



2GEN STATEWIDE CONFERENCE: A CALL TO ACTION

SUMMARY REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

NOVEMBER 6-7, 2017
DENVER, COLORADO



COLORADO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Key Themes Emerging from Conference	3
Next Steps.....	5
Organization of the Report	6
Introduction	7
Day 1: The 2Gen Approach	8
Coming Together - A Call to Action.....	8
2Gen Past, Present, and Future	8
Parent Perspectives - Keeping Families at the Center	9
Taking 2Gen Statewide - PACTT State Policy Network	9
Embracing 2Gen Approaches - State Agency Efforts	10
Innovation in Colorado.....	12
Key Takeaways, Day 1	12
Day 2: Putting the 2Gen Approach into Practice	14
Strategic Communication for 2Gen Policy and Systems Change	14
Investing in Change - Philanthropic Leadership	15
At the Forefront - County Innovations.....	16
Measuring Outcomes	17
Measuring Success: Developing 2Gen Outcomes & Data Systems: Governance and Technology.....	17
Collaboration and Alignment	19
Social Determinants of Health across Generations & 2Gen Approach to Higher Education	19
Resources and Sustainability	21
Leveraging Existing Resources to Support Innovation & Engaging Employers in 2Gen ...	21
Policy and Practices	23
Policy Landscape for 2Gen Solutions & Challenges and Opportunities of Program Implementation	23
Key Takeaways, Day 2	24
Overall Themes and Next Steps	26
Appendices	27
Appendix A: Parent Stories	27
Appendix B: 2Gen Definitions	28

The 2Gen Statewide Conference was made possible through the generous support of the following foundations:



Special thanks to our partners:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A state in which all families have access to the resources and support they need to escape poverty and achieve their full potential: this is Colorado’s guiding vision for the two-generation (2Gen) approach, which focuses on meeting the needs of children and the adults in their lives together to help both have a better chance at a brighter future. It was also the impetus behind Colorado’s first 2Gen Statewide Conference.

Colorado has been a national pioneer in utilizing 2Gen strategies to address the impacts of intergenerational poverty. Well before the term “2Gen” was coined, innovative local and county leaders started embracing a holistic approach to working with children and their parents—providing access to a comprehensive set of services, including education, economic supports, social capital and health care—to put entire families on the path to permanent economic security. Governor John Hickenlooper has made 2Gen approaches a cornerstone of his administration and engaged with public and private partners across the state to create cycles of economic opportunity for all Colorado families.

Although Colorado has seen great success with 2Gen efforts to date, key stakeholders have recognized that taking 2Gen to the next level will require new strategies that cut across multiple sectors and domains and drive the system-level changes needed to support and sustain this work into the future. In 2016, representatives from state and county government, nonprofits, research and policy institutes and the philanthropic community came together to develop a statewide vision for 2Gen in Colorado. The resulting *Colorado Guide to 2Gen (2Gen Guide)* provides a road map for the next phase of the state’s efforts to ensure Colorado’s children and families are valued, healthy and thriving.

To further catalyze the expansion of 2Gen approaches across government and non-governmental partners, the governor and lieutenant governor invited thought leaders from across the state to participate in the first “2Gen Statewide Conference: A Call to Action” on November 6-7, 2017, in Golden, Colorado. Over 200 people—including representatives from state, county and local government, nonprofits, business, philanthropy and research—participated in the day-and-a-half event. The conference presentations, panel discussions and workshops were structured to achieve the following objectives: 1) share information about current and planned 2Gen initiatives in the state; 2) increase public-private and cross-sector relationships among key stakeholders; and 3) identify new strategies and opportunities to expand the adoption of 2Gen approaches.

Key Themes Emerging from Conference

The conference offered multiple opportunities to educate, energize and engage participants around the shared goal of serving Colorado families. Day 1 highlighted the strong foundation of 2Gen work at the national, state and local level. Key stakeholders—including national partners, Colorado Cabinet members and county and local organizations—offered varying perspectives on their efforts to incorporate 2Gen into their daily work and organizational culture. On Day 2, participants were asked to roll up their sleeves and identify specific issues, priorities and action steps for moving 2Gen forward during “mini-workshop” sessions that

focused on key objectives identified in the *2Gen Guide*: 1) measuring outcomes (data, data systems and evaluation); 2) organizing and collaboration; 3) resources and sustainability; and 4) policy and practices. The mini-workshops were complemented by a series of panels addressing strategic communications, the role of philanthropy in supporting and promoting a 2Gen agenda, and county innovations.

