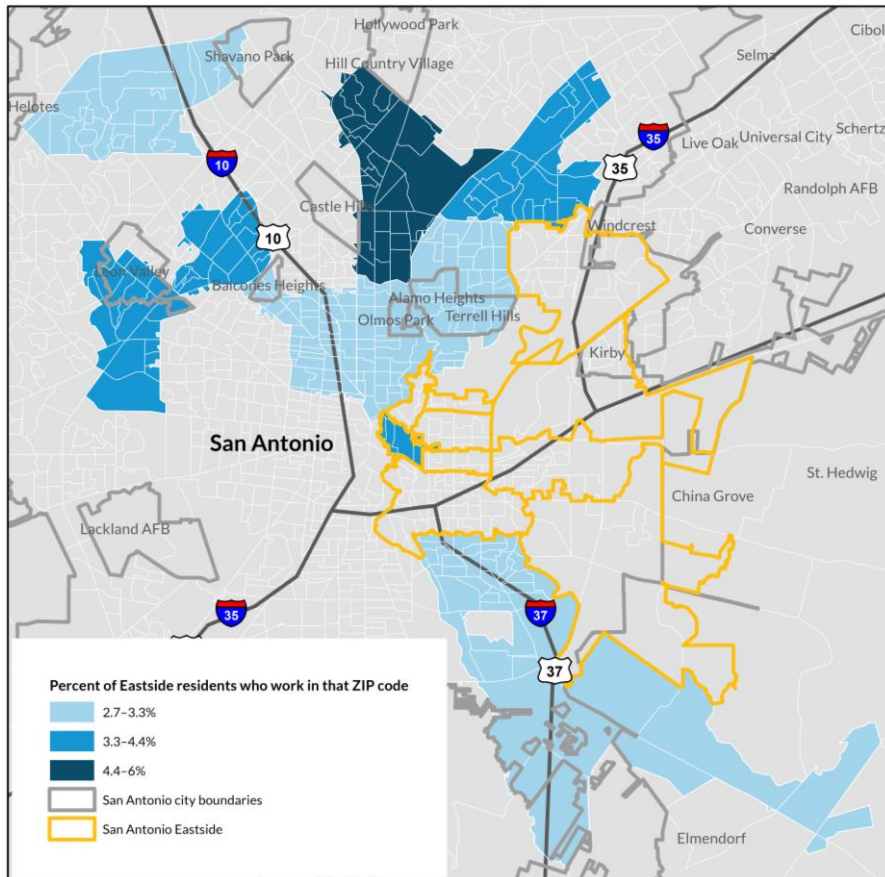
Weinland Park Residents More Likely to Work South of the Footprint



Source: US Census Bureau. 2018. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-15). Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program. Accessed in June 2018 via OnTheMap.

FIGURE 6

San Antonio's Eastside Residents More Likely to Work West and North of the Footprint



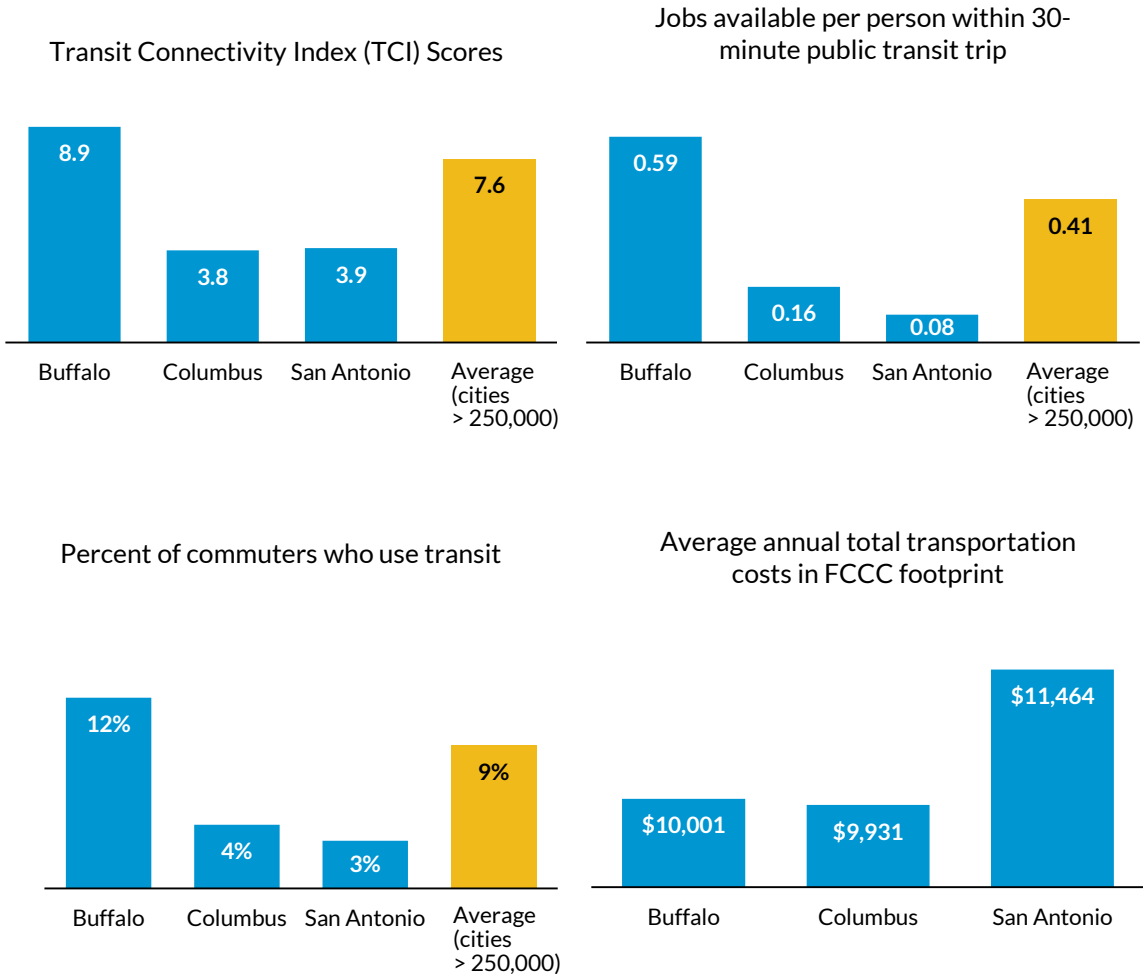
Source: US Census Bureau. 2018. LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-15). Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program. Accessed in June 2018 via OnTheMap.

