



2GEN CASE STUDY

Thriving Together with Two-Generation Collaboratives



THE WOMEN'S FUND
of GREATER BIRMINGHAM

What does 2Gen mean for women?

Two-generation (2Gen) approaches focus on creating opportunities for and addressing needs of children and adults in their lives together. The approach recognizes that families come in all different shapes and sizes, and that families define themselves. In Alabama, mothers are the sole, primary, or co-breadwinners in 65% of families. 2Gen approaches articulate and track outcomes for both children and adults simultaneously.



The 2Gen Framework

Core components to creating an intergenerational cycle of opportunity for women and their families.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Peer and family networks, coaching, cohort strategies

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Mental, physical, and behavioral health; coverage and access to care

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

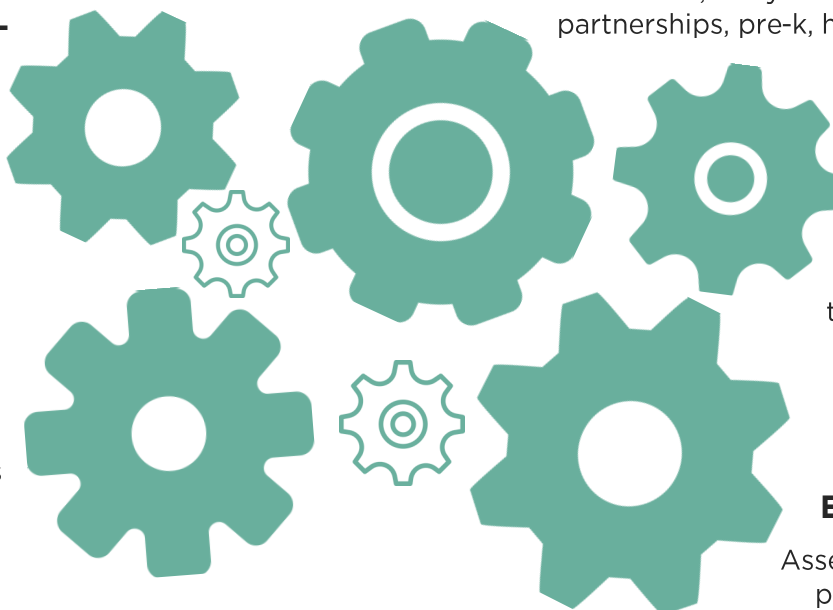
Head Start, Early Head Start, child care partnerships, pre-k, home visiting

POSTSECONDARY & EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

Community college, training and certification, workforce partnerships

ECONOMIC ASSETS

Asset building, housing and public supports, financial capacity, transportation



Credit: Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Executive Summary

Siloed services leave women and children behind. Launched with funding from The Women's Fund, three permanent collaboratives provide clearer pathways to opportunity.

Throughout The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham's (TWF) over 20 years of partnerships with local agencies and organizations serving Alabama women and children, we have seen firsthand the critical resources they provide. However, these efforts are often fragmented, leaving either the child or mother behind and dimming the family's chance at success. In an effort to maximize families' opportunities and potential to help our communities thrive, TWF launched Collaboration Institute (CI) to begin breaking down silos and to formalize cross-system collaboration among providers.

From June 2017 to December 2018, TWF invested \$1 million in the design and implementation of CI, a collective action funding model designed to better align services of organizations serving low-income families using a two-generation (2Gen) approach. The CI process was guided by the expertise and resources of a stakeholder committee comprised of ten local funders, private sector employers, and social service leaders.