Overall, the following themes and priorities emerged to guide and inform the development of cross-sector strategies that will expand and advance the adoption of 2Gen, now and in the future:

Measuring Outcomes (Data, Data Systems and Evaluation)

- Data outcomes should target the best interest of families in Colorado, rather than focusing solely on programmatic or organizational compliance.
- Data systems should provide a comprehensive view of *family* needs and utilization of services across programs and sectors.
- Trust is foundational to data sharing, both among partner agencies and organizations, and between service providers and the families they serve.

Organizing and Collaboration

- Partnerships within and across agencies, organizations and sectors are critical to the success of 2Gen efforts.
- Families need increased access to wraparound services and other types of support (e.g., child care, integrated health care) that will support their path toward self-sufficiency.
- Navigators provide a key service and ideally should serve clients across sectors.
- Duplication of efforts or continued investments in unwanted or ineffective services should be minimized and eliminated from systems wherever possible.

Resources and Sustainability

- Partners must develop creative models that can sustain 2Gen work, rather than depending on new funding.
- Private and public funding sources must be merged to support programs.
- Building a case for businesses to adopt family-friendly strategies and cover the costs of related services can increase funding from a third, currently less involved, source.

Policy and Practices

- Programs and policies should be prioritized to meet critical needs, including housing, transportation and child care.
- Policies should value equity over equality and support remedies that are tailored to meet particular needs; not all families require the same type and level of support.
- State policies and programs should recognize and allow for diversity within and among Colorado counties.

Next Steps

Colorado's commitment to improving the well-being of all children and families—spurred by innovative leadership and strengthened by partnerships at the local, state and national level—have positioned the state as a national leader in 2Gen approaches. However, critical work remains to be done to expand and advance 2Gen programs, policies and initiatives across new sectors. Public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaborations will play a key role in driving system-level change so that state policy and service delivery more effectively and efficiently meet the needs of children and their parents together.

The 2Gen Statewide Conference galvanized these efforts by engaging public and private stakeholders to identify strategies that parents, advocates, funders and state and local policymakers can take to ensure the 2Gen approach has a lasting impact on Colorado families. Over the next 14 months, the State Two-Generation Program Coordinator within the Governor's Office will continue to work with representatives from state and local government and other partners to build off the momentum gained from the conference and help coordinate the implementation of the following key next steps:

- Develop a State 2Gen Action Plan that identifies short-, medium- and long-term objectives and goals within and across state agencies and nongovernmental partners, to be released in early spring 2018.
- Implement the 2Gen activities and priorities identified by state agencies participating in the Parents and Children Thriving Together (PACTT) initiative and pursue opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.
- Hold quarterly online convenings (via webinar) of statewide stakeholders to review and discuss Action Plan implementation efforts, identify gaps and opportunities, and foster ongoing partnerships and collaborations.
- Support innovation by county agencies, including county human services department, local public health agencies and workforce centers to develop, improve and refine programs that support children and families.
- Continue education and outreach to cross-sector stakeholders, including the business community, who are currently engaged or interested in adopting a 2Gen approach.

A [Two-Generation Approach](#) webpage has been created on the Governor's Office website to serve as a resource and information hub about the state's 2Gen efforts and as a channel for communicating with 2Gen stakeholders. This platform will serve as a launching point for future efforts to help ensure the sustainability of Colorado's 2Gen work.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report summarizes key themes from the 2Gen Statewide Conference, generated through presentations, audience questions, conversations with industry leaders and participant-led brainstorming sessions. Information is organized into sections that mirror the format of the 2Gen Conference and highlight the content and key ideas from each session. More detailed descriptions of the mini-workshop sessions on Day 2 are available on the Governor's Office [Two-Generation Approach](#) webpage as part of the conference materials.

This report, and the conference itself, purposefully build on the priorities and objectives identified in the *2Gen Guide*. Conference participants were asked to identify tangible next steps to start “filling in” the guide’s proposed action plan. This report details strategies and ideas for action identified by the attendees and stakeholders who will be integral to their implementation. These ideas will inform the development of a State 2Gen Action Plan, which will pave the way to improve current strategies; overcome gaps, silos and barriers; and generate innovative ways to embed 2Gen into programs, policies, systems and the overall culture in Colorado.