Neither Buffalo, Columbus, nor San Antonio has a strong public transportation infrastructure, and trips from the FCCC communities to job-rich downtown areas, or to the increasingly job-heavy city outskirts (Raphael and Stoll 2010), can require multiple bus transfers and take well over an hour. Figures 4 through 6 show where most residents of each FCCC footprint work. Compounding the problem, predominantly African American and Latinx communities are often less well served by public transit systems (Kaufman et al. 2015; McKenzie 2013; Pendall et al. 2014). In addition, cities may have neglected to maintain roads and other transit infrastructure in areas with lower incomes.

Figure 7 summarizes key transportation characteristics in each city, based on a consistent measure of urban connectivity. Columbus and San Antonio are much less connected by transit than the average city. In these cities, public transit usage is low—only 3 to 4 percent of commuters—and there are many fewer jobs per person accessible within a 30-minute public transit trip distance than the national

average.¹³ Buffalo has higher connectivity, more public transit use, and more jobs accessible in a 30-minute public transit trip. However, transportation can be expensive, with an estimated cost of \$10,000 a year in the Buffalo and Columbus footprints and a slightly higher cost of about \$11,500 in the San Antonio footprint. These estimates include the cost of public transit and car ownership, reflecting the actual transportation resources used by residents in the footprints.

FIGURE 7
Key Transit Characteristics for FCCC Communities



Note: The Transit Connectivity Index, percentage of commuters who use transit, and jobs available in a 30-minute trip per person are from AllTransit. Annual transportation costs in the FCCC footprint are from H+T Index.

Inadequate public transit has a disproportionate impact on households with low incomes, who often cannot afford to own and maintain cars or can only afford older, less reliable vehicles. Although lack of

access to a reliable car is a problem for FCCC families in all three cities, the problem is particularly severe in sprawling San Antonio, a city that spans 465 square miles—larger than other fast-growing Texas cities like Dallas and Austin. In San Antonio, access to a car is a true necessity; without a car, people not only struggle to get to work and school but also to manage basic tasks like grocery shopping and going to medical appointments.

A parent from San Antonio we spoke to in 2017 described the difficulty of trying to manage work and family life with an older, unreliable car:

Well, of course, it's not a new car, so I have things and issues that have been going on with it that I've had to sit on financially, until I can afford to pay it, so it'll start. Then it'll stop. Then it'll start. Then it'll stop. When we're without a car, it takes a toll on us 'cause I still have to maintain, you know? When I was going through [FCCC] I didn't have a vehicle, so it was a little bit more overwhelming. (San Antonio parent 2017)

Buying a good car requires substantial savings and/or access to a loan. But getting a loan at a reasonable, affordable interest rate requires good credit or a lender willing to provide a loan to a person they deem as “higher risk.” Knowing these challenges, predatory lenders target people of color with low incomes, putting them at risk for default and further damage to their credit (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau 2013).

How Transportation Has Affected the Three FCCC Communities

Across the three FCCC communities, both staff and parent participants describe how inadequate transportation affects families and undermines FCCC programs and services. For example, a staff member in Buffalo told us in 2016,

Transportation is the number one issue across the board. It doesn't matter where you go and what you do, where the program is, who's running the program, transportation for any family is going to be an issue. (Buffalo staff member 2016)

Likewise, a Buffalo parent told us in 2017, “When people ask me what are the most important things, I usually start off with transportation.”

In San Antonio, service providers described transportation as “a huge challenge.” One partner told us that Dual Generation participants without cars struggle to attend programs and receive services:

You can wait on a bus for an hour and a half each way. There are some folks who have transportation that get here—some have great perseverance in trying to get here. But there are some, not just here but anywhere in the city, that aren't coming because of it. (San Antonio partner 2017)

Staff across the three FCCC communities also talked about how spatial mismatch—the fact that their initiative footprints are far from job-rich areas—makes it difficult for them to connect people with jobs that pay a living wage. A representative from one Columbus partner told us,

Columbus is growing, and we're bringing jobs here outside of [Interstate] 270, way outside.
(Columbus partner 2017)

Likewise, a staff member in San Antonio said,

Good jobs are literally on the opposite side of town. (San Antonio staff member 2017)

These comments reinforce that lack of transportation is a fundamental problem for two-generation initiatives aimed at helping families with low incomes improve their economic circumstances. Without reliable, affordable transportation, parents cannot take advantage of training or job opportunities or get their children to school or child care on time. Inadequate transportation contributes to school absenteeism, which can affect children's learning outcomes and even put parents and children at risk of criminal charges for neglect and truancy.¹⁴ Program staff and parents from all three FCCC communities described the challenges of traveling to school and work. A Buffalo staff member told us in 2017,

