



Innovating Place-Based Grantmaking

An Evaluation of the Annie E. Casey Foundation
Strategic Co-Investor Approach

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Introduction

In 2012, the Annie E. Casey Foundation launched Family-Centered Community Change™ (FCCC) to support local partnerships in three high-poverty neighborhoods as they develop a more integrated set of services — including housing assistance, high-quality education, and job training — to help parents and children succeed together in what is known as a “two-generation approach.” Rather than creating something new, the Foundation joined existing partnerships, located in Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas, and provided technical assistance, trainings, and peer learning opportunities to build upon their ongoing community change efforts — a role the Casey Foundation referred to as a strategic co-investor (SCI).

In this approach, the Foundation played two roles: they served as a partner for a locally driven community change initiative, and they seeded the development of an approach to two generation that could be adapted to the local context. The type of community change initiative partner varied but was always a multi-pronged existing effort such as a federal Promise Neighborhood or a locally developed initiative. The community change initiative provided the infrastructure to nest the specific FCCC two-generation programming, an approach that has been implemented in other areas and that is a promising practice in the field of poverty alleviation writ large. Each FCCC two-generation effort was guided by a backbone organization that supplied the primary FCCC community lead, called the lead in this report.¹

Over the course of FCCC, the Foundation also provided an array of non-monetary supports. This included establishing a Community of Practice for the three communities that was meant to enhance learning across communities. The Community of Practice convened a series of affinity groups meant to accelerate peer learning (including community leads, frontline staff, and data & learning staff) as well as facilitated regular in-person convenings meant to deepen relationships within and across the three communities. Driven by a shared learning agenda, there were ongoing webinar series that were open to FCCC grantees as well as to staff at organizations in the broader community change initiative. The Foundation also provided customized consulting or resource support, frequently at the direct request of communities, including around data, trauma-informed care, strategic planning, racial and ethnic equity and inclusion, and workforce readiness.

The Foundation also supported evaluation and data activities to support the work, both to benefit the communities and to benefit the Foundation and the broader field of place-based philanthropy. This included having four evaluation partners: one focused on building data capacity in the communities, one focused on a process evaluation and a cost-study aimed at understanding the true cost of serving families using the FCCC approach, one focused on documenting the entire effort and lessons learned, and one focused on evaluating the Foundation’s role as strategic co-investor.

This report shares findings from the strategic co-investor evaluation. This evaluation included several components, including yearly community visits and pulse-check surveys focused on personnel directly involved in the two-generation approach and those less involved in two-generation work but involved in broader community change work. Both of these data collection tools collected data about perception of the Foundation’s role, the strategic co-investor approach, and feedback on explicit elements of the approach (e.g., technical assistance). TCC Group also tracked requests the Foundation and its consultants made of communities and participation in events. (See Appendix A for more details on the methodology). The evaluation was largely formative, providing ongoing feedback about how the approach was functioning and how it could be improved.

The report is organized by the eight components that, operating collectively, comprise the strategic co-investor approach.² Within each component, we share an introduction to how this worked in practice, insights from the evaluation, considerations for funders, and considerations for communities.

¹ The term backbone organization is taken from the collective impact model to community change and describes the organization that is responsible for managing the collaborative effort in a way that is inclusive and engaging. See Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. (2011). "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 36–41.

² This approach has been previously published on the Casey website community. *The Strategic Coinvestor Approach: Components and Lessons* (2021). Available at: <https://www.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-strategiccoinvestorapproach-2020.pdf>

The eight components are:

1. **Flexible grant funding** (of which a percentage is for use at the local community's discretion)
2. **A high-touch staffing approach**, with significant in-person time from the Foundation
3. **A non-directive relationship**, with the funder deferring to local discretion in program design and implementation of an agreed-upon topic
4. **An assumption that the work is done in collaboration** with other investing and implementing partners (including other funders)
5. **The funder serves as a strategic thought partner** and sounding board while providing on-demand technical assistance
6. **Facilitation of networking** and learning across communities
7. **Nesting of a focused issue** within an existing broader community change effort; and
8. **Ongoing evaluation** of the investment approach and the funder's role.

The theory of change guiding the SCI approach can be seen in Appendix C.

FCCC Phases:

- **Readiness (years 1-2)**
pilot demonstration focused on recruiting, refining approach, and developing local capacity
- **Mid-term implementation (years 3-4)**
full implementation, improved outcomes, and more consistent participant engagement
- **Longer-term implementation (years 5-7)**
additional refinement, expansion of numbers served, and higher-outcome achievement
- **Scale-up impact (beyond year 7)**
achieve neighborhood saturation and expand to additional neighborhoods

Three communities were provided funding through Family-Centered Community Change:

- Buffalo Promise Neighborhood in Buffalo, New York
- San Antonio Dual Generation Initiative in San Antonio, Texas
- Weinland Park Neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio

Work in each community was organized through a backbone organization that coordinated the work of partnering organizations focused on adult, child, or family services.

This report presents a summary reflection of findings derived from the evaluation over the course of the strategic co-investor demonstration project. We examine each aspect of the approach independently, providing a more nuanced description of the concept, evaluation insights, and considerations for both funders and grantees. We conclude with a synthesized assessment of the approach, including perceptions of the various stakeholders that were directly involved.

1. Flexible Grant Funding

The Casey Foundation grants were intended to be flexible. While flexibility is considered a funder best practice, the SCI approach sought to expand the concept from a single organization to flexible funding across a range of organizations, including those outside the core program area (in this case, two-generation efforts). The Foundation explicitly labeled the first two years of the grant as the readiness phase, meant to include elements of planning and piloting. In this phase, communities were encouraged to try different approaches and understand what worked best for their participants before choosing their two-generation approach. During the Readiness Phase, the FCCC communities were eligible to receive \$200,000 - \$300,000 apiece per year in grant funding, as well as have access to technical assistance and peer learning opportunities. During the subsequent Implementation Phase (2015-2019), each FCCC community was originally eligible to receive up to \$1 million in grant funds per year.³ Each community's fiscal sponsor (typically the community lead) submitted a joint application. Within these applications, funds were either explicitly awarded to multiple organizations or allocated to partners through sub-granting. Communities were given broad flexibility within the year to move funding towards emerging needs, such as hiring new staff or shifting programmatic work, often informing staff from the Casey Foundation of a request through a phone call or email but not needing any formal sign-off.

The grant structure also allowed for up to 25 percent of funding to be allocated to important work outside of two-generation that was happening in the broader community change initiative, though what might fall into this category was never defined.

Evaluation Insights

Flexible funding provided the often-ignored resources needed to work in collaboration. Collaboration often requires a level of work that doesn't fit neatly into grant funding. This includes elements that create and hold collaboration together – meetings that might not be strictly linked to programmatic work, social gatherings, trust building, time for staff to observe work at another organization, or, most critically to FCCC's mission, time spent to focus on family updates with staff across organizations. Having substantial funding that could be

allocated to these essential but often underappreciated elements of collaboration allowed partners to engage in this work fully and with compensation. The Urban Institute's Cost Study provides more information on the level of investment needed for coordination.⁴

Organizations that control the grant application have more power in deciding grant priorities, impacting the grantee/grantor relationship. Communities took different approaches to their yearly grant application – one community jointly created the proposal with its partners; the other two communities were somewhat less collaborative, inviting partnering organizations in for conversations but having the lead organization write the actual grant application and corresponding budget.⁵ The two communities that had a lead organization responsible for the bulk of the application and budget also saw the majority of grantmaking funds awarded to the lead organization, which caused some friction. For example, a partner organization at one of these communities shared, "Our community lead holds all the power as the fiscal agent."

Without clear and consistent guidance, communities did not distinguish between two-generation funding and support for broader community change initiative work, perhaps missing an opportunity to create stronger ties with the broader community change work. The SCI approach included nesting a specific programmatic effort within a community change effort (often referred to as a community change initiative or CCI) that has multiple existing program streams. While the bulk of the FCCC funding was intended to seed specific two-generation programming, originally the Casey Foundation allowed communities to use up to 25 percent of their yearly grant awards to address issues important to their communities that fell under the broader community change effort. As each of the three communities selected were nested within a broader community change initiative, this was also meant as a mechanism to strengthen the community change initiatives. Our data found that communities often did not treat this pool of funding as distinct from their two-generation funding. As an example, in the first year of the SCI evaluation (2015), only 10 percent of our survey respondents agreed that their community had strategically used the 25 percent of Casey Foundation funding that can be used for work outside of two-generation,⁶ and the "25 percent" concept was

³ Casey Foundation. (2014). Request for Proposals: Evaluation of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Role as Strategic Co-Investor in the Family Centered Community Change Demonstration.

⁴ The Costs of Coordinating Two-Generation Programs (2021). The Urban Institute. Available here: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/costs-coordinating-two-generation-programs>

⁵ The lead organization was sometimes referred to as a backbone organization. This report uses lead organization throughout, with the understanding that the original model referred to backbone organizations.

⁶ FCCC Strategic Co-Investor Evaluation Pulse Check Findings (2015). TCC Group. (Unpublished).

subsequently dropped from discussions of the FCCC approach. As communities were also given a budget range for their grant requests, some purposefully chose to use their entire pool of funding specifically on the two-generation work, as they felt their requested range was lower than what they would have applied for openly. While communities did seem to make

available FCCC resources to organizations beyond those involved in two-generation programming, the extent to which they did so was unclear because they were generally not explicit about doing so. This represents a missed opportunity to better situate the two-generation work within the broader community change effort.