INTRODUCTION

Two-generation, or 2Gen, is a term to describe approaches that help families escape the cycle of poverty by intentionally serving children and their parents or adult caregivers together. Research has shown that parents' education level, income, and physical and mental health all greatly impact their children's development and future trajectory. Conversely, when children are thriving, they exert a positive influence on their parents. 2Gen approaches harness this mutual motivation by simultaneously providing children and the adults in their lives with support and resources to put the entire family on a path to economic stability and security.

Colorado's engagement with 2Gen approaches dates back several decades. Well before the term 2Gen was coined, innovative local and county leaders started embracing a holistic approach to working with children and their parents—providing access to education, economic supports, health, social capital and well-being—to put entire families on the path to permanent economic security. Governor John Hickenlooper has made 2Gen approaches a cornerstone of his administration, and leaders across the state—including Cabinet members, county directors and executives from nonprofit and philanthropic organizations—have taken up the governor's call to create cycles of economic opportunity for all Colorado families. The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) has embraced 2Gen, adopting a “21st-century approach” that has shifted the agency's culture toward viewing families holistically and providing the services they need to achieve educational success and economic security. County agencies and local organizations have continued to pursue innovative new strategies to better serve children and families. And Colorado-based philanthropies have actively engaged with policy groups, nonprofit organizations and leaders from state agencies to identify opportunities to support and partner with emerging 2Gen approaches in Colorado.

Although Colorado has seen great success with such efforts to date, key stakeholders have recognized that taking 2Gen to the next level will require new strategies that cut across multiple sectors and domains. The state has a wealth of resources to draw from—including innovative leaders, strong relationships with national partners, and a history of proven 2Gen successes—to help expand and advance this critical work. New tools and resources, including the *2Gen Guide*, the PACTT initiative, and a State Two-Generation Program Coordinator located in the Governor's Office, are also available. Yet Colorado's ability to develop and implement the ideas and strategies contained in this report, and create true systems change that will help ensure the sustainability of this work, will ultimately rely on the strength of public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaborations. Working together, we can collectively achieve our overall vision: “a state in which families, government, businesses and service providers are working together to achieve a holistic, strength-based approach to empowering families to strive for healthy, successful lives.”

DAY 1: THE 2GEN APPROACH

Coming Together - A Call to Action

“A call to action.” That was the rallying cry for the first 2Gen Statewide Conference, which brought leaders from across the state together in Golden, Colorado. Governor John Hickenlooper welcomed attendees via a recorded message and challenged them to use the conference as an opportunity to share ideas, develop collaborations and identify new strategies to support children and families. Reggie Bicha, the executive director of CDHS and a state 2Gen champion, offered insights into his agency’s 2Gen journey and stressed the importance of moving beyond traditional systems that “focus on one narrow scope without thinking about the context.” Bicha highlighted Colorado’s role as a national 2Gen leader, noting that “states all across America are listening to the work we are doing.” He cautioned, however, that 13 percent of Colorado children are still living in poverty; therefore, the purpose of the conference, and the need for continued collaboration, was simple and direct: “We have to act” to better support the state’s children and families.

Presenters:

*Governor John Hickenlooper
(recorded message)*

*Reggie Bicha, Executive
Director, Colorado Department
of Human Services*

*Kyle Brown, Policy Director,
Health and Human Services,
Office of Governor John
Hickenlooper*

2Gen Past, Present and Future

Partners at the national level have played an important role in supporting and advancing Colorado’s 2Gen efforts to date. In particular, Ascend at the Aspen Institute, a hub for 2Gen innovation and leadership, has partnered with Colorado since 2011 to identify and implement 2Gen strategies across programs, policies and philanthropy.

Ascend’s Colorado network has grown to include 16 organizations, and the recently launched Colorado Children and Families Health and Human Services Fellowship will invest in additional leaders who are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of Colorado families.

Ascend’s long-standing partnership with Colorado, and its leadership and advocacy at the national level, will continue to be invaluable resources for the state’s efforts to create 2Gen solutions through best and next practices, innovative policies and bipartisan political will.

