

Collaborative on Accountable Communities for Health for Children and Families**Call 3: Portfolio of Interventions and Two-Generation Approaches**

Call 3 of the ACHCF collaborative focused on two core elements - two-generation approaches and portfolio of interventions. Two-generation (2Gen) approaches, rooted in recognition of the family system, are policies and efforts that simultaneously serve children and their adult caregivers for greater benefit to both.

The five core principles that underlie the 2Gen approach are: (1) measure and account for outcomes for both children and their parents, (2) engage and listen to the voices of families, (3) foster innovation and evidence together, (4) align and link systems and funding streams and (5) ensure equity.¹ The portfolio of interventions concept refers to the coordination of aligned and mutually reinforcing interventions in a community that span five key domains – clinical, community, clinical-community linkages, policy and systems, and environment—in order to improve personal and population health.² Another way to think about a portfolio of interventions, as it relates to 2Gen and an ACHCF, is that it is a suite of interventions across a community intentionally designed and coordinated to reach the whole family and recognize that the child is part of a family system.

Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS)

CDHS uses a Two-Generation (2Gen) approach to guide their services. The 2Gen approach encourages CDHS programs to serve children and their caregivers together, to harness the family's full potential and to put the entire family on a path to permanent economic security. Colorado's pioneering 2Gen work dates back several decades when community organizations began to embrace a more holistic approach to working with families, providing early care and education, access to adult learning, family supports, and mental health and life skills support to low-income parents and their children.

Lessons and Recommendations from Presenters

Following are overarching themes that emerged from the discussion, as well as bulleted recommendations to build upon the insights shared.

Best Practices for 2Gen Implementation and Portfolio of Interventions

Interviewees provided several recommendations centered on best practices for communities and funders desiring to align their work with 2Gen approaches and implement a portfolio approach to interventions.

All interviewees discussed the preconditions of bold leadership and culture change needed to break down silos in systems to recognize whole families. They also discussed the importance of bringing the

¹ <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Colorado-2Gen-Action-Guide.pdf>

² <http://cachi.org/uploads/resources/CACHI-2016-RFP.pdf>

voices of the families to the table from the beginning with an appreciation that children and adults are interconnected and embedded in a larger community.

Interviewees also highlighted the importance of overcoming the challenges related to shifting to a portfolio approach. In order to move towards common goals and a portfolio to advance those goals, it may be necessary to discontinue entire programs that have been effective but served a more siloed purpose. Resources can then be reallocated in the most effective way to effect change and realize shared goals over time..

- **Recommendation:** Communities should develop metrics that cross-cut funding streams and consider the entire family. This entails ensuring inclusion of some metrics at the family level. Examples of outcome measures that focus on the whole family can be found [here](#).
- **Recommendation:** Funders should encourage communities to include both short- and longer-term metrics to measure their progress over time (e.g., kindergarten vaccination rate vs. high school graduate rate)
- **Recommendation:** Funders should structure funding opportunities to support a portfolio of interventions with a 2Gen lens instead of focusing on a singular program or intervention. Communities that are coming together around shared goals should also consider a portfolio mindset, managing, discontinuing and initiating programs to ensure consistent progress toward their goals over time.
- **Recommendation:** Federal agencies should provide technical assistance (TA) and offer guidance regarding best practices for measurement and evaluation of two-gen initiatives.

Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Ascend is a policy program of the Aspen Institute. The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization with the mission of fostering values-based leadership and providing a nonpartisan venue for dialogue around critical issues. Ascend was launched with catalytic support from a core circle of investors with the mission to serve as a hub for breakthrough ideas and proven strategies that move parents, especially women, and their children beyond poverty toward educational success and economic security. Ascend takes a two-generation approach to its work and brings a gender and racial equity lens to analysis.

Multi-Sector Partnerships – Interviewees discussed the importance of multi-sector stakeholders working collaboratively to align and/or coordinate programs, policies, organizations and systems to reflect the 2Gen framework and ingrain it in their mission.³

- **Recommendation:** Foundations should leverage their convening power to support key community stakeholders in coming together to strategize about how to break down silos and set a common agenda, building toward a coordinated portfolio approach.

Lifespan Development – Collaborative members highlighted the role of lifespan development in the 2Gen approach and in portfolio design. For example, early on in a child's life his/her attachment with primary caregivers is critical and later on in adolescence development of a healthy sense of identity and

³ file:///C:/Users/ah0118/Downloads/Ascend_Practical-State-Solutions-report.pdf

relationship with peers becomes primary. Thus, 2Gen approaches should align with the developmental stage of the child/adolescent in addition to the systems (e.g., family, child care, school, and neighborhood) that greatly influence that particular developmental stage.

- **Recommendation:** Communities and funders should include partners with expertise in child development across the life span and stakeholders from across the diverse setting and sectors that care for children reflecting life course in their governance/decision making processes and in the development of their portfolios.