1. Flexible Grant Funding

Considerations for Other Funders

- **Use funds to strengthen community partnerships.** Funders interested in supporting place-based work as an SCI will benefit from providing grantees with funding that can be explicitly used towards building or deepening partnerships, including compensating time for collaboration.
- **Be present with grantees.** This could include spending time in-person with staff (including staff outside of the lead organization) and being particularly careful to understand the implicit and explicit needs that grantees are communicating.
- **Encourage a collaborative budgeting process that includes partners in the process.** The way the community approaches the grant application is both an indicator and an influencer of the amount of trust among local partners. Funders should encourage collaboration in the budgeting process and pay attention to whatever approach the community organizations take towards the grant application; this can be one data point to better understand local relationships.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Be explicit in the resources that the target programming brings to broader community change efforts.** Flexible funding is a valuable tool to realize nested integration rather than nested isolation when it is used in ways that clearly benefit the broader community change effort. In order to take full advantage of nesting, communities will benefit by making explicit the way that flexible resources are supporting the broader community change efforts. If they are not explicit, the flexible funds are likely to be viewed through the specific program lens, which leads to a siloing of the effort.
- **Recognize that flexible funding is an opportunity for creativity and leverage.** Grantees with less experience working with flexible funders may feel uncomfortable. As a result, they may look to the funder for more directive guidance or feel a need to be overly descriptive in how they plan to use funds. Recognizing the flexible funding as an opportunity for ambiguity and creativity will enable grantees to better leverage the underlying value of flexible funding – its flexibility.
- **Engage in collaborative budgeting.** Communities that develop a strong collaborative decision-making process are able to engage in thoughtful trade-off conversations about how best to use funding. The budgeting process is a concrete mechanism with which to practice such collaborative decision-making. Partner tables that provide ongoing space for conversation among engaged organizations may be a good avenue to bring in budgeting conversations.
- **Understand different funding needs partners have.** Some partners may be operating at full organizational capacity, with robust staff and systems in-place at their organizations to be fully engaged in collaborative work. Others may be struggling with capacity issues and need a baseline level of support to help create organizational stability before they can fully collaborate. Communities should take care to identify the needs partners have in each area, as well as what supports, if any, can be provided through collaborative grant funding.

2. High-Touch Staffing Approach

The SCI approach for FCCC was designed to have program officers be very high touch but still operate at a national level.⁷ The belief was that to effectively invest in local places, the Casey Foundation would need to have a deep and sustained understanding and relationship with community partners; to be a good co-investor, they would need to bring national resources, including funding and ideas. Further, their active presence in the community would serve as an additional catalyst for local relationships to develop.

The program officer for FCCC transitioned a few times over the course of the initiative, with the expectation that one program officer would oversee the work of all three communities. The first program officer was engaged in the site selection process and was the initial point of contact for the selected communities. When this program officer left the Foundation in 2013 shortly after site selection, a new program officer was hired from outside of the Foundation; this was the program officer's first role within a foundation. In the early years of the effort, and especially during the readiness phase (the first two years of the grant), the program officer was extremely hands-on. This person attended most community meetings in-person and had frequent one-on-one check-ins with grantees and local funders. Because two of the communities had no prior relationship with the Casey Foundation, there were also efforts to invite the Foundation into community work being done more broadly, which the program officer often chose to participate in (e.g., neighborhood association meetings or community collaborative meetings).

As time passed, the program officer became less deeply involved. Having established strong relationships with community staff (both senior staff and many frontline staff), the program officer attended more events through phone or would opt-out of events (or communities would choose not to extend invitations), and check-ins were often conducted at a higher-level. The change in level of involvement seemed to be mutually agreeable, with a shared understanding that the same level of on-the-ground presence was less important as the program work matured. While not necessarily related (see finding below), there were also several transitions in the program officer role starting in 2016.

Finally, it is important to note that FCCC included a number of technical assistance providers in various capacities in addition to the program officer role. This included additional Casey Foundation staff as well as external consultants who were consistently involved with communities. The ongoing support included communications, data and evaluation, Communities of Practice, and more. This meant that the communities had a significant number of touchpoints that were perceived as Foundation touchpoints. Furthermore, with staff transitions sometimes taking place with the external consultants, this led to some difficulty in helping community staff who were not deeply involved in evaluation planning or data work keep track of the roles of individuals sent to the community on behalf of the Casey Foundation.

Evaluation Insights

A high-touch approach generated goodwill and value for communities – especially when starting out. All three communities took advantage of their close relationship with the program officer, using conversations to vet ideas and strategies and to ask for advice and resources. This was particularly true during the piloting phase when communities were thinking strategically about collaboration, two-generation approaches, and nesting. Having a program officer who was available for scheduled and ad-hoc calls, as well as who was often in the community, was a way to ensure that the program officer was perceived as a resource to be relied on during the piloting phase and led to strong feelings that the Foundation and its consultants were effective collaborators in their community (see Figure 1). One concern with using the lead organization model for funding arrangements is that it will limit direct access to the funder. As seen in Figure 1, nearly two-thirds of survey respondents felt they had direct access to the Foundation during those early years of intense on-the-ground presence; as the touch became less pronounced, this number generally started to drop.

The high-touch approach was the linchpin that shifted grantee/grantor relationships into a true partnership. The funder/grantee power dynamic is so engrained that it takes a lot of work to overcome it. In the first year or so of FCCC, partners engaged with the Foundation in a more traditional

⁷ An initial benchmarking report on place-based grantmaking conducted by TCC Group in 2016 found that place-based efforts approach grantee relationships with different levels of depth and intensity. It identified several staffing models employed by foundations, including:

- Local staffing: The effort can be staffed locally by a foundation staff person/program officer that is on the ground in the local community.
- Full-time staff model: It can be staffed from a foundation office located somewhere outside the target community or communities, but with a staff person that is dedicated full or near full-time to the initiative. In multi-community initiatives, this might mean that there is one staff person for each community or that one staff person covers multiple communities (perhaps responsible for the whole initiative).
- Part-time staff model: The initiative is staffed more lightly by foundation staff that have a responsibility for multiple programs.

funder-grantee relationship, and then something shifted. In early 2015, data showed that more than half of survey respondents felt the Foundation was too directive in local actions.⁸ But a change was imminent, driven by at least three factors:

- 1. Humanizing the program officer.** Having a program officer who often would carpool with grantees, or engage in purely social activities, helped facilitate group development processes (e.g., storming and norming), leading to a shift from funder to partner.
- 2. Grantees taking a leap of boldness.** Grantees grew increasingly comfortable sharing challenges related to the work. But the dynamic really started to shift when they pushed back on funder behaviors that they felt were not the most effective. It put the “co” in co-investor. For example, at one point, communities pushed back on an outcomes-focused evaluation and successfully argued that any evaluation that shared outcomes also needed to have a major focus on community context. This led to a shift in how the outcomes evaluation organized its work.
- 3. Clear messaging of top-to-bottom “open door” policy.** There was a proactive push by lead organizations to ensure that other partners felt comfortable reaching out directly to the funder. Interestingly, partners rarely took this direct approach in later years, but knowing it was there was sufficient.

The percent of survey respondents that felt the foundation was too directive dropped to 10 percent in 2016, and data from our first community visit report at the end of 2015 included this representative comment: “The amount of time that [the program officer] is able to spend in each community is seen as embodying the Foundation’s commitment to being an

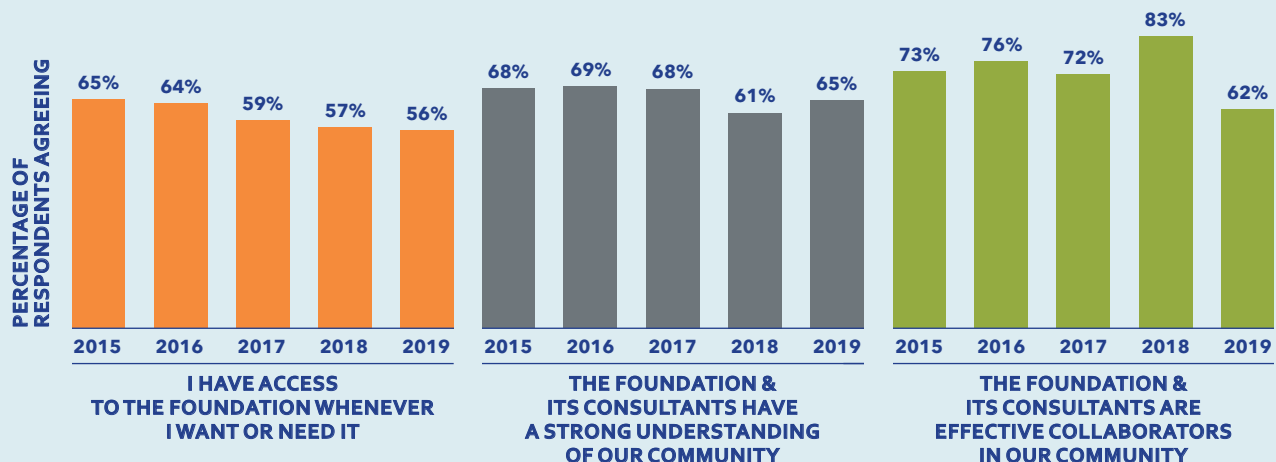
embedded member of FCCC work, as well as allowing [the program officer] the opportunity to build strong relationships with local actors.”

Having a Foundation program officer on the ground expedited building relationships with other funders. The high-touch nature of the approach meant that the program officer was often visiting the communities in-person. This also allowed visits to be used to build relationships with other local funders in a way that was perceived by these local funders as authentic, perhaps because of the number of touch points or the informal ways (e.g., lunches, coffee) that relationships were often developed. This was evident in interview data collected from local funders, which often evidenced warm relationships and specific examples of interactions with the Casey Foundation’s program officers.

Staffing transitions were weathered well, with limited negative effects. One concern about a high-touch approach is that it will be overly dependent on a single program officer, and another is the potential of burnout for the program officer serving this role. During the FCCC demonstration, the Foundation had four different individuals in the program officer role. This required partners to continually rebuild relationships with their new Casey Foundation liaison. Interview data over the years indicated that the trust in the funder generally carried over, particularly the closer the relationship that one had with the program officer. For example, transitions seemed to be easiest for the community leads, somewhat easy for two-generation partners, and led to some confusion for individuals and organizations (including local funders) who were not deeply involved in the two-generation work. Program officers who were transitioning out of the role also took care to work with the incoming program officer to help with smooth transitions whenever possible, and interviewees did not cite any negative impacts the transitions had on the work.