Transportation can be a barrier too, when you are helping parents who are qualified for certain jobs. In some of these locations, there is no bus service. Even when there are bus services, you're talking about working 8 to 4 p.m. A lot of parents can only work one shift, unless they are married or have other support; then travelling to and from one and a half hours on the bus; then have kids at EduKids [the early childhood program]; have to get their kids. They may have kids at other schools in the footprint. (Buffalo staff member 2017)

Likewise, a mother from Columbus said she was at risk of losing her job because of transportation problems:

I really need a car, because me and my daughter constantly walkin' back and forth to the school and work. I can't do this no more, because I just got this job and I missed two days already.
(Columbus parent 2017)

And a mother from San Antonio described having to get up at 4 a.m. to take her daughter to day care and make it to work on time:

I got up at 4:00 in the morning every day to get [my daughter] to day care and get me to school, and I made it on time, no excuses. [I traveled] on the bus. I'd walk if I had to, 'cause I'm gonna get there. (San Antonio parent 2017)

FCCC parents also travel to training programs and service centers. Without adequate transit, signing up for services or getting basic assistance can consume an entire day. However, even trying to get to programs and services in the initiatives' footprints can be challenging for families with multiple children. As this staff member from Columbus put it,

The organization, it's just a block away. But if I'm a single mother with 5 kids, it's raining outside and I got two in a stroller, and I'm walking down one of the busiest streets in Columbus, and you want me to walk to a training or educational opportunity in the busiest streets, bus passes don't help, they don't help. I ask them questions all the time, I ask leadership, "how many of you walked to work today? Or took a bike two or three blocks?" We don't walk places—if I don't do it with my kids, we shouldn't expect someone to do it just because they're poor. (Columbus staff member 2017)

Transportation is one of the most difficult challenges for the FCCC teams to address. Local governments determine bus routes, often in response to demands from business or the constraints of their own funding challenges. Providing private transportation, such as a bus or a van, to take participants to training programs or a job center requires pick-up and drop-off points that will serve a significant number of people, as well as funding for purchasing, maintaining, and insuring vehicles. For now, the FCCC teams in all three communities are limited to offering bus passes or help in emergencies.

Not Enough Early Care and Education

Quality child care and early education is core to the two-generation approach for families, as it both supports children's healthy development and helps parents work and/or participate in education and training (Sama-Miller et al. 2017; Scott, Popkin, and Simington 2016). Further, there is emerging evidence that supporting quality child care as part of a two-generation model may improve children's outcomes (Chase-Lansdale et al. 2017; Frank 2019).

However, FCCC communities, like communities all over the country, face a fundamental challenge in that the market simply does not have a supply of quality, affordable child care that meets families' needs. Quality programs are in short supply overall, and there are particularly severe shortages of affordable quality care for special groups—including infants and toddlers, families needing care during nontraditional hours, and families with children with special needs (Henly and Adams 2018). Further, public investments in early care and education are not sufficient to fill the gap. The child care subsidy system only supports 15 percent of eligible families, and states are using much of the recent funding increases to meet new federal requirements imposed in 2014, including quality improvement, rather than significantly increasing slots (Johnson-Staub and Sethi 2019; Chien 2015; Walker et al. 2017).¹⁵ Although state and federal investments in prekindergarten and Head Start are very helpful in improving access to early education services for three- and four-year-old children, these services often do not match parents' work schedules, and funding varies across states and localities.

All three FCCC communities wrestled with a fundamental problem of significant gaps in the supply of quality care that their families could afford and a lack of public resources that their families could use to help pay for services. Further, quality child care can be prohibitively expensive for programs to provide long term.

How Early Care and Education Have Affected the Three FCCC Communities

All three FCCC initiatives recognize the central role of quality child care and early childhood education to their missions. Buffalo and San Antonio were both Promise Neighborhoods focused on improving access to child care in their communities; Columbus has The Ohio State University's Schoenbaum Family Center as a core partner. But all three communities have struggled to meet the demand for high-quality, affordable care and have tried different approaches to increasing the number of slots available for FCCC families.

In Buffalo, BPN supports the Children's Academy. For the first years of FCCC, the Children's Academy housed Early Head Start and Head Start programs run by the Community Action Organization. But in 2016, BPN decided to replace the Community Action Organization with a private provider, EduKids, which offers National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited programming in Buffalo's suburbs. This change shifted funding for the Children's Academy from federal Head Start to private donations. Under EduKids's management, the Children's Academy offers longer hours and year-round programming. But even with this change, demand for high-quality early education far outstrips the supply available at the Children's Academy. As one BPN leader told us in 2017,

The neighborhood in general, though, has about 1,000 kids that are five or less. So, us servicing, you know, 230 is great, but the demand is higher than that. I think we still have a wait list of 300 that we're working off of. (Buffalo leader 2017)

To address the need for more child care, BPN is now working to open a second Children's Academy a mile from the existing location.

Although the Schoenbaum Center has historically been a core partner of the Columbus initiative, the Center serves the entire city of Columbus, and only a few slots were set aside for Next Doors participants. In 2018, the partnership stopped paying for these slots because FCCC leadership thought the cost was not justified by the very small number of children served. Weinland Park offers few other child care options, and almost none are high quality. The Next Doors initiative gives referrals to Early Head Start, Columbus Early Learning Centers, and YMCA service centers, but some parents still opt for

closer providers who have available slots, even if they are not considered high quality. The initiative has also tried busing kids to another child care center across town, but the effort failed because of low interest from parents. The Columbus team is considering options, including parenting interventions like Building Blocks, a parent-child reading program; SPARK, a home-based early learning intervention; or Waterford computer-based learning for young children, to address the need for early childhood education.¹⁶ They are also partnering with the new owners of a previously low-quality child care center in Weinland Park to try to develop alternative, high-quality services. Initiative leadership explained that the fundamental problem they face is too few high-quality child care slots available in the area.