CI participants included three place-based teams in Jefferson, Shelby, and Walker Counties composed of local leaders from nonprofits, community colleges, child care centers, and employers. The teams completed an in-depth 18-month curriculum to provide the strategies, tools, and expertise to help them realign and integrate their services to better serve low-income families. The CI curriculum included:

- Peer-learning workshops, led by the **Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group** (Aspen CSG)
- Site visits to proven, effective 2Gen models in Garrett County, Maryland and Newport, Kentucky
- Access to a local coach and a family expertise council, composed of families who have benefited from services
- Technical assistance in family-centered coaching and writing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)
- empowOR, a robust client-tracking software to measure the success of the work

At the conclusion of Collaboration Institute, TWF granted each team \$100,000 and the three teams formally joined forces as Thrive Together, a collaborative network providing seamless, wraparound services to women and their families.

We proudly presents this 2Gen Case Study, an overview of the process we used to build 2Gen collaborations, lessons learned, and opportunities to scale this work. **The Women's Fund is committed to supporting 2Gen collaboration in our region and state, and we hope this report will inspire you to join us in replicating and sustaining the success of the model.**

OUTCOMES OF COLLABORATION INSTITUTE

3 PERMANENT COLLABORATIVES

There's no wrong door for families seeking services at Thrive Together, a collaborative network of organizations providing seamless, wraparound services to women and their families.

SYSTEM COHESION

Multi-sector partnerships work together to provide a comprehensive and seamless set of services that more strategically and efficiently address the opportunity gaps for women and their families.

FAMILY OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS

Mothers or guardians and their children experiencing poverty have a clearer path and access to opportunities for educational and economic services that will advance their family's economic success.

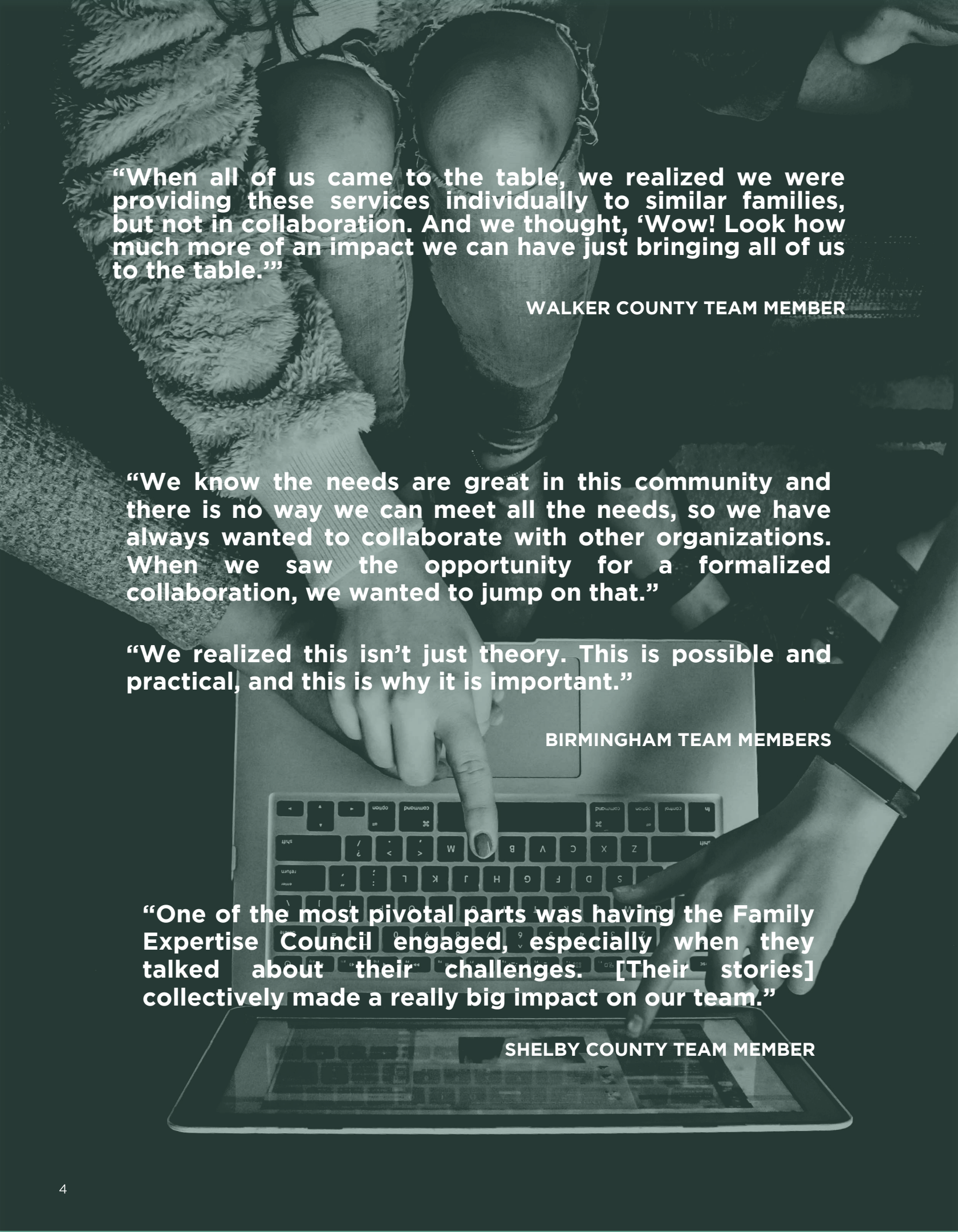
By intentionally focusing on child care, children will be better prepared for educational and economic success.