ReThink Health (A Rippel Initiative)

In 2007, the Rippel Foundation sought to understand what barriers stand in the way of creating an optimal health system. For two years, Rippel convened a group of leaders—[the ReThink Health Pioneers](#)—which included some of the nation's most prestigious healthcare leaders, as well as a diverse group of experts and change agents from economics, politics, business, and energy. ReThink Health is the creation of this group, embracing their best ideas for leading and understanding change and bringing them to health. ReThink Health works with leaders to transform health at the regional level – their neighborhoods, cities, counties, or states.

Accelerators to Financing, Spread, and Scale

Data Systems Integration – Interviewees discussed the value of data sharing across agencies and improving legacy data systems as accelerators. For example, the state of Maryland leveraged their State Innovation Model (SIM) grant to transition to a cloud-based system where data is shared across state agencies.

- **Recommendation:** Funders should continue to invest in data systems integration and innovative data system development to better track and report family outcomes.

Shift to Value-Based Payment – Interviewees discussed the shift to value-based payment and

alternative payment models as significant drivers for 2Gen work and diverse portfolios. They also discussed the need for a federal structure to support state investment in value-based payment.

- **Recommendation:** The federal government and states should incentivize investment in value-based payment models and SIMs that create overarching structures for health care innovation and integration across child and family-serving sectors in ways that more explicitly focus on family systems.

Fiscal Coordination and Partnerships – Interviewees discussed the gradual shift in federal agencies promoting 2Gen work. For example, the Administration on Children and Families (ACF) released a memo encouraging TANF agencies to coordinate and serve as active partners in statewide, tribal, regional, and local two-generation efforts.⁴

⁴ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/resource/tanf-acf-im-2016-03>

- **Recommendation:** Funders should support agencies, and other entities, wishing to blend and braid funds to support 2Gen efforts through both their Federal Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) and the technical assistance they provide.

Barriers to Financing, Spread, and Scale

Interviewees discussed several barriers related to the financing, spread, and scale of 2Gen work and diverse portfolios. Both real and perceived funding barriers were highlighted. For example, a community might perceive that they can only use dollars for a specific service, but in reality there is flexibility.

- **Recommendation:** Funders, including federal and state agencies, should provide clear guidance about how their funds can be used to implement coordinated, 2Gen portfolios as well as encourage innovative uses of funds and best practices that achieve 2Gen objectives for funding recipients.

Federal Silos and Insufficient Technology – A major barrier to the proliferation of holistic 2Gen efforts is that federal programs are siloed. For example, categorical programs do not focus on whole family outcomes. Interviewees discussed the need for policymakers and funders to continue to think about the intersections of policies beyond singularly focused program interventions.

- **Recommendation:** Funders should continue to invest in comprehensive data systems with advanced analytical capacity to obtain a better picture of whole families and a variety of different outcome measures.
- **Recommendation:** Funders should encourage awardees to come to them with options for pooling multiple existing funding streams to make needed IT investments. Funders should also work together to create innovative, pooled funding streams focusing on enhancing IT infrastructure, to which communities or agencies could apply.
- **Recommendation:** Funders should consider avenues to link data across systems, funding streams, and organizations. FOAs could begin to require appropriate data-sharing among family-serving grantees to expedite linkages.
- **Recommendation:** States should continue to leverage Medicaid authority including waivers to test innovative payment models and data integration pilots across programs that serve the family. CMS should collaborate with other federal and state funders to facilitate a coordinated and cross-sector strategy for family health, building toward a portfolio approach to 2Gen.

There is promising work at the state level regarding data and technology advancements. For example, the Integrated Data Systems Project, the Early Childhood Data Collaborative, the national Data Quality Campaign, and the Workforce Development Quality Campaign are working to integrate data systems to align with 2Gen efforts.⁵

⁵ <file:///C:/Users/ah0118/Documents/New-Ways-of-Creating-Opportunities-for-Families-in-Poverty.pdf>

The cliff effect, which occurs when a family's income increases above the income eligibility for financial supports, is a policy barrier that prohibits families with low income from moving forward economically. Interviewees discussed the need to address the cliff, while implementing other policies (e.g., workforce development programs) that balance the needs of both children and families while improving their economic status. In Colorado, legislation was passed to pilot a program to reduce the benefit cliff. Specifically, counties were encouraged to collaborate with community partners, early childhood education experts, and families to develop an approach to address this barrier.⁶

- **Recommendation:** Federal agencies and states should review eligibility cliffs in their funding streams and promote revenue neutral local innovations to address these cliffs, with an emphasis on education and workforce programs that acknowledge the role of family systems.⁷

[First Focus](#) offers additional recommendations for federal, state, local, and tribal policy on how to implement 2Gen policy strategies.

⁶ <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/reducing-the-cliff-effect-to-support-working-families/>

⁷ <https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Top-Ten-for-2Gen.pdf>