The situation leaves working parents forced to rely on family or friends to care for their children. As this mother told us in 2017, those arrangements can often be unreliable and put their jobs at risk:

I did have a situation when I was working at [employer]. I'd just had my daughter and I had went back to work. I had a babysitter for the first couple of days, but then, after a while, it got kinda hard because she couldn't go to daycare 'cause she wasn't six weeks. My sister was watching her for me, but then she winded up moving out of town, so then I had no babysitter. I didn't have anybody that could watch her for me, so I then winded up missing a couple of days of work, which sucks 'cause I don't like to miss work. (Columbus parent 2017)

The San Antonio team has taken a more systemic approach to addressing the need for high-quality child care than the other communities. They have partnered with one high-quality provider, the Healy-Murphy Center, since the beginning and have worked with other providers in the footprint to bring lower-quality centers up to Texas Star certification levels.¹⁷ A program manager at the Miller Child Development Center, one of the centers that Dual Generation helped improve to a quality rating, described the partnership's impact this way:

We had a coach that came out. We had an amazing Texas Rising Star coach. I wish we had pictures. It's like night and day from when we started with Texas Rising Star...The United Way program and [staff member] helped us to get a lot of equipment, and a lot of toys, and everything else that we were lacking in the classroom...She also helped us get a lot of multicultural aspects that we added to the classroom that we just didn't have. A lot of training that we needed...And then, we just really had to build our teachers up and just, like, give them that confidence that they were four stars, three stars, they were a Texas Rising Star teacher. (San Antonio staff member 2018)

Getting the Texas Star certification is costly and includes training and education for staff, quality materials, and following state-mandated child-provider ratios. The San Antonio team provided additional funding and support for the centers, paid for staff education, and as of spring 2018, raised two more centers to the Texas Three Star level. In addition, the initiative plans to open a high-quality facility at its Eastside Employment and Training Center and is working with another center nearby to help them obtain their certification.

Nevertheless, even with these successes, the size of the footprint—73 square miles—and the number of families with low incomes and children means that the need for care far exceeds the supply. To address the need and offer families more options, the San Antonio team used its Promise Neighborhood funds to support a Family Friend and Neighbor Provider Network, offering regular trainings and meetings in accessible community spaces, including the local grocery store, HEB. A United Way staff member described the group meetings at HEB in 2018 as follows:

When the families come grocery shopping, the manager has set aside their staff room. They have a [Family Friend and Neighbor Provider Network] session in there with the parents and the children. That probably is one of the most powerful groups we have. The goal is, if they wanted to, at the end of this process, they would have the basic background knowledge to know how to apply for a homecare license. (San Antonio staff member 2018)

To expand the training's reach and maintain efforts to expand quality care access after the Promise Neighborhood funding ended, the training coordinator identified a group of the most engaged Family Friend and Neighbor Provider Network providers and tasked them with starting Family Friend and Neighbor Provider Network support groups in their neighborhoods.

Although the San Antonio team has been very successful in increasing the supply of high-quality care slots on the Eastside, it faces more challenges in providing subsidies that will enable Dual Generation families to continuously afford care. If parents are unable to enroll their children in Early Head Start, Dual Generation has limited options available. Child Care Development Fund funding has been frozen in Texas for the past few years, with the governor directing resources to families involved in the child welfare system. The United Way offers a small child care scholarship program, and, for now, Dual Generation uses its Annie E. Casey Foundation funding to reserve a slot in each of the high-quality centers. But finding a sustainable way to provide this essential service for Dual Generation families remains difficult.

The three FCCC communities' experiences highlight how the larger structural challenges of the child care market undermine this critical resource for two-generation approaches. The inability to support and sustain access to affordable quality care, the lack of public resources to address these gaps, and the significant costs associated with efforts to develop such care all create major barriers to providing the care that families need to improve their economic circumstances—and their children's long-term development.

Elementary Schools Under Pressure

Nationwide, many large city school districts have struggled for years to improve their students' educational performance and outcomes (DeArmond et al. 2015). Insufficient school funding and lower school readiness demonstrate the continuing effects of longstanding racial and economic inequities on Black and Latinx communities (Ladson-Billings 2006).

Federal and local governments have tried to address these disparities, but the gap in educational achievement between white children and children of color remains. Starting in 2001 with the No Child Left Behind Act, reforms that required high-stakes testing were introduced as federal policy. In this new policy landscape, students' performance on standardized tests became a key accountability metric that states could use to determine everything from teacher compensation to mass terminations of staff. Facing increased pressures for accountability, many large school districts have turned to school choice—policies that allow students to attend publicly funded schools other than the one assigned to them by geography—to both improve students' access to better educational opportunities and force schools to compete for public funds. Despite these reforms, many districts continue to struggle with low performance.

Providing children with access to high-quality educational opportunities is a central element of the theory of change in two-generation efforts like FCCC, but the realities of the public-school system constrain their ability to achieve this goal. School choice complicates the place-based nature of the initiatives, because neighborhood students may attend any number of schools across the district. The partnership may choose to invest heavily in improving local schools, but there is no guarantee that the children they are serving will attend them. Further, charter schools have greater autonomy from the school district than traditional public schools and may not be willing to enter the collaborative agreements the initiatives need to function or to serve students who require more specialized services.