QUALITY WORKFORCE

Participating women enter and advance in the workforce, filling skilled, in-demand workforce positions.

DATA CENTRALIZATION

Collaboratives use empowOR, a web-based software to track the impact of their services and programs for families in the region.



“When all of us came to the table, we realized we were providing these services individually to similar families, but not in collaboration. And we thought, ‘Wow! Look how much more of an impact we can have just bringing all of us to the table.’”

WALKER COUNTY TEAM MEMBER

“We know the needs are great in this community and there is no way we can meet all the needs, so we have always wanted to collaborate with other organizations. When we saw the opportunity for a formalized collaboration, we wanted to jump on that.”

“We realized this isn’t just theory. This is possible and practical, and this is why it is important.”

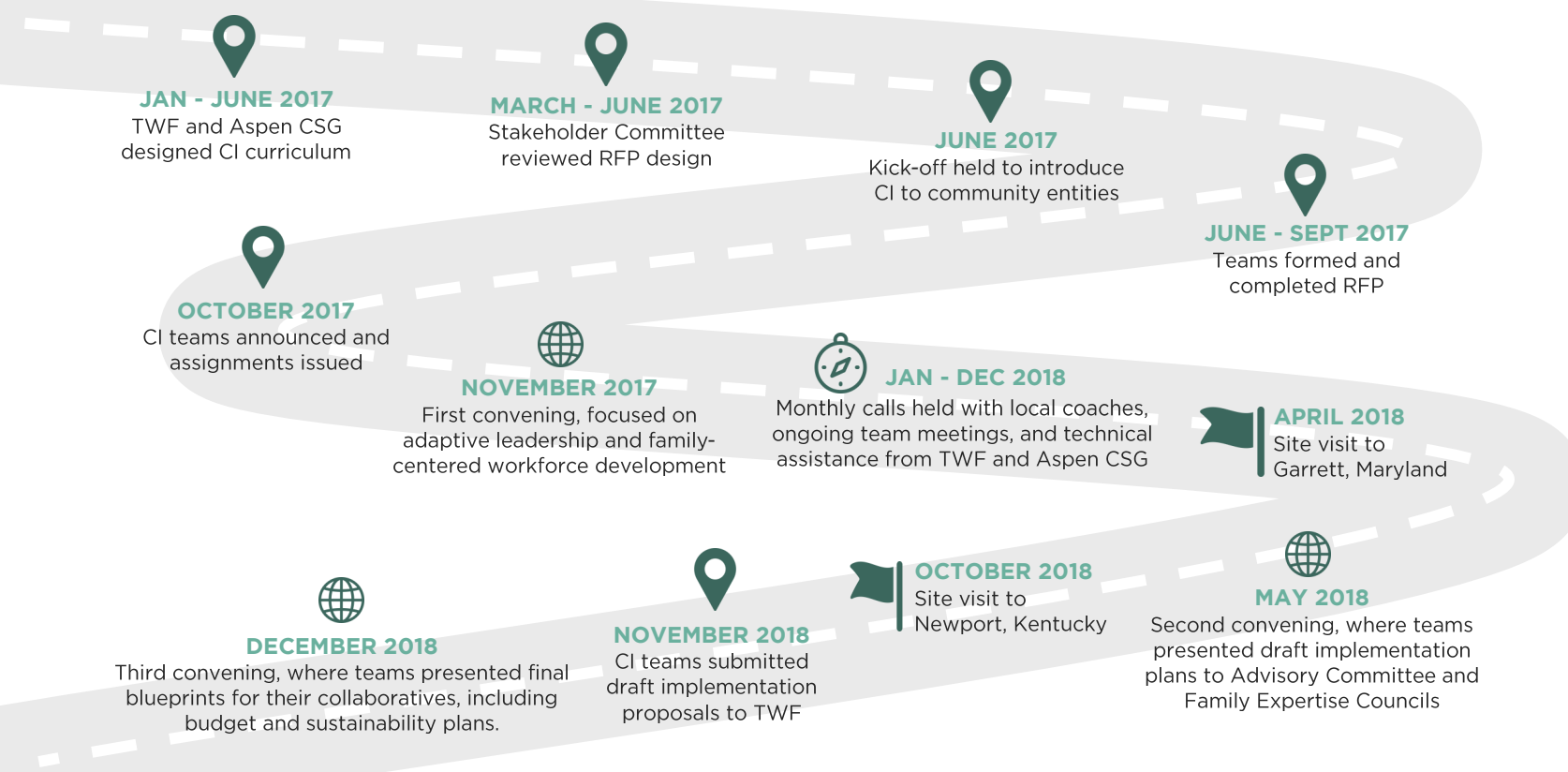
BIRMINGHAM TEAM MEMBERS

“One of the most pivotal parts was having the Family Expertise Council engaged, especially when they talked about their challenges. [Their stories] collectively made a really big impact on our team.”

SHELBY COUNTY TEAM MEMBER

Collaboration Institute Road Map

The path to formal collaboration for women and children's opportunity



Collaborative Team Profiles



JEFFERSON COUNTY

MEMBERS: Hope Inspired Ministries, East Lake Initiative, Serving You Ministries

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS: Small, faith-based nonprofits providing different community services from a shared location

EARLY WINS: Co-location of services with single intake coordinator; public investment from City of Birmingham

YEAR 1 GOAL: Serve 30 families, prioritizing women and families enrolled in Hope Inspired Ministries' job training course, East Lake Initiative's housing program, or receiving emergency services from Serving You Ministries.

SHELBY COUNTY

MEMBERS: City of Montevallo, City of Vincent, Shelby Co. Community Services, Jefferson State Community College, University of Montevallo

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS: Public sector and academic institutions (no direct service providers)

EARLY WINS: Developed external Leadership Council of social service agencies; public investment from Shelby County commission

YEAR 1 GOAL: Serve 20-30 families, focusing on families utilizing Shelby Emergency Assistance and children enrolled in Montevallo Boys and Girls Club or Head Start.

WALKER COUNTY

MEMBERS: Walker Co. Board of Education, University of Montevallo, Beville State Community College, Jasper Area Family Services Center

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS: Participated in a past 2Gen pilot; partners from academic institutions, public sector, and family resource center

EARLY WINS: Established primary physical hub and satellite entry points; transitioned intake process from a client-based to coaching relationship with families.