⁸ FCCC Strategic Co-Investor Evaluation Pulse Check Findings (2016). TCC Group. Unpublished.

Figure 1: Perceptions of Casey Foundation Relationships



2. High-Touch Staffing Approach

Considerations for Other Funders

- **This approach to work can be extremely resource intensive.** The program officers managing this work were often stretched thin, not just responsible for managing three different grants but also expected to have a deep knowledge of partner dynamics. New funders should account for the amount of work a program officer would need to devote to this type of intervention.
- **Some level of grantee/grantor dynamics will likely always remain.** Though staff at the Casey Foundation tried their best to move beyond traditional dynamics and into a partnership, it is unrealistic to expect grantees to forget the power that grantors have over their funding. Bringing in explicit acknowledgement of funding decisions, rather than ignoring them, may bring the relationship closer to the ideal of a partnership.
- **Foundation staff will be expected to provide value beyond dollars and reputation.** Local partners relied on their Casey Foundation program officers to have advice, strategic input, connections, and good political insight around how to best advance their work. A program officer without a sufficient foundational base may be unable to provide the needed level of worth from the Foundation.
- **Staffing transitions can be mediated by ensuring that multiple foundation staff build relationships with communities.** Allowing for more foundation staff to engage with communities can ensure that the relationship between the foundation and community isn't dependent on one individual. This can also allow communities to benefit from the expertise of multiple foundation staff. Foundations can also take time to onboard new foundation staff in-person, to give them an opportunity to build deeper relationships.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **The community needs to show up as a “co” and not as a “sub.”** The SCI approach requires a reorientation in the thinking of the funder-grantee relationship. It requires a community lead that is bold and comfortable giving and receiving pushback.
- **Community leads need to cultivate collective leadership.** There is a risk that the high-touch approach concentrates the relationship in the hands of the lead organizations. The community lead cannot be overly protective of their individual relationship with the funder at the expense of the collaborative. This requires actively encouraging partner organizations to reach out to funders directly if they feel it would be useful. At the same time, the lead organization needs to have sufficient capacity to keep other partners informed of conversations happening with the Foundation and sharing back as appropriate.

3. Non-Directive Relationship

Building on a recommendation that emerged from an evaluation of the Foundation’s previous work with Making Connections, another place-based effort, the FCCC non-directive relationship was intended to allow local context to drive the design and approach to two-generation programming and adapt to emergent challenges.⁹ The SCI approach would resemble more of a coaching model that provides a supportive environment, encouragement, and works to clarify and refine the ideas that emerge from the community. This meant that the Foundation would not dictate a specific two-generation program design for communities to use but rather would allow the three communities to develop a model of two-generation that worked best for their communities (even to the point of not being prescriptive about the use of the term two-generation).

In practice, this led to the Foundation being at the table for most conversations related to two-generation work (though less so with time) but often erring on the side of providing suggestions, questions, or feedback rather than explicitly stating preferences for any specific model of work. This lack of direct input extended to elements surrounding the two-generation work, such as governing structure, with the Foundation offering insights but rarely mandating a specific approach.

Given the lack of community understanding of how much, or how little, direction would be given, there were often blurry edges where it wasn’t clear to any stakeholders if the Foundation should be providing direct input or not; the Foundation chose to err on the side of less input rather than more, particularly in the early years.

Evaluation Insights

A non-directive relationship allowed communities to have deep ownership of the work – if they were willing to do so. The three communities did not receive any mandate from the Casey Foundation about how they should implement their two-generation strategies. Rather, each community had to figure out the approach that would work best for its community residents. When the two-generation integration hit challenges, grantees were mostly responsible for identifying these and creating solutions. For example, one community initially

created a fully consensus-based governance structure that seriously slowed down decision-making. Despite this community’s struggle, the Casey Foundation did not proactively offer advice on a more effective process for making decisions. The more the communities were willing to step into this leadership role, the more they fully owned two-generation work and embedded it into their organizational infrastructures in a way that benefitted sustainability. Data from site visits showed that communities that remained passive and waited for the Foundation to provide guidance had more struggles with work stalling and struggling to figure out effective governance and programmatic structures.

Without an externally imposed program design, there may be a long onramp to a clear program model. Non-direction is not a common approach among funders, nor is the language intuitive. In the first years of FCCC, communities sometimes perceived that the Foundation had two-generation knowledge and/or insights on the FCCC structure that they were not actively providing. Conversely, the Foundation saw FCCC as an opportunity to explore new ideas and nuance to two-generation approaches. This mismatch of expectations around the program model design led to some frustration on both parts. As seen in Figure 2, clarity of the two-generation model hovered around only half of survey participants even through the last year of the program. There are also some data to suggest that the lack of this overarching model also led to some limits on learning across the three communities, as discussed in later sections.

Figure 2:
Clarity of the Two-generation Model



⁹ Community Change: Lessons from Making Connections (2013). The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available here: <https://www.aecf.org/resources/community-change-lessons-from-making-connections/>

Both funder and grantee need to be aligned on non-direction. Throughout FCCC, the Foundation largely determined what it would and would not give direct guidance about. Evidence indicates that in the early years, communities both desired and would have benefitted from more direction in terms of a two-generation program model (something about which the Foundation was perceived by communities to have rich experience and expertise) and technical assistance needs.

Non-direction does not mean that the funder should set aside its own values. In 2015, race and ethnic equity and inclusion emerged as an internal priority at the Casey Foundation and was retrofitted to the Foundation's existing work. The mechanism for the Foundation to promote its own values into emerging work, while using a SCI approach, was not well articulated, and so when it brought these things forward, in several instances it felt like an imposition. Deciding in partnership with the communities that the values would lead the work or making these values clear in advance during the grant proposal phase may have been a better approach.

Race and ethnic equity and inclusion (REEI)

The Casey Foundation prioritized REEI in its approach to two-generation work and provided both formal and informal technical assistance to communities to encourage prioritization of REEI principals. Survey data continually showed that while communities felt REEI was a value guiding their two-generation work, it was challenging to operationalize the value and to create change. For example, in 2019, survey data show:

83 percent agreement that REEI are core considerations of how we approach two-generation work.

44 percent agreement that the community is effective at addressing issues of equity.

51 percent agreement that the community is effective at addressing issues of diversity.

60 percent agreement that two-generation partners are effective at addressing issues of equity.

66 percent agreement that two-generation partners are effective addressing issues of diversity.

Several of these items were asked over multiple years, with no substantial shift in the numbers.

3. Non-Directive Relationship

Considerations for Other Funders

- **Working effectively in a non-directive approach requires a unique skill set.** The program officer leading the work needs to have the ability to allow grantees to make decisions that perhaps are out of alignment with the program officer's or foundation's view while also remaining a committed partner of the work. It also requires the ability to build a learning environment where all parties are willing and able to engage.
- **Consider framing things by offering a range of different options to choose from and allowing grantees to select those things that are of greatest interest or need.** Rather than sitting back and being fully non-directive, funders can provide considerable value by offering a range of observations and opportunities based on what they are seeing. This remains true to non-direction, as it doesn't say do this or that but also provides the richness of skills and insights that come with being an active participant.
- **The funder should be explicit from the beginning of the engagement about the values that are important to them that they want included.** Funders should be encouraged to bring their own values to the table as part of the SCI approach. However, funders cannot expect that values that show up after initial terms are negotiated will be equally shared by their co-investors. An optimal pathway might be to co-create a set of values to guide the work.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Be proactive in soliciting ideas and insights from the funder.** Funders may not realize the concerns that communities have around perceived expectations. Further, funders may be reluctant to offer insights in order to not "overstep." By creating spaces to explicitly and concretely solicit ideas, information, and feedback from funders, grantees can better take advantage of the insights funders might be able to bring.
- **Embrace a learning mindset to model development.** There is unlikely to be a clear answer to the complex issues facing partners in a strategic co-investor approach. In this context, embracing a learning mindset can shift the conversation from needing to be directive or non-directive to a co-creative relationship. A co-creative relationship jointly values exploring where there are challenges and opportunities rather than declaring something as right or wrong.

4. Assumption That Work is Done in Collaboration with Partners

The FCCC approach assumed a couple of important aspects of a collaborative design. First, the assumption was that multiple organizations would provide resources to the effort rather than being entirely reliant on one funder. Funders often seek to “leverage” their funds by attracting additional resources to the table, and the SCI approach makes this assumption explicit. Second, the SCI approach was not prescriptive about the form of local collaboration but assumed a role of providing resources needed to enable that collaboration while other investors (including grantees) provided additional resources for implementation. Rather than being the sole funder, the Casey Foundation wanted to sit at a decision-making table that included representatives from community organizations working on FCCC, community organizations from the larger community change initiative, a variety of local funders, and community members, parents, and families.

What this looked like in practice differed for each of the three communities, but there was a general approach that bore similarities to a Collective Impact model, particularly the element of having one organization take the lead in coordination of the collaborative effort (lead organization) and establishing a shared approach to measurement.³⁰ Figure 3 shows that, in general, each community had an overall community lead that coordinated partnerships from adult and child service organizations. There were varied levels of perceived hierarchy between the community lead and the partnering organizations. Partnering organizations worked on FCCC, but some also worked on efforts of the community change initiative outside of the FCCC umbrella.

³⁰ Kania, John, and Mark Kramer. "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 36–41.