How Schools Have Affected the Three FCCC Communities

FCCC seeks to serve families with children from birth to age 10, so the initiatives must contend with national and local education policy trends that affect their local school systems. For example, all three FCCC communities have school choice policies that enable parents to place their children in schools outside the target footprints. Each of the FCCC communities includes at least one local elementary school in their partnership. San Antonio and Columbus both partner with their local school districts. Buffalo's Promise Neighborhood includes two elementary schools: Westminster Community Charter

School, supported by M&T Bank through the Westminster Foundation, and Highgate Heights Elementary School, a Buffalo public school.

Both Highgate Heights Elementary School in Buffalo and Weinland Park Elementary School in Columbus have been subject to accountability-driven, whole-school reforms. The Highgate Heights reform plan “restarted” the school in 2013 under a New York State Improvement Grant, which granted BPN both funding and direct administrative control of the school for five years. By 2016, Highgate Heights had improved from a priority school to a focus school—a significant improvement, given the school’s four continuous years as a priority school.¹⁸ However, with the end of the State Improvement Grant in mid-2018, BPN lost a significant source of funding for its two-generation programming on the campus and, perhaps more significantly, transferred administrative control of the school back to Buffalo Public Schools (BPS). Some staff fear that this instability could threaten the school’s academic gains:

We didn’t use Buffalo’s curriculum. There was a lot of things that we didn’t have to do. [Our] thought process now is, “We’ve spent five years training teachers with professional development specifically in some [English Language Arts] work, and then we’re going to revert back, and then they’re going to have to be retrained, and what will that do to the student that is starting to move up that learning curve?” (Buffalo service provider 2017)

Complicating the two-generation picture further in Buffalo is the issue of school choice. Both Westminster Community Charter School and Highgate Heights are subject to the BPS school choice policies, but BPS does not provide bus service to charter schools. The effect is that Highgate Heights, the public school with busing, has a student body that is disproportionately bused from outside the community, while Westminster, the charter school, has more students within walking distance or whose parents take them to school. These differences have directly impacted FCCC programming, as PAZ coaches have had a much harder time connecting with and engaging parents at Highgate. The coaches have less opportunity to build face-to-face relationships, and without those relationships, the two-generation theory of change that feeds on direct contact with families suffers.

The Columbus FCCC partnership includes both the local elementary school, and more recently, the Columbus City schools central office. Weinland Park Elementary School has had three principals during the initiative. The school entered “turnaround” mode in the 2014–15 school year, when the second principal came in (Ohio Department of Education 2013).¹⁹ In efforts to improve the school, this principal reconstituted the teaching staff. One of the initiative’s leaders described the process in 2014:

It took a year. It was a year-round school and what [the principal] got clear about was that if she wanted to do well, she needed a new teaching staff. She worked tirelessly to figure out who had the skill set to work in an urban setting. On a Friday, she pink-slipped everyone, and she was allowed to hire new staff. You have to hire within the district, and so it became a recruitment

process to get other teachers in other buildings to make them want to work at [Weinland Park Elementary School]. (Columbus service provider 2017)

Despite these radical efforts to improve performance, the school still is working to raise its reputation, and the Columbus team reported throughout the initiative that parents were increasingly taking advantage of school choice policies to send their children to schools in other parts of the city. One of the Next Doors staff told us in 2016,

As Next Door members have grown in a lot of areas, they're becoming more knowledgeable about [educational] choice, and the lottery and charter schools...which means that they leave Weinland Park [Elementary School], using educational choice to send their children to private schools, putting kids in schools where they think it's a better fit: fitness academies, and science academies, or language—like the international school. (Columbus staff member 2016)

The team now has a promising relationship with the central school district and is optimistic about how that change may help them support FCCC families. In addition, the new Weinland Park principal, who entered at the beginning of the 2017–18 school year, has been working to regain the community's trust and promote the schools' continued improvement, in collaboration with community partners. This change allowed the FCCC partnership to establish a team of service providers in the elementary school in 2018 to better reach children and their families.

Finally, Columbus is also feeling the effects of a state policy intended to reduce chronic absenteeism—a problem affecting children across the US.²⁰ In Ohio, parents can be taken to court if their children miss too much school; the “every minute counts” policy means that even tardy children are counted as partially absent. One mother described the burden of this policy change:

They give 'em points after school now. After so many points they take you to court. Well, you have a meeting first after school, and then after that, they'll take you to court [for] being late, not coming to school. It's just them two, being late and not comin' to school, even tardiness. Tardiness will even get—'cause you earn a half a point for that. I ain't got time to be on nobody's courts. That's just doin' too much. (Columbus parent 2017)

The San Antonio FCCC team has faced a different set of challenges. The City of San Antonio has 19 independent school districts, each with its own operating budget and local property tax base.²¹ This situation creates inequity between districts; those serving higher-income—predominantly white and Latinx—parts of the city can offer higher teacher salaries and more resources for local schools than those serving communities with lower incomes. Families generally do not have the option of placing their children in a school in a different district, with limited exceptions by district. The San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) encompasses most of the Dual Generation service area. SAISD has faced severe resource constraints because of enrollment declines. Charter schools have opened in the Eastside and throughout the SAISD in recent years, lowering enrollment in district public schools. In

addition, the new development on the Eastside has led to vacant housing and lots and fewer students overall.²² SAISD had to contend with a \$31 million revenue shortfall for the 2018–19 school year and laid off dozens of teachers and administrators.²³

Some staff worry about what these changes may mean for FCCC families, saying that the charter schools “choose the kids they want to choose; the leftovers are a lot of them with disabilities.” Though another staff member noted that one of the local charter schools has “a great program...for children with disabilities,” the caveat was that “it’s a lottery system,” so some children with special needs may not get in. As charter schools continue to expand, SAISD may serve an increasingly high-need population, which may stretch school funding for the students who need the resources the most.