YEAR 1 GOAL: Serve 35 families, primarily single mothers or grandmothers and their children living at 200% poverty line or below.

Scalability: Takeaways & Opportunities

SYSTEMS CHANGE REQUIRES COLLABORATION AND CULTURE CHANGE.

TAKEAWAYS

- 1 While the collaborative teams look different, given their specific contexts, they are all implementing strategic plans to either physically co-locate 2Gen services or better coordinate services in ways that work best for whole families.
- 2 Sustainable systems change requires strategic collaboration among partners who cover all aspects of the 2Gen model (i.e., postsecondary education and employment, economic assets and support, social capital, health and well-being, and early childhood development).
- 3 Since participating in CI, team members have shifted their mindsets from serving clients as case managers to coaching women to access the support they need to move their families out of poverty. Coaches at each collaborative will work with mothers and families to understand their needs and provide them with tools to create a better future for themselves and the next generation.

COLLABORATION IS BOTH AN ART AND A SCIENCE.

TAKEAWAYS

- 4 As an art, collaboration requires partners to be flexible, adaptive, and sensitive to diverse personalities. It is necessary to keep in mind the purpose of the work, while being creative in the approach of how to get there.
- 5 As a science, collaboration requires set procedures and a blueprint to keep all partners on the same page and moving forward. It is important to test what is working, what is not, and realign when needed.
- 6 This structured, yet responsive model of collaboration would not have been possible without TWF serving as a backbone organization to provide resources and support, as well as a facilitator like Aspen CSG to provide expertise, guidance, and intellectual capital.

SUCCESSFUL 2GEN WORK REQUIRES SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT.

TAKEAWAYS

- 7 CI demonstrates that intensive investment in effective collaboration on the front end can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of 2Gen work, eventually contributing to meaningful and lasting outcomes for mothers, guardians, and children.
- 8 In addition to the initial investment in pilot testing, designing, and implementing the 18-month curriculum, TWF invested in local and national expertise, trainings and site visits as needed, and the use of the empowOR software. Overall, TWF invested \$1 million to achieve the immediate outcomes of increasing team members' understanding of 2Gen approaches, increasing cohesion and peer learning within and across teams, establishing employment partnerships, and developing implementation plans.

OPPORTUNITIES: EXPANSION

Collaboratives must seek additional community partners outside of the core team to ensure whole families are supported, especially children. This requires establishing MOUs and reviewing the CI framework with new partners. Rather than relying on an outside facilitator, the teams should train new partners on 2Gen approaches and strategic collaboration. Teams should continue to engage the Family Expertise Council and Stakeholder Committee to ensure their services are grounded in local knowledge and responsive to the community. To ensure they are meeting families' needs, Collaboratives can regularly evaluate their work using data-collection tools like empowOR.



OPPORTUNITIES: BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

When asked about the most important elements of the CI curriculum to replicate in future models, team members mentioned the structured framework, an organizing leader like TWF, and expertise from Aspen CSG. Although team members felt they would have been able to establish a collaborative on their own, the direction, guidance, and resources provided by CI gave them the competence and confidence to ensure their collaborative proposals provided comprehensive and forward-thinking 2Gen solutions for families.



OPPORTUNITIES: FUNDING

Given the extensive time, energy, and resources needed to implement the CI curriculum, multi-year funding models should be developed to support organizations who engage in this work. When done correctly, 2Gen collaboration itself can result in outcomes related to system cohesion, family opportunity pathways, and improved services for mothers and children. As a pioneer and incubator in this innovative approach towards collaboration, TWF can serve as a thought leader in the field of 2Gen collective action.





*Special thanks to all of our local and national partners,
especially the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group,
Collaboration Institute Stakeholder Committee, and Family Expertise Council.*



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KORWIN CONSULTING



READ THE FULL REPORT ONLINE AT:
www.womensfundbirmingham.org/research