Presenters:

*Anne Mosle, Vice President,
Aspen Institute; Executive
Director, Ascend*

*“Here in Colorado, you are sitting on a powder keg of possibility.”
— ANNE MOSLE*

Parent Perspectives - Keeping Families at the Center

Background: 2Gen combines best practices with the expertise of the families affected and creates a “magnifying impact” by employing a holistic frame to connect people across generations. Four parents with experience navigating Colorado’s support systems and services shared their stories during the event’s first panel. Their personal accounts, included in Appendix A of this report, served as a touchstone throughout the conference.

Strategies and Insights

- **Offer supportive staff, mentors and navigators and wraparound services.** They instill confidence and help people overcome the fear of returning to school or applying for a new job.
- **Reach out to people about what support exists and how to access it.** Many of the people most in need of help are unaware of available services or how to find them.
- **Recognize that housing and transportation are critical needs.** Prioritize basic needs for service delivery.
- **Understand the impact of the “cliff effect.”** Wraparound supports should not end abruptly when a person gets a good job or a raise, or ages out of foster care.

Moderator:

Anne Mosle, Vice President, Aspen Institute; Executive Director, Ascend

Parent Panel:

Michaela Harman, United Way Bridging the Gap

Lona Juarez, Jeffco Prosperity Project

Lisa Kordisch, Jeffco Prosperity Project

Aaron Roybal, Jeffco Prosperity Project

Taking 2Gen Statewide - PACTT State Policy Network

Background: Colorado is one of five states participating in the Parents and Children Thriving Together (PACTT) State Policy Network, a joint initiative of the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) that supports states in advancing 2Gen approaches to achieve system change. During this session, representatives from NGA and CLASP explained the motivation behind PACTT and how their organizations are utilizing 2Gen to inform and support state policy and service delivery reforms.

Strategies and Insights

- **Recognize that challenges also bring opportunities.** In times of federal uncertainty, states can take a leadership role in protecting low-income families.

Presenters:

Olivia Golden, Executive Director, Center for Law and Social Policy (recorded message)

Martin Simon, Associate Director, Economic Opportunity Division, National Governors Association

Kyle Brown, Policy Director, Health and Human Services, Office of Governor John Hickenlooper

- **Leverage the fact that governors are looking to 2Gen for answers.** Economic, social and fiscal issues across the country are motivating state policymakers to consider 2Gen approaches.
- **Set priorities to focus work and energy, and track outcomes.** Don't spread efforts too thin.
- **Build partnerships at the state and local level.** Find out where the resources are to support 2Gen approaches, and apply state-level lessons learned throughout the country.
- **Stay connected to the families that policies affect.** Listen to their stories, and create policies, programs and systems designed to meet their needs.

“Using 2Gen approaches to create systemic change that can transcend changes in administration is in the interest of everyone.”
 – MARTIN SIMON

Embracing 2Gen Approaches - State Agency Efforts

Background: Under the Hickenlooper administration, state agencies have started incorporating 2Gen into programs, policies and goals, so it becomes a “framework by which we do the work, not just one more thing we have to do.” Leaders from five Colorado agencies discussed their efforts to employ 2Gen strategies across the realms of health, human services, local affairs and higher education. Panelists noted that while they have a strong history of working with one another, opportunities for increased collaboration to better support families still exist. The bipartisan nature of these partnerships will help ensure continuity and sustainability in the face of changes in administration.

Strategies and Insights

Housing

- **Make housing a top priority.** Access to housing (and housing stability) is foundational to the health and well-being of children and families.
- **Work with local housing authorities to address acute issues, such as helping felons access housing.** Stable housing reduces recidivism and helps break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

Moderator:

Roxane White, Morgridge Family Economic Security Innovator in Residence, Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Panelists:

Reggie Bicha, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Human Services

Sue Birch, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

Irv Halter, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Kim Hunter Reed, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Larry Wolk, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Health

- **Evaluate physical and behavioral health together.** Use assessments that see people holistically, inclusively and across sectors to bring uniformity.
- **Provide mental health screenings with prenatal care.**

Education

- **Focus on talent development.** In today's "knowledge economy," education beyond high school is essential.
- **Address the needs of parents pursuing higher education.** Options such as block scheduling can be helpful for parents.

Collaboration

- **Differentiate between content problems and process problems.** Focus on a process that sustains 2Gen efforts holistically.
- **Find common ground and focus on why the work matters, not on