These problems arose as Dual Generation expended the last of its Promise Neighborhood funding for the Eastside. Those resources had supported extra training and supports for local schools, including a leadership program for teachers and administrators and additional funding for STEM training.

Despite these challenges, the SAISD leadership are optimistic and have taken steps to help the district rebound. The district has created public charter schools, which adopt a magnet school model, to attract students from outside the district. The district is also combining some middle and elementary schools to improve performance. SAISD is currently restructuring its Family and Community Engagement Division in an effort to provide additional support to campuses as they work to increase engagement opportunities for families. The Parent and Family Liaison (PFL) role has been elevated to a professional position to offer a more competitive salary and ensure the implementation of specific tasks providing increased communication, interactions, and events on every campus. As part of this restructure, each campus team will identify spaces designated as family centers and volunteer zones. As a result, the Dual Generation programming will expand beyond the prior Parent Room programs—resource rooms staffed by parent volunteers—previously offered on one-third of the district campuses. The Parent Room program was suspended at the end of the 2018–19 school year because of funding.

The three FCCC communities’ experiences show how the structural challenges inherent in the public education system limited what these initiatives could accomplish. In particular, the added complexity of school choice undermines the ability for initiatives to focus on a particular school or geographical area and know that the families they serve will benefit from investments in local schools. However, the experiences in the smaller Buffalo and Columbus communities also show the potential benefits of strong partnerships with local elementary schools. And, as of the end of 2018, the San Antonio team was beginning to benefit from a much stronger partnership with SAISD that has the potential to bring new educational opportunities to the community.

Rapidly Changing Public Policy Environment

The FCCC initiative has spanned a volatile period in American political history, which has created a particularly challenging context for these three community-level efforts. We have already addressed some of the major policy and economic trends affecting the partnerships, including the affordable housing crisis, wage stagnation, the 2018 increase in child care funding, and the expansion of school choice and high-stakes standardized testing. The transition from the Obama era to the Trump Administration has brought even more volatility, with changes to federal funding streams and new policies that will affect these place-based initiatives and the people they are serving. The main effect has been to increase uncertainty, which is likely increasing the stress and instability of many families, creating greater needs for stability and support. Below, we discuss a few notable examples of issues that are already affecting or likely to affect the FCCC communities soon.

How the Public Policy Environment Has Affected the Three FCCC Communities

One of the biggest areas of uncertainty with clear implications for FCCC families is whether current efforts to cut or significantly limit federal safety net programs such as SNAP (previously Food Stamps), Medicaid, child care funding, and housing assistance will be successful. Both the Administration and House proposed large cuts in 2017, but the negotiations over the passage of the Tax Cut and Jobs Act led to the passage of the 2018 Omnibus Spending Bill that included increases for some programs (e.g., child care), while holding the line on others. Similarly, the Administration and Congress had not succeeded in their goal of overturning the Affordable Care Act as of the end of 2018, but they have weakened some provisions and its future remains uncertain. Both New York and Ohio have Medicaid expansion, so working families who depend on the program could potentially be at risk if the law changes. In the long run, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act is likely to squeeze the amount of funding available for discretionary safety net programs, and local government entities (e.g., housing authorities) are already concerned about the effect on their funding streams.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has introduced its own uncertainty for community-level initiatives that often rely on federal tax credits to support affordable housing and new development. Although the law did not eliminate the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (LIHTC), it reduced incentives for banks to invest in tax credits, and it is unclear how that will affect the flow of capital available. At the local level, the governor of Texas has taken advantage of federal policy changes to dramatically expand the number of “opportunity zones” to include 628 low-income census tracts statewide. This designation

may lead to more inequity, causing increased gentrification and displacement as investors take advantage of the “opportunity” for lower tax rates.²⁴

The federal move to impose expanded work requirements on recipients of federal assistance (SNAP, Medicaid, and housing assistance) could affect FCCC families and possibly make it more difficult for parents to participate in training and education programs.²⁵ Work requirements could discourage people from signing up for the assistance they and their families need, potentially increasing problems like child food insecurity. And FCCC participants who receive assistance may have to focus on complying with program requirements rather than pursuing opportunities that might help them improve their economic circumstances in the long run.

Some policy changes will likely affect certain FCCC communities more than others. Columbus depends heavily on AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers to support public housing residents and staff its early learning enrichment programs, so any cuts or efforts to eliminate the AmeriCorps VISTA program will have a disproportionate impact on programming in Columbus.

Finally, San Antonio is feeling the effects of the immigration policy changes. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids (real and rumored), increased deportations, and policies to separate immigrant parents from their children have all increased anxiety and fear in the community. The consequences for families are real: staff report that some clients from mixed-immigration status families are afraid to bring their children to school, and some families have members who have been deported or denied reentry to the United States. Uncertainty about federal and local policy direction seems likely to continue for the foreseeable future, leaving the FCCC initiatives to do their best to help families and communities cope with the volatility.

Lessons for the Field

The key lesson from the FCCC initiatives' experiences is not to give up in the face of large, contextual challenges, but that any community seeking to create a new two-generation community change initiative needs to be prepared for these kinds of societal shifts. Maintaining the ability to be nimble and flexible is critical for both short-term successes and creating sustainable and lasting change. These three communities have all demonstrated the persistence, flexibility, and resilience it takes to create and sustain a comprehensive community initiative in the face of rapid societal and policy change. As a result, the three FCCC communities' experiences offer important lessons for both the potential and real challenges of embedding a two-generation approach in a community change initiative intended to improve the economic circumstances for families with very low incomes. And they show that even in the current uncertain policy environment, local initiatives can succeed and help families with low incomes thrive.