Figure 3: FCCC Collaboration Structure



Evaluation Insights

There are many different stakeholders to be brought in under the umbrella of “co” investors in the strategic co-investor approach that go beyond co-funders. During FCCC, the specific definition of a co-investor was left open, leaving many stakeholders to view co-investors as co-funders – those contributing explicit dollars to the work. Each community did build a model around co-funders (M&T Bank in Buffalo; Weinland Park Funders Collaborative in Columbus; and United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County), and there was some engagement of additional funders over the course of the Initiative. When viewed through that lens, the role of Casey as the primary funder led communities to worry about how they would sustain the work after the grant period. Survey data in the last years of the program showed that only 23 percent of respondents agreed that two-generation work was not overly dependent on any one funder, and over half expressed serious concerns about the sustainability of the two-generation work in their community.²¹

However, the evaluation indicated that co-funding was an overly narrow interpretation of a co-investor for the SCI approach. Co-investors showed up in a variety of ways, including:

- **In-kind resources: Many partners brought their own organizational resources to the table in a way that far exceeded grant funding.** For example, in the early years in Columbus, a childcare center based in the neighborhood footprint that often had an extensive waitlist for seats allowed FCCC to reserve a number of slots for full-time, high-quality childcare for FCCC children. As evidenced by the Urban Institute’s cost-study,²² these were important investment contributions towards the success of the work.
- **Time and ideas:** A variety of stakeholders, including FCCC partners and those within the broader community change initiative, contributed their time and ideas towards helping the two-generation program model advance. This included partner meetings, relationship building, and participation in technical assistance. As noted earlier, while some of this time was compensated, some was uncompensated.²³

- **Parents and local resident participation:** FCCC worked, with varying degrees of success, to make good on previous place-based recommendations about promoting resident and parent engagement.²⁴ Parents provided time and energy to both receiving program services (an investment in its own right) and contributing to program development through convenings, trainings, and affinity groups. Despite some efforts, there was wide agreement that the effective engagement of parents and local residents as co-investors was not sufficiently developed, nor was it developed as early as might be optimal.²⁵

Pre-existing funder infrastructure made it easier for the Foundation to be at the table as a collaborator. Communities that had an existing mechanism for funders to come together had already built a natural place for the Foundation to come to be one of many. At these tables, the Casey Foundation was able to get up to speed on community work and build trusting relationships with peer funders.

There is a need for ongoing attention to the “glue” of collaborative work. In this context, glue refers to the intangible bonds that facilitate messy collaborative work. The space and resources to generate this glue is often missing. The FCCC approach, with a deliberate planning phase to enable relationships to be built, assumed that the flexible funding, responsive technical assistance, a high-touch staffing approach, and a non-directive relationship would create an environment that would catalyze strong relationships. Once established, there appeared to be an unspoken assumption that the glue would remain permanently sticky by virtue of success in working together. The evaluation found that this was only partially true. The ever-changing nature of partnerships (new people, new organizations, new project aspects, etc.) meant that attention to nurturing relationships was needed in an ongoing way. The high-touch staffing model appeared to be an enabler of collaborative development in the beginning, but that showed signs of waning influence in later years.²⁶ By involving multiple people from each community at ongoing FCCC convenings, conducting a partnership assessment, and providing ongoing funding, the SCI approach recognized the need to continue to nourish the partnerships.²⁷

²¹ TCC Group FCCC Strategic Co-Investor Evaluation Pulse Check Findings 2018 and 2019, unpublished.

²² For more information on costs and compensation associated with FCCC, see Urban Institute’s report, *The Costs of Coordinating Two-Generation Programs* (2021). Available here: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/costs-coordinating-two-generation-programs>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2013). *Community Change: Lessons from Making Connections*.

²⁵ For more information on this topic, see *Developing Two-Generation Approaches in Communities* (2021). The Urban Institute. Available here: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/developing-two-generation-approaches-communities>

²⁶ There was not sufficient data to indicate why the influence was waning. A couple of hypotheses include that it was tied to the reduction in the depth of the high-touch model that happened in later years or that as sites became more comfortable with the Casey Foundation as a co-investor and the end of the funding relationship was more prominent on the horizon, there was a correlated reduction in their unique position to provide the glue.

²⁷ For a more detailed examination of the partnerships developed through FCCC, see McDaniel, M. Anderson, T. Okoli, A., Popkin, S., Coffey, A. & Gwam, Peace. (2021). “Developing Place-Based Two-Generation Partnerships: Lessons from Three Community Change Initiative Partnerships.” Urban Institute.

Systemic changes can lessen the amount of effort needed to maintain collaboration. The nature of the collaboration appears to have an impact on how much “maintenance glue” is needed. At the end of FCCC, evidence indicated that the partnership to implement the program (implementing two-generation) would not be self-sustaining. Instead, it required continual support to keep the partners working effectively together. However, there was one condition that did appear to create self-sustaining partnerships: policy change. The areas where communities were able to create structural changes to norms, behaviors, and policies exhibited a shift in how work was done (rather than what work was done) that seemed to sustain the collaboration. For example, the evaluation found that regardless of what happens with the formal FCCC partnership in San Antonio, individual FCCC partners have done things that should provide some longevity to the two-generation work. Interviewees noted a shift in the community services from a focus on individuals to a focus on the family. The commitment goes beyond lip-service, as evidenced by a few select examples. The City of San Antonio has begun to systematically incorporate two-generation ideas into its funding opportunities and has started a two-generation learning community. In a major policy addition, the City included two-generation principles (“statements of belief”) as a standard part of contracts with youth service providers. Further, the San Antonio Housing Authority has integrated two-generation strategies into its resident service program, and one of the school districts is making space available in a school for a “Dual Generation hub.”⁴⁹ In addition to public institutions, other organizations have also embedded two-generation into their work. For example, the local United Way has incorporated the two-generation model into their new funding approach and is expanding its neighborhood footprint to include the Westside of San Antonio. These embedded changes led the FCCC group to officially agree to continue the relationship after the Casey Foundation’s funding ended.

There is potential for community leads to become gatekeepers to the Foundation, leading to the perception that others in the community are less important to the partnership. For two of the three communities, the initial concept of broader collaboration reduced into a relationship mainly between Foundation staff and one or two lead individuals on the community side. For those communities, this led to a perception that rather than supporting an entire

Dual Generation Partnership in San Antonio: A “community-wide solution that coordinates the expertise of its partners who bring decades of experience serving children and families to help them find safe housing, education, childcare and employment.”¹⁸

two-generation initiative, the Foundation was mostly funding one partner who could implement a two-generation model as they wished. In all three communities, there was a perception at some point in the process that the community lead was acting as a “gatekeeper” through which all other interactions with the Casey Foundation had to be funneled. One consultant working for FCCC described a phenomenon where the Casey Foundation would partner with the community lead while the non-community leads acted as contractors. Given that communities were able to work through this phenomenon at various points, it does not seem that this is an inevitable result; rather, it seems to indicate the benefit of ensuring that communities have relationships with multiple stakeholders at the Foundation.

To meaningfully integrate community voice, work should start in the planning phases. While there was always some interest in having community members provide input and guidance into two-generation work, the mechanisms to do this were not created upfront. Rather than having formal mechanisms that included community residents at the planning table (e.g., a drop-in session for residents to look at the grant application and proposed budget and provide feedback), these voices were often brought in later years. There was also a fair amount of blurriness between community engagement and parent engagement, with parents often acting as proxies for the broader universe of community residents. Parent involvement at FCCC convenings is a good example of how parent engagement worked in practice: in the early years, parents were not invited to these convenings; by the end of FCCC, parents were responsible for organizing convening sessions on topics that they identified as important.

¹⁸ Dual Generation Partnership website. Available here: <https://uwsatx.org/dualgen/>

⁴⁹ The FCCC partnership in San Antonio was called the Dual Generation Partnership.

“ I don’t know if there’s an actual approach for engaging families for [our FCCC work]...There’s not one shared approach, and I think it would make the work more effective.” — FCCC GRANTEE

4. Assumption That Work is Done in Collaboration with Partners

Considerations for Other Funders

- **Taking a broad definition of “co-investors” can enable greater collective ownership and help the funder remember to continually nourish an array of relationships.** Ideally, partners – including the nonprofit organizations but also community residents and family participants – would be brought into the work as authentic partners and decision-makers from the early stages of the two-generation work – and through a process that is optimized for family engagement. To do this, grantees will likely need some upfront capacity to engage communities and work in a more participatory way as well as explicit guidance on how to capture some of the important resources that non-funding co-investors bring to the table. Funders will need to be deliberate about ensuring both individual and group engagement with a stakeholder group that goes beyond a central organization.
- **A focus on systems and infrastructure work can enhance sustainability of relationships.** Nesting programming is a good way to start the institutionalization process, but it is not sufficient. As the program model gets developed, identify ways the program changes how things are done early in the process (institutionalization) instead of just whether things get done. Encouraging this mindset shift among community members sets an expectation that the work is not about implementing a program but about shifting the way work is done, which can improve the odds of longer-term sustainability.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Have a clearly defined partnership model with clear collaborative decision-making.** Taking the time to ensure that this is developed (or in place) allows for a more effective partnership model. Otherwise, the partnership can show up more like a contractor or vendor arrangement and not as a true collaboration.
- **Have a clear community engagement plan from the outset.** Communities will benefit from a history of community engagement and collaboration. If it is not already in place, it will take considerable effort to make sure there is a trusted approach and plan that lead to effective engagement.

5. Funder as a Thought Partner, Sounding Board & Provider of On-Demand Technical Assistance

While the non-directive relationship component of the SCI approach set a deference to local partners regarding program implementation, the goal was not disengagement. As a co-investor, the Casey Foundation assumed that its role as a funder was more than just funding – they brought ideas, experience, perspective, and the ability to provide capacity support. This was thought to involve a fair amount of informal guidance, collaborative brainstorming, and other methods of helping communities problem solve, without the funder suggesting the solution. The Foundation also committed to providing responsive technical assistance support based largely on requests from the local community.

As described in the introduction, the Foundation provided an array of non-monetary support. They established a Community of Practice for the three communities that was meant to enhance learning across sites. The Community of Practice convened a series of affinity groups meant to accelerate peer learning (including site leads, frontline staff, and data & learning staff) and facilitated regular in-person convenings meant to deepen relationships within and across the three sites. Driven by a shared learning agenda, there were ongoing webinar series that were open to FCCC grantees as well as staff at organizations in the broader community change initiative. The Foundation also provided customized consulting or resource support, frequently at the direct request of communities, including around data, trauma-informed care, strategic planning, racial and ethnic equity and inclusion, and workforce readiness.

Evaluation Insights

A major asset of working with the Casey Foundation was its ability to bring in national expertise to inform the work in the three communities. The Casey Foundation has deep knowledge of two-generation work, including having networks with other organizations doing this work well. Further, they have relationships with an array of technical assistance providers that they could match up with emergent community needs. The ability to pull on this pre-existing network and

experience allowed the Foundation to continually deliver trainings that were seen as high quality and led by expert facilitators. Finding a balance between the value that a SCI funder brings through the role of a thought partner and the principle of non-directive partnership can be challenging. For example, communities consistently found the insights from the Foundation to be useful and, on occasion, indicated that they wished the Foundation would be more proactive in sharing them.

Fully on-demand technical assistance fell short as a concept.

The Foundation was generally perceived as being responsive to community requests for technical assistance, though there were instances where communities indicated they requested something to which they didn't feel the Foundation was responsive (in the mind of Foundation staff, this was often because they felt these requests sat outside of the two-generation umbrella). However, the concept fell short of expectations. Early on, the Casey Foundation operated in a fully responsive mode to community technical assistance needs, expecting them to be able to correctly identify what resources would be most helpful to them in addressing a certain issue. However, communities often had difficulty identifying their technical assistance needs and expressed an interest in having the Foundation be more proactive in suggesting assistance topics. At other times, requests would take several months to be met because of scheduling issues with technical service providers, at which point the original issue would no longer be relevant. In other instances, the Foundation essentially mandated technical assistance in areas that it felt were important, including Results-Based Accountability and racial and ethnic equity and inclusion (REEI). In these instances, the technical assistance was sometimes perceived to be top-down; and Casey Foundation staff acknowledged that one of the difficulties in remaining non-directive was the fact that the Foundation itself was in constant motion with its own work and strategic direction. For example, as the Foundation solidified its own commitment to REEI, it sought to more actively bring it into the FCCC work. The non-directive relationship section includes a recommendation for addressing this in the considerations for other funders.

There was a variety of technical assistance and support offerings that were generally well-received. The Casey Foundation supported consultants to provide technical assistance, operate Communities of Practice, and organize convenings and ongoing webinars available to all grantees. Convenings often included a visit to a two-generation project and the opportunity to learn from others pursuing similar strategies, and they were valued as a way to learn from peers rather than from formal trainers. Ongoing webinars were seen as both a helpful way to share information with organizations involved in implementing the FCCC work and as a way to engage the broader community change initiative, which was always invited to participate.

While participants enjoyed technical assistance and support offerings, the offerings could have been better streamlined, and they needed a more concerted focus on implementation. Nearly every year, qualitative data indicated that participants in all three communities felt overloaded with technical assistance and that they had limited ability to synthesize and apply lessons to their work. Quantitative data indicated that participants did not have a clear vision of the overall learning agenda. Collectively, these led to participants learning about new topics, but they frequently did not have the resources necessary to change their existing practices or implement this new learning. Many interviewees over the course of FCCC noted it would be more conducive to cover fewer topics but offer more personalized assistance in follow-through. This was especially true for topics such as racial and ethnic equity and inclusion (REEI), about which participants reported needing more support to help them understand how to better and more authentically integrate this lens into their work.

5. Funder as a Thought Partner, Sounding Board & Provider of On-Demand Technical Assistance

Considerations for Other Funders

- **Technical assistance should be assessed for absorptive capacity and focus on implementation.** The learning agenda needs to be sufficiently precise so that participants have the bandwidth to make change. This probably means limiting the number of topics and having a strong emphasis on implementation support. Communities may need a deeper level of engagement that focuses on how to change behaviors and practices.
- **There is a role for both peer- and funder-led technical assistance.** While funder-led technical assistance that brings in formal providers to train on specific topics is valuable, there is also value in the types of information that only peers can share with each other. Funders should consider both funder- and peer-led technical assistance as helpful tools for improving the work.
- **Funders can bring forward technical assistance options without being overly directive.** Funders need to balance the offering of technical assistance with the level of direction. For example, a funder may want to present two to four areas for deeper work, and then the community can choose its top priority. An approach that includes some space for opting into technical assistance could lead to greater absorption and implementation.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Take control of your learning agenda.** Communities have a critical understanding of bandwidth and the strategy necessary to make programs work in their local context. Being strategic about who participates and in what topics will ensure that technical assistance is not a wasted investment. For example, including a less involved partner in a high-profile convening may be a way to deepen the relationship. Or, a learning topic may sound really interesting, but it may cause a distraction from a current focus.
- **Be vulnerable in your assessment of need.** Under the SCI approach, the funder is interested in collective success more than individual accountability. If you suspect gaps in your knowledge or know that you have a challenge, being explicit with the funder will yield opportunities to get additional insights and targeted support. This approach is often quite different from typical human service funding, especially for communities that typically rely on government funding.

6. Facilitation of Networking Across Communities

Smaller in scale than some previous efforts, FCCC focused on three different local collaboratives: Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, San Antonio Dual Generation Partnership, and the Weinland Park Collaborative (Columbus, OH). As each of the three communities was involved in developing two-generation work, cross-community learning was seen as an opportunity to amplify learning and advance the work of each community. The specific two-generation models could be different – what was important for the SCI approach was that they would have a similar vision for a desired end state, even if the pathway to get there varied. Networking was intended to benefit participants both at this cross-community level and at the personal level, allowing staff involved in developing and implementing FCCC to build trusting relationships with each other as peers.

As mentioned earlier, there was a Community of Practice that held nearly all of the cross-community relationships and work. This included the yearly in-person convening and several affinity groups for staff across levels. While individuals were also encouraged to reach out to each other as needed, there was no mechanism to track this or measure the depth of relationships.

Evaluation Insights

Role-specific affinity groups provided a concrete way to facilitate connection and peer learning. The Learning Network organized affinity groups for staff with specific roles. For example, there were affinity groups of frontline staff, community leads, and staff involved in data & learning. Staff involved in FCCC for all three communities were invited to participate in relevant affinity groups, and participants had space to inform the agenda. They were also expected to contribute their insights during affinity group meetings. These targeted learning opportunities were well-received, and participants generally felt they were a good use of time. The frontline staff affinity group is of particular note, as this is a group that is often left out of collaborative infrastructure. The group had an especially positive perception of the value of meeting together.

Participants expressed a desire for a more confidential space for cross-community conversation. While facilitated networking has clear benefits, community staff sometimes requested time to talk directly to their peers without any involvement from others (e.g., Casey Foundation staff or consultants). Some of this happened organically at social times tied to the in-person convenings, and site leads eventually developed their own quarterly calls to check-in informally. Towards the end of the initiative, there was a push to have some space for site leads that was facilitated by the staff organizing the Communities of Practice, but without any Foundation staff present. Having space for conversation without the Foundation present was thought to provide an avenue to air more complex or challenging issues without having to worry about funder perceptions, and having active facilitation and a set time on the schedule may have been seen as beneficial to grantees compared to a more informal style.

A natural tendency to compare across communities caused some tension in cross-community relationships. In order to facilitate learning, early evaluation data was shared collectively. For example, a graph might include the data of Buffalo, Columbus, and San Antonio side-by-side. While technical assistance providers and evaluators would often caveat the findings with an acknowledgement of the unique contexts of the communities, it was easy to look at information and compare across communities. This led to some tensions between communities around whose work was considered valuable and why. Explicit pushback from communities against straightforward comparisons led to changes in the way information was shared.

6. Facilitation of Networking Across Communities

Considerations for Other Funders

- **Taking the funder and its perceptions out of the room can change peer learning.** Removing the funder's presence for networking and preventing the funder (or its consultants) from putting a hierarchy (whether real or perceived) on grantees can change the depth of relationships that grantees are able to build with each other. Taking care to establish cooperative rather than competitive relationships may also enhance the opportunity for communities to learn more deeply with each other.
- **Embedding values into the networking process is a way to ensure visibility.** When consultants began planning agendas that explicitly incorporated the values of FCCC, there was a perceived sense of greater unity to the work. Having funders – and consultants – lead with values, can be a useful way to embed values more deeply into the work.
- **Be careful around creating implicit or explicit hierarchies for communities.** Funders should take caution to keep in mind the unique context around each community rather than force them into a hierarchy focused on size, number of funders, or other directly comparable mechanisms.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Despite differences in local context and model, cross-community learning can be valuable.** There are some limitations on learning across different program models, most specifically around how to implement. However, the diversity also provides opportunities for spurring innovation and creative thinking that might be missed if the models were all the same.
- **Approach peer communities as companions rather than competitors.** The non-directive nature and nesting elements of SCI implicitly mean that direct comparisons across communities are difficult. Recognizing this, peer communities can be valuable allies in exploring program ideas and navigating funder dynamics; and maybe embracing a little bit of friendly competition can enhance your own community cohesion.

7. Nesting of a Focused Issue within a Broader Community Change Effort

Fundamental to the SCI approach is that the programmatic effort should not be established as a stand-alone effort, but rather it should be nested within an existing infrastructure. The Foundation described the basic hypothesis as follows:

“A national foundation participating as a strategic co-investor can bring a Foundation-designed [initiative]...into an existing community change effort in a way that simultaneously builds upon and strengthens the existing community change effort. It is our theory that the existing community change initiative will contribute to the success of the Two-Generation program in two ways: By providing an infrastructure of preexisting interagency relationships to undergird and facilitate the more intensive and intentional coordination of child- and adult-focused services required for Two-Gen programs; By providing services that promote residential stability among participating families. In turn, the Two-Generation program will contribute to the success of the community change effort by building the capacity of Two-Gen families to participate effectively in the local community change initiative, and by deepening the working relationships among local partners.”²⁰

FCCC required each proposed two-generation effort to be connected to a broader community change initiative. In two of the communities, the work was nested into federal Promise Neighborhood grants, while the third community nested its work into a more local community change effort organized by local funders, nonprofits, and residents. Each community was able to define their own approach and framing of the nesting arrangement.

This led to a range of different nesting approaches, from relatively loosely embedded (e.g., periodic updates at community change initiative meetings) to formal enough that new hires into the broader community change initiative were provided with an onboarding orientation and booklet related to FCCC work. Nesting was intended to contribute to the sustainability of the work as well as provide a pathway to resources provided by the Casey Foundation so that communities would have some benefit on broader community change initiative work outside of two-generation.

Evaluation Insights

Nesting a new initiative into a community change initiative with a broad mandate shows the most promise for the SCI approach. The nesting played out quite differently across each of the three FCCC communities. While all three communities had a clear community change initiative, the two Promise Neighborhood communities (Buffalo and San Antonio) had a much broader mandate within which to nest the two-generation work. It is worth unpacking each community individually:

- In Columbus, the primarily housing-related work of the Weinland Park Collaborative was a fairly narrowly defined community change initiative. This meant that FCCC was predisposed to operate more like a traditional program approach, because it was not nesting into other preexisting work, which freed it from any pre-existing requirements related to collaboration or community work. From its outset, FCCC (and the scale of funding) had an outsized influence on the community change initiative work. It had clear name recognition – essentially a branded two-generation initiative. In later years of the work, other elements related to neighborhood revitalization (e.g., housing development) became less salient and FCCC became essentially the only significant programmatic arm of the community change initiative.
- The nesting rationale in San Antonio was to bridge across various existing Promise Zone and Promise Neighborhood programs and fill the gaps those programs were not filling. In particular, the two-generation work was seen to address the issues of childcare and providing bridging services and navigation to families. For example, if a family entered the door of one nonprofit in the community, that nonprofit was expected to also directly connect the family to other services that it needed. Promise Neighborhoods opened the door to the community in the first two years, allowing the Dual Generation Partnership to gain credibility faster, and the metrics had set the ground rules for the FCCC work, allowing

²⁰ Casey Foundation. (2014). Request for Proposals: Evaluation of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Role as Strategic Co-Investor in the Family Centered Community Change Demonstration. Page 1.

internal FCCC team development. Even though two-generation work distinctly brought in a parent component, it was largely a siloed program initiative during the initial development years, with low name recognition and visibility. As FCCC solidified its approach and expanded its partner base, it grew in visibility. As the Promise Neighborhood began to phase out in 2017 and Promise Zone work shifted, two-generation work took on a more prominent and independent role. Now, despite an ongoing entity for the Promise Zone (San Antonio for Growth on the Eastside—SAGE), there appears to a weaker integration between the Dual Generation partnership and the work of the original broader community change initiatives.²¹

- In Buffalo, interviewees initially agreed that the two-generation approach allowed for much greater support and reinforcement of the overall Promise Neighborhood Initiative model. In particular, children were not going to be as poised for success in school if their families were faced with extreme economic and housing instability. From a very early point, there was evidence of name recognition and a greater community ownership for the two-generation work than other child-focused interventions in the Promise Zone, particularly due to its engagement of parents in some aspects of program design. But the two-generation work was also very siloed and operated with clear and distinct roles and responsibilities. By the end of FCCC, the two-generation work appeared to operate completely distinct from other community programs.

Data suggest that the Foundation’s technical assistance efforts improved the overall community change initiative, showing some tangible benefits to the nesting approach.

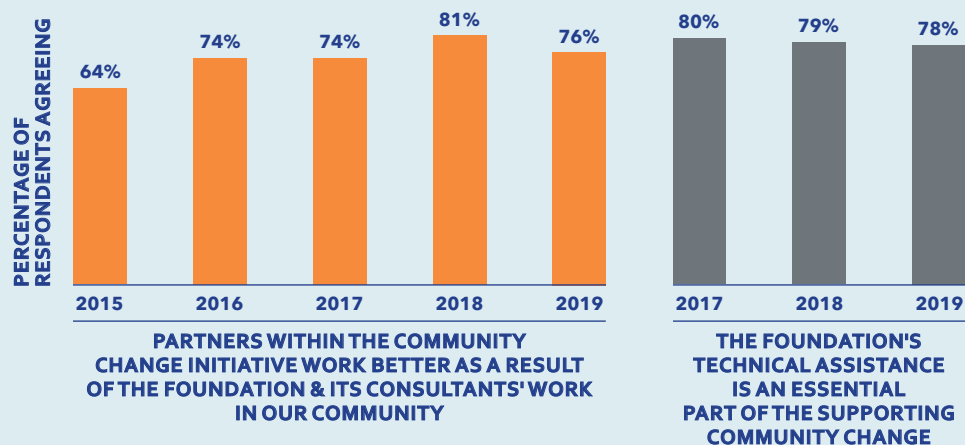
Providing forms of technical assistance that were open to members of the entire community change initiative was driven by an assumption that this work could benefit both the immediate two-generation initiatives and those not doing direct two-generation work. Data showed this to be the case. For example, a high number of survey respondents agreed that partners within the community change initiative worked better as a result of the Foundation and its consultants’ work in the community, and a consistently high percentage (78-80 percent) agreed that the Foundation’s technical assistance was an essential part of supporting the community change initiative work (see Figure 4).

The right level for nesting can be difficult to establish.

Taken too far at one end, nesting becomes a fully collaborative experience, where stakeholders are in endless meetings to share information and process updates. Space and time to do the actual programmatic work becomes limited. At the other extreme, nesting can be in name only: providing only limited updates and not truly embedding itself into any pre-existing infrastructure, with repercussions for the ultimate sustainability of the project. The correct balance requires a well-nuanced understanding of both the broader community change initiative and the pre-existing infrastructure that already exists within that initiative, as well as an ability to communicate clearly about work and models that are often evolving.

²¹ SAGE sits on the coordinating task force of the Eastside Education and Training Center where dual-generation offices and core Dual Generation partners sit on SAGE’s coordinating council. However, in both cases, the links to Dual Generation appeared relatively weak.

Figure 4: Benefits of the Foundation’s Work for the Community Change Initiative



“ I think it [two-generation] was the missing link. When you talk about building communities and changing the neighborhood, it’s all about relationships. And that can’t be built without focusing on the whole family.”

— FCCC COMMUNITY PARTNER

7. Nesting of a Focused Issue within a Broader Community Change Effort

Considerations for Other Funders

- **Encourage some level of nesting.** While it likely makes sense to allow communities to decide the depth of nesting appropriate for their communities, funders should encourage some level of nesting to ensure that the new work has ties to other work happening in the community and to take advantage of that infrastructure. This will likely have an added benefit related to longer-term sustainability of the work. There are myriad opportunities to explore for nesting. Some ideas include Community Needs Health Assessments by local hospitals; Community Improvement Plans; the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; federal programs; and the initiatives of other funders.
- **Nesting within a broader community change initiative is likely to yield more benefit than a narrowly defined community change initiative.** The initial data suggests that a community change initiative with a strong infrastructure and broad mandate provides the ideal environment to nest a new program concept in a natural and mutually beneficial way. Community partners may need help clarifying how nesting can be a net-positive for pre-existing community work and with identifying gaps in existing programming to ensure that the new programmatic is filling these gaps.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Communities with a strong collaboration are best positioned to engage in effective nesting.** Without this, the two-generation work can become extremely isolated and siloed. Leaders that can effectively communicate the why and how of the nested effort in a way that makes sense to staff are much better positioned to launch a nested effort.

8. Ongoing Learning and Evaluation

FCCC included a strong emphasis on learning and evaluation. An SCI approach to evaluation prioritizes learning and improvement, with an eye toward progress on a defined end goal. A particularly unique element of the SCI approach to evaluation is that it includes an explicit mechanism to assess the funder as a participant in the process.

FCCC had three main learning and evaluation arms.

These were:

- 1.** A process evaluation²² and a cost study calculating the cost to serve each FCCC family (managed by the Urban Institute).
- 2.** An evaluation of the strategic co-investor approach, focused on understanding how the Casey Foundation and its consulting partners were showing up in the three communities (managed by TCC Group); and
- 3.** An intensive data capacity-building support focused on performance management, continuous improvement, and using ongoing data collection for evaluation purposes (managed by Metis Associates).

All three arms operated over the entire course of the initiative and provided continuous data, feedback, support, and analysis. All three partners worked directly with the communities and the Foundation. For example, data collection tools were often vetted by both community staff and by the Casey Foundation staff as well as the other evaluation consultants before they were shared with the communities for comment. All three consulting agencies would also meet – either in the data & learning affinity group or in *ad hoc* phone calls – to share results of data collection and community updates when needed.

The sharing of evaluation results shifted over time from a more formal process focused on the Casey Foundation as the main consumer to a more iterative process that shared raw data with community staff and included them in the interpretation of data.

Evaluation Insights

The tension between the traditional funder approach and the SCI approach was most present in the evaluation and data space. The broad bucket of evaluation, learning, and data saw tensions between a funder-driven approach and

how much each individual community got to drive this work. In the first years, community interviewees often complained about the top-down nature of the evaluation work, with the Foundation dictating data to be collected. There were shared conversations, but community feedback noted that the process did not seem collaborative. The Casey Foundation and its evaluators did a course correction, attempting to be highly responsive to community direction around the evaluation, which created a separate problem – as communities were given more ability to choose their own data points to measure long-term, standardization of this work was lost across the three communities. Some communities also decided to focus more on programmatic data rather than outcomes data, leading to a limited ability to tell an outcomes-based story at the end of the FCCC investment. Communities lacking a strong data sharing agreement or data sharing infrastructure were also hindered in their ability to collaboratively report back on outcomes to the Foundation. The evaluation tension was further exacerbated by ambiguity in the program model, as described above.

A mechanism for two-way accountability is important to the strategic co-investor relationship – as is a more community-focused outcomes evaluation. For FCCC, there was an explicit evaluation focused on how the Casey Foundation was showing up as a strategic co-investor; this involved a yearly survey and a yearly community visit to each community. While the evaluation was ostensibly about testing the SCI approach, community partners continually appreciated the opportunity to provide confidential feedback on the Foundation as a funding partner. While they desired further clarity about how data were being used to inform the Foundation’s future work, they did appreciate that the Foundation remained true to having a confidential mechanism to provide feedback, and this built a level of accountability from the Foundation into the relationship in a way that benefitted the SCI approach. At the same time, having a level of data and evaluation work focused on outcomes at the community level was seen as important for ensuring that there was some accountability to the work happening at each community as well as for positioning the demonstrations to have something to share with the broader world. These twin evaluation arms provided a way to build accountability into both sides of the funder-grantee relationship.

²² All reports related to FCCC from the process evaluation are available here: <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/metropolitan-housing-and-communities-policy-center/projects/family-centered-community-change-two-generation-approach>

Deliberate space is a necessity for digesting data and using it for learning. In some cases, evaluators prepared evaluation reports for each community. These reports were narrative in nature and often were not accompanied by follow-up conversations with the communities (often at the communities' request). This approach shifted over time towards sharing more raw data with communities (including data walks) and providing them with space to make their own interpretations. These interpretations then fed into the overall analysis. This opened space to allow for those involved in the day-to-day work to reflect on how the data was aligned (or not) with their own perceptions and also allowed for more space within groups to discuss the implications of the data. This space for digestion allowed communities to take on ownership of learning from evaluation data.

The lack of one comprehensive evaluation plan for FCCC made it difficult to understand the core lessons learned. Having evaluation sit under three different consultants without one unifying evaluation plan created initial confusion. The sheer number of evaluation reports and updates shared throughout the year amplified this problem. Without a broader framework for each evaluation to sit within, some areas of work were touched on by multiple evaluations and others by none at all. Furthermore, each community was able to provide input into which data they collected to share with the Foundation, which led to differences across the three communities in terms of standardized data collection. These elements heightened the sentiment that the audience for the evaluation work was not clear. One important learning was the need to clearly decouple the data capacity-building efforts of Metis Associates from the more formal evaluation work conducted by the Urban Institute and TCC Group.

8. Ongoing Learning and Evaluation

Consideration for Other Funders

- **Funders should consider where on the scale of participatory to standardized evaluation they need to be.** At its core, funders need to understand what the role is they desire evaluation to play. A more participatory evaluation likely comes with the benefits of greater community ownership and learning but may affect cohesion or generalizability. More rigid evaluation approaches allow the funder to establish clear indicators and standardized data, but sacrifice buy-in and local nuance. Funders should work with other stakeholders to decide how best to optimize evaluation resources (which includes community time engaged in data collections).
- **Funders should build in a mechanism to evaluate their role and can serve as a model for how evaluation inputs can influence work.** The evaluation mechanism of SCI will be incomplete if it only focuses on the program work. Evaluation of the broader system, inclusive of the funder, is both a practical learning benefit and an explicit demonstration of the spirit of the SCI approach. Funders can use themselves as models to show how evaluation data are being used to change how decisions are made. This has the benefit of not only ensuring that the funders are learning from data and using a data-based approach to adapting their own work, but it also serves as a model for community partners around how evaluation can be used as a meaningful input to guide work.
- **Create opportunities with all partners to discuss and digest evaluation data.** Having time and space set aside specifically to digest evaluative data will likely enhance the chances that communities learn from the data being collected. While this certainly applies to evaluation reports, it need not always be in the form of report-respond. For example, interactive data activities, such as data walks, were very popular.

Considerations for Local Communities

- **Have a candid conversation about your learning and data needs and revisit those needs on a yearly basis.** Learning and data needs are likely to evolve over time. Regularly considering the learning needs as a group will greatly enhance the likelihood that the evaluation is collecting the right data at the right time. One caveat, however, is that in some instances, if you choose not to collect baseline data, it can be difficult to reconstruct this data later on.
- **Commit to making space to discuss evaluation findings.** Program implementation is all-consuming, and partners never have a shortage of meetings, things to discuss, and services to provide. Ensuring that there is a deliberate time and place to discuss the findings as a group creates a learning culture that will permeate the collective.

Conclusion

The strategic co-investor approach represented a collective shift in the way that the Annie E. Casey Foundation approached place-based investing. While some of the eight components that comprised the approach are common within philanthropy, together they comprise a mental model that is distinct – one that places primacy on the flexibility of the funder-grantee relationship and the programmatic contribution towards larger community change.

Towards the end of the Foundation’s monetary support of FCCC, community partners and Foundation staff and consultants were asked to reflect on the approach in its totality through confidential evaluation interviews. Their reflections, along with the overall evaluation data, sum to the following key findings on the success of the approach:

- **The SCI approach fosters an authentic partnership and mutual respect between funder and community grantees.** The flexibility in the funding, high-touch staffing approach, non-directive relationship, and nesting of a focused issue within an existing broader community change effort combined to create the perception of a true relationship. There were certainly challenges along the way, but the commitment to a push-pull, supportive relationship generated a generally strong working relationship.
- **The balance between engagement and non-directiveness is a consistent challenge.** Be it through the evaluation, technical assistance, or the Foundation’s monetary and non-monetary contributions, finding a sweet spot proved challenging. Part of the challenge seemed to stem from different models and cultures manifesting across communities, indicating there is not a “right” universal balance. Evidence appears to indicate that the Casey Foundation could have offered more direction and insights during initial parts of the project that would have advanced the work without sacrificing the integrity of the SCI approach. Over time, communities became more comfortable and established in their roles and felt better prepared to give direction to the foundation.

“When I think about how we come across to our partners, I want them to feel how we felt working with Casey.” — FCCC GRANTEE

- **The SCI approach is not, *de facto*, a solution to the ever-present sustainability concern.** Being part of an SCI relationship doesn’t automatically ensure greater funding and sustainability; however, it does open the door to it by bringing other funders and a focus on infrastructure into the work early on. Evaluation data showed other factors also came into play around sustainability, including the type of relationships (transactional versus collective), talking early on about sustainability concepts, the depth of program model buy-in, and the ability to embed institutional change.
- **An early high-touch approach, technical assistance, and nesting are the three components of the SCI approach that most helped advance the work.** These approach components were seen as helping articulate the value of two-generation work and better integrating the work into pre-existing infrastructure in a way that helped fill gaps overall and made the work more sustainable. One of the greatest values to these three components, along with flexible funding, is supporting the “glue” to make collaboration work.

The Strategic Co-Investor approach shows a lot of promise for enhancing place-based work supported by funders. If nothing else, funders and their grantees will benefit from SCI approach discussions that make explicit relationship assumptions that sometimes go unexpressed and lead to confusion or frustration. The eight core components together generate flexibility, collaborative engagement, and the ability to leverage diverse resources. We believe the data supports further application and refinement of the approach.

Appendix A: Methodology

TCC Group served as the evaluator for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family-Centered Community Change strategic co-investor approach starting in 2015. This evaluation design included two yearly data collection points from each of the three communities:

- **Community visit.** The in-person community visit consisted of one-on-one or small group interviews. Where scheduling proved problematic, interviews were subsequently conducted by phone. Interviewees comprised a variety of individuals directly involved in FCCC's two-generation programming and/or who were involved in the community's broader community change initiative. Local funders and community leaders were also included in the interview pool. These community visits were intended to understand feedback on the strategic co-investor approach as well as elements of the approach that were working well or less well. TCC Group relied on each community lead to create the interview list yearly, and this list typically included 10-25 individuals. Examples of questions that were asked include:
 - Throughout this effort, Casey has described their approach as a co-investor. As you reflect back on the entire initiative, what behaviors did Casey display that you would describe as co-investor-like behaviors?
 - What would you have expected the Foundation to do around sustainability as a strategic co-investor? What have you actually been seeing them do?
 - As you are aware, funders bring a unique dynamic to community-based work. From your perspective, what dynamic has Casey's involvement had on the community in the last two years?

- **Pulse check survey.** TCC Group created a quantitative pulse check survey that was administered yearly to a set of individuals. Community leads determined the people on the survey list and were asked to include a mix of partners involved in two-generation work and other community individuals who may be aware of the work but who are not directly involved in it. While there were some open-ended questions on the survey that were analyzed thematically, the majority of the data were quantitative and used a five-point Likert scale for responses. The full 2019 pulse check survey is shared in Appendix C.

In our final year of work, TCC Group also conducted a set of interviews with current and previous staff and consultants involved in two-generation work. This included:

- Eight individual interviews with current or previous staff from the Casey Foundation.
- Four group interviews with each of the consulting firms that played a long-term role in two-generation work.

These end-of-year interviews were more reflective in nature and created space to talk broadly about lessons learned.

Appendix B: Pulse Check Survey

Introduction

Thank you for taking this survey. As you may know, TCC Group is working with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to evaluate their role as a strategic co-investor in the community change initiative (CCI). This is a related but distinct evaluation from that focused on your community's programmatic implementation of a two-generation approach. This evaluation seeks to understand whether and how a national foundation may strengthen an existing, locally led community change effort.

This survey is completely confidential – data will only be reported in aggregate.

Notes

- When we say community change initiative, we are referring to all work, including work outside of two-gen/FCCC/dual generation happening in:
 - Buffalo Promise Neighborhood
 - Eastside Promise Zone
 - Weinland Park Collaborative
- Throughout this survey, we use a variety of terms. Below, we describe how we define them.
 - **Backbone organization** – refers to the organization that is leading two-gen work in each community. For Buffalo, this is M&T Bank, for San Antonio, this is the United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, and for Weinland Park, this is Community Properties of Ohio (CPO).
 - **Capacity building & technical assistance** – refers to any work being done to increase the skills of people working on two-gen or within the broader community change initiative. This might include webinars, convenings, and consulting work being offered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation directly or by consultants affiliated with Casey.

- **Community change initiative** – refers to the broader neighborhood effort that two-generation work is nested within. For Buffalo, this is Buffalo Promise Neighborhood. For San Antonio, this is Eastside Promise Zone, and for Weinland Park, this is Weinland Park Collaborative.
- **Evaluations** – refers to any two-gen evaluation work, including the Urban Institute's outcome evaluation and cost study, TCC Group's strategic co-investor evaluation, and data being shared with Metis Associates.
- **Foundation** – refers to the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- **REEI** – stands for race and ethnic equity and inclusion.
- **Two-gen/dual-generation/FCCC** – refers to two-generation work (e.g., work that integrates services for adults and children in a family).

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact [redacted].

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following items about two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work happening in your community. Please skip any items you do not feel you have enough information about to answer.

For all questions referring to backbone organizations, we're referring to:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A Those working on FCCC/two-gen/dual generation effectively inform the broader nonprofit/provider community about what's happening with the work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B I am aware of work happening in two-gen/FCCC/dual generation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Everyone involved in the nonprofit service sector (including partners like government agencies) in our community is aware of the FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work that is taking place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D There are some community organizations that feel that FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work hinders other important community initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E Race and ethnic equity and inclusion are core considerations in how we approach two-generation work in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F Two-gen/FCCC/dual generation partners are very effective at addressing issues of equity related to community change work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G Two-gen/FCCC/dual generation partners are focused on meaningful inclusion of all stakeholder voices (e.g., involved organizations, parents and families, residents, etc.) in their two-generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H Two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work in our community has the buy-in from everyone needed on the local level to make it work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I Our community is clear about how to define a two-generation approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J The current set of FCCC/two-gen/dual generation partners is the right set to implement a two-generation approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work has the potential to improve systems and policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

QUESTION 1 CONTINUED

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
L There are community organizations not currently involved in our collaborative that could contribute to FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M The role of the backbone organization in our two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work is clear to all of our community partners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N Our backbone organization is an appropriate gatekeeper to the Foundation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O Compared to other organizations we work with, our work with the backbone organization is an authentic partnership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P The backbone organization is extremely open to ideas coming from the community related to two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q Two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work happening in our community is not overly dependent on any one funder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R Two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work happening in our community has deep enough buy-in to survive any personnel or organizational transitions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S I have serious concerns about the sustainability of two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T Our community has a plan to bring additional funders or funding into our two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following items about your community change initiative – e.g., Weinland Park Collaborative, Buffalo Promise Neighborhood, Eastside Promise Zone).

Please skip any items you do not feel you have enough information to answer.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A Our community programs have good integration across child and adult service areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

QUESTION 2 CONTINUED

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
B Our community is very effective at addressing issues of diversity related to community change work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C Partners within the community change initiative work better as a result of the Foundation and its consultants' work in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D The Foundation's technical assistance is an essential part of supporting the community change initiative work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E Compared to other funders working in our community, the Foundation represents an authentic partnership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F The Foundation has clear opinions or direction for most issues on our community agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G The Foundation has expectations of our community that are not always clearly stated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H The Foundation is too directive in the local actions and results it wants to see through our community change work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I Our community is very effective at addressing issues of equity related to community change work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J The Foundation has a clear set of principles they bring into the community change initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K Technical assistance provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation is an essential part of the community change initiative work happening.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L Our community change initiative's work has the potential to improve systems and policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M Having partners outside of our community is important for furthering our FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N Our community's priorities are set internally and are not heavily influenced by actors outside of the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Are you actively involved in FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work happening in your community?

A. Yes (Go to question 4)

B. No (Go to question 5)

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following items about FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work happening in your community.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A There is a high level of trust among the participating FCCC/two-gen/dual generation organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Our FCCC/two-gen/dual generation work has a clear leadership process that all participating organizational leads support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C All FCCC/two-gen/dual generation partnering organizations have a shared vision for two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Have you interacted with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (including any of its contractors – such as the Urban Institute, Metis Associates, TCC Group or any of its technical assistance activities such as results-based leadership, family economic success TA, leadership development, the results leadership group, webinars, convenings, etc.) at all?

A. Yes (Go to question 6)

B. No (Go to question 7)

6. Please rate your agreement with the following items about your perception of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and its technical assistance (TA) consultants and evaluation contractors (referred to throughout as “the Foundation and its consultants”). Please skip any items you do not feel you have enough information about to answer.

For all questions referring to backbone organizations, we’re referring to:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
A The role of the Foundation and its consultants in two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work is clear to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B The Foundation and its consultants are extremely open to ideas coming from the community related to two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C The Foundation and its consultants have an extremely strong understanding of our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D The Foundation and its consultants are effective collaborators in our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E I have direct access to staff at the Foundation whenever I want or need it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F The technical assistance provided by the Foundation is strategically relevant to our community’s broader goals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G The technical assistance providers are culturally competent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H The technical assistance providers communicate effectively with our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I I have a clear understanding of what the FCCC learning priorities are for 2019.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J The Foundation or its consultants are timely when sharing evaluation findings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K Our community’s backbone organization is timely when sharing evaluation findings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L The Foundation or its consultants share evaluation findings with me in an easily digestible way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M Our community’s backbone organization shares evaluation findings with me in an easily digestible way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

QUESTION 6 CONTINUED

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
N Our community needs more support from the Foundation or its consultants to make meaning from evaluation findings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O Our community needs more support from our backbone organization to make meaning from evaluation findings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P I have a clear understanding of how Foundation staff are learning from evaluation data.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q Evaluation findings (whether meant for internal or external audiences) take a strengths-based view of our community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R A broad range of stakeholder voices have had input into our evaluation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S Our evaluation reports are accessible to diverse audiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T The goals of trainings and technical assistance provided by the Foundation are always clear to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U Trainings and technical assistance provided by the Foundation are directly relevant to my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V I am able to use information and skills I get from trainings and technical assistance in my day-to-day work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
W Our community is clear on what the Foundation is expecting from us, beyond the two-gen/FCCC/dual generation work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
X Our work benefits substantially from our interactions with other FCCC sites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y The Foundation's support for two gen/FCCC/dual generation in our community involves too many actors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. With which of the following categories do you most identify?

- Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American
- Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
- Latino or Hispanic American
- East Asian or Asian American
- South Asian or Indian American
- Middle Eastern or Arab American
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)

Appendix C: Strategic Co-Investor Theory of Change

STRATEGIC CO-INVESTOR THEORY OF CHANGE				
Local Preconditions	Casey Contributions	Value-added	Nature of Engagement (the “how”)	Outcomes
<p>Well-established existing local place-based initiative</p> <p>Strong and sustainable local partnerships anchored by effective backbone organizationⁱ</p> <p>Significant and sustainable funding sources</p> <p>Demonstrated commitmentⁱⁱ to resident and parent engagement and leadership</p> <p>Commitment to integrated data analysis and evaluation</p> <p>Receptivity to Casey engagement</p>	<p>Grant funding</p> <p>Strategic advice</p> <p>Technical assistance</p> <p>Capacity-building</p> <p>Networking</p> <p>Program-related investments</p> <p>Accountability to results objective</p> <p>Focus on sustainability of change effort</p>	<p>Flexibility of funding (e.g., 25% of Casey funding for broader initiative at local community’s discretion)</p> <p>Effectiveness of two-generation point of view</p> <p>Depth of experience</p> <p>Breadth of networks</p> <p>Engaged strategic partner</p> <p>National profile and endorsement</p>	<p>Act as one investing partner at a larger table</p> <p>Respectful of local process and views</p> <p>Primary and sustained focus on two-generation, not broader local initiative</p> <p>Outside of two-generation “non-negotiables,” defer to local consensus</p> <p>Demand-driven technical assistance</p> <p>Modest scale of Casey financial investment</p>	<p>Initiative-level Local initiative advances its pre-existing broad implementation goals</p> <p>Two-Generation Infrastructure level Successful implementation of place-based, two-generation integrated strategy, sustained <i>beyond</i> Casey involvement</p> <p>Individual and Family-level (for participating families) Child, Adult, and Family Outcomes articulated elsewhere</p>

ⁱ “Backbone organizations” guide vision and strategy, support aligned activities, establish shared measurement practices, build public will, advance policy, and mobilize funding (see Ellen Martin, *Evolving Our Understanding of Backbone Organizations*, FSG Blog, 12/11/2012).

ⁱⁱ “Demonstrated commitment” means the community has a track record of investment in/support for resident and parental engagement and leadership development.

About TCC Group

TCC Group collaborates with leaders to solve complex social problems. As a certified B Corporation and with nearly 40 years of experience as a mission-driven consulting firm, TCC Group partners with foundations, nonprofits, and companies to propel positive social change through strategy, capacity building, initiative design, strategic communication, management, and evaluation. We design and implement solutions for social impact by immersing ourselves in interconnected communities and systems, co-creating innovative and effective processes, and applying and sharing our experience with the field.

About the Authors

Jared Raynor, Director of Evaluation and Learning.

Jared specializes in evaluation and organizational development of innovative and complex efforts and has worked with hundreds of diverse organizations throughout the world. He is sought after for his expertise in a variety of areas, including capacity-building initiatives, convening effectiveness, prizes and competitions, policy and advocacy evaluation, and networks and coalitions.

Deepti Sood, Senior Consultant. Deepti brings a relatable style to engaging stakeholders at all levels. Highly responsive to changing environments with unwavering focus on key goals, she is an effective communicator, willing to raise up difficult issues and address them head on. With a background in advocacy and working with grassroots organizations, Deepti is inspired by opportunities to proactively partner with communities to impact change. She understands the practical needs various stakeholders require and tailors the evaluation work accordingly.

Kate Locke, Associate Director of Evaluation and Learning.

Kate has worked as an evaluator for over 15 years, specializing in evaluation of policy/advocacy efforts, collaborations, and equitable evaluation methods. She draws on her experiences working as a direct service provider and program manager in the HIV/AIDS human services realm.



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