The reasons for trying such an approach are many: a community change initiative offers the promise of improving conditions and opportunities for local residents and bringing about systemic changes that can have long-term benefits. Adding a two-generation lens means going beyond typical initiatives that have either focused on adults or children in isolation—e.g., on housing and job opportunities for adults, or, as in Promise Neighborhoods, on educational opportunities for children. A two-generation approach serves whole families and recognizes that meeting both generations' needs may lead to better outcomes in the long run.

However, the FCCC initiatives' experiences also highlight the reality that communities designing these ambitious initiatives need to be aware of the contextual factors that will impinge on their ability to bring about real change. Local and national trends in housing markets, job markets, transportation systems, child care, and school systems all affect how successful these initiatives can be in helping families move up the economic ladder. Any new two-generation community change initiatives should consider these factors when establishing goals and creating their theories of change, build in flexibility, and be prepared to bring on new partners when circumstances change.

The FCCC communities' experiences offer important examples of how they have adapted to navigate these challenges. For example, in response to the growing affordable housing crisis, Buffalo shifted its approach to incorporate building new affordable housing and has made adding eviction prevention services a goal. Columbus shifted its approach to partner more intensively with the local school district and other city-level partners to reach more children. And San Antonio has been very

strategic about looking for new funders to buffer the changes in child care funding, as well as building a stronger partnership with the school district and workforce systems. These responses demonstrate how these communities are working to create strong supports for families that will thrive despite societal and policy shifts.

Further, the FCCC communities show the importance of building in flexibility so they can both serve the needs of the families enrolled in their current programs and be prepared to serve new families in the future. All three FCCC communities have made that pivot, with Buffalo looking to add more child care slots and find new funding partners, Columbus looking to build on its partnership with schools and housing providers while considering how to expand their footprint, and San Antonio actively pursuing systemic changes that will bring more sustainable resources for dual generation services to the Eastside.

Finally, a key lesson from FCCC is that any community attempting this kind of comprehensive change needs to be ready to address the realities of the structural racism that underlies many of these contextual challenges—poor housing, racial segregation, low-wage jobs, lack of quality child care, and struggling schools. That means both training staff on racial equity and inclusion and advocating for real and meaningful systemic change.

Research Methods

The data in this report come from the first four years of a multiyear formative evaluation of the FCCC initiative. The evaluation uses a formative approach and involves multiple evaluation firms and a partnership between the evaluators, AECF, and the FCCC Communities. Data include the following:

- secondary data from public sources, including the American Community Survey and other Census Bureau data, as well as reports from local governments;
- data from evaluation partners;
- quantitative data on key performance measures, reports, and other publicly available documents on partner organizations and other relevant background;
- qualitative data on progress, partnership integration, and challenges from twice-yearly site visits, including interviews with partners and focus groups and interviews with program participants. Individual site teams took part in additional activities, including observing partner meetings. Site visit areas of focus are detailed in table 2.

TABLE 2
Site Visit Areas of Focus, 2014–18

Site visit	Activity	Focus
Spring 2014	Staff interviews	Introduction to the initiative, including intro to development, approach, enrollment and services, family participation, partnerships, target outcomes, incorporation of feedback, and financing
Fall 2014	Staff interviews	Initiative development and approach, enrollment and services, family participation, partnerships, target outcomes, incorporation of feedback, and financing
	Family focus groups	Awareness of FCCC, how participants were introduced to FCCC, perspective on services, and goals for services and how services could be improved to help meet them
Spring 2015	Staff interviews	Evolution of enrollment, services, partnerships, financing, and data capacity and use; discussion of logic model with site coordinator
	Service partner observations	Content, timing, logistical features, staffing and participation; staff engagement; participant engagement
Fall 2015	Staff interviews	Goals for FCCC, enrollment and services updates, partnership, and service integration
	Family focus groups	Awareness of FCCC, how participants were introduced to FCCC, perspectives on services, and

		goals for services and how services could be improved to help meet them
	Service delivery observations	Activity identification, logistical features, form and format, participant engagement, and staffing
Spring 2016	Staff interviews	Presentation of findings from first two years of evaluation and feedback from staff
Fall 2016	Staff interviews	School relationships, child services, adult education, employment, economic and financial success services, service integration, and contextual and policy issues
	Family focus groups	Participation in services and experiences with coaching and classes
Spring 2017	Staff interviews	Program and staffing updates; contextual and policy issues; race, equity, and inclusion; community engagement
	Resident community leader focus groups	Community changes, impressions of FCCC, and FCCC community engagement
Fall 2017	Staff interviews	Program and staffing updates, context and policy updates, and partnership integration
	Family interviews	Participant background, community context, impressions of FCCC, goals and engagement with services, and family and health concerns
Spring 2018	Staff interviews	Program and staffing updates, child services, school partnerships, data collection and use, and partnership integration clarifications
Fall 2018	Staff interviews	Program and staffing updates, sustainability of common goals, sustainability of collaborative service delivery, sustainability of data sharing, and sustainability of funding
	Family data walks	Community context, child care, FCCC programming, and family engagement with FCCC

Notes

- ¹ The final FCCC evaluation report will be released in 2020.
- ² Sarah Gillespie, Peter Tatian, Jay Dev, and Sara McTarnaghan, “A New Day for Data,” Urban Institute, accessed September 2016, <http://apps.urban.org/features/promise-neighborhoods/index.html>.
- ³ Aspen Ascend, “What is 2Gen?” The Aspen Institute, accessed September 3, 2019, <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/two-generation/what-is-2gen/>.
- ⁴ “Buffalo Promise Neighborhood,” Parent Achievement Zone, accessed June 12, 2019, <https://buffalopromiseneighborhood.org/our-programs/parent-achievement-zone/>.
- ⁵ The 10 zip codes in San Antonio’s FCCC initiative range in size from .99 square miles (zip code 78208) to 22.37 square miles (zip code 78222), totaling 71.74 square miles; “Dual Generation Partnership,” United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, accessed September 3, 2019, <https://www.unitedwaysatx.org/dualgen/>.
- ⁶ Corianne Scally, Amanda Gold, and Nicole Dubois, “How the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Puts Affordable Housing Production at Risk,” *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, July 12, 2018, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/how-tax-cuts-and-jobs-act-puts-affordable-housing-production-risk>.
- ⁷ “Community Properties of Ohio,” accessed June 12, 2019, <http://www.cpoms.org/>.
- ⁸ Samuel Stebbins, “Migration and Growth: The Fastest Growing (and Shrinking) Cities in the US,” *USA Today*, May 26, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/economy/2018/05/26/fastest-growing-and-shrinking-us-cities/34813515/>.
- ⁹ Elizabeth La Jeunesse, “Our Shrinking Supply of Low-Cost Rental Units,” Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (blog), August 14, 2018, <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/our-shrinking-supply-of-low-cost-rental-units/>.
- ¹⁰ “Buffalo Area Economic Summary,” BLS New York-New Jersey Information Office, updated August 28, 2019, https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-york-new-jersey/summary/blssummary_buffalo.pdf; “Columbus, OH, Area Economic Summary,” Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Midwest Information Office, updated October 2, 2019, https://www.bls.gov/regions/midwest/summary/blssummary_columbus_oh.pdf; “San Antonio Area Economic Summary,” BLS, Southwest Information Office, updated October 2, 2019, https://www.bls.gov/regions/southwest/summary/blssummary_sanantonio.pdf.
- ¹¹ For definitions of “employed persons” and “employment-population ratio,” see Bureau of Labor Statistics Glossary, updated June 7, 2016, <https://www.bls.gov/bls/glossary.htm>.
- ¹² “Living Wage Calculator,” Amy Glasmeier and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, accessed June 12, 2019, <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>.
- ¹³ See “AllTransit Rankings,” AllTransit, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://alltransit.cnt.org/rankings/>. This index takes into account the number of bus routes and train stations within walking distance and the frequency of service for a geographic area.
- ¹⁴ Alexandra Ricks and Sino Esthappan, “States Are Looking Beyond the Juvenile Justice System to Address School Truancy,” *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, August 20, 2018, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/states-are-looking-beyond-juvenile-justice-system-address-school-truancy>.
- ¹⁵ “Child Care in the FY 2018 Omnibus Spending Bill,” Center on Law and Social Policy, March 22, 2018, <https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/child-care-fy-2018-omnibus-spending-bill>.

- ¹⁶ “What is SPARK?” Early Childhood Resource Center, accessed June 12, 2019, <https://www.ecresourcecenter.org/WBA/Content/spark/what-is-spark>.
- ¹⁷ For more on Texas Star certification levels, see “TRS Program Quality Improvement,” Texas Rising Star, accessed August 1, 2019, <https://texasrisingstar.org/providers/program-quality-improvement/>.
- ¹⁸ The New York State Education Department previously designated Highgate Heights as a priority school, which both identifies the school as one of the lowest performing academically in New York and mandates the implementation of a whole school reform plan.
- ¹⁹ “Turnaround” is a federally authorized school improvement strategy under a School Improvement Grant, which requires replacing the school principal and at least half of the school staff. See Weinland Park Elementary School’s 2015 School Improvement Grant application, Ohio Department of Education, accessed August 1, 2019, <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/School-Improvement/Transforming-Schools/33-Weinland-Park-ES-Columbus.pdf.aspx>.
- ²⁰ Ricks and Esthappan, “States Are Looking Beyond the Juvenile Justice System to Address School Truancy.”
- ²¹ “San Antonio Metro Area School District Finder: Nineteen Independent School Districts Boundary Map and Directory,” WeGoPublic.com, accessed September 13, 2018, <http://www.wegopublic.com/districts.html>.
- ²² “Finance Services – Planning & Budget,” San Antonio Independent School District, accessed June 12, 2019, http://www.saisd.net/main/documents/Departments/Finance/2017-18_District_Budget.pdf.
- ²³ Michael Locklear, “San Antonio ISD Plans to Phase Out Some Middle Schools by Expanding Elementaries,” *Fox San Antonio*, February 25, 2016, <https://foxsanantonio.com/news/local/san-antonio-isd-plans-to-phase-out-some-middle-schools-by-expanding-elementaries>.
- ²⁴ Giertz, Seth, and Matt Kelly. “Opportunity Zones Are Just the Same Old Tax Incentives That Hardly Help the Poor,” *Dallas Morning News*, April 12, 2018, <https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2018/04/12/opportunity-zones-just-old-tax-incentives-hardly-help-poor>.
- ²⁵ Heather Hahn, Eleanor Pratt, Eva Allen, Genevieve M. Kenney, Diane K. Levy, Elaine Waxman, and Nathan Joo, “Work Requirements Tracker,” Urban Institute, August 21, 2018, <https://www.urban.org/features/work-requirements-tracker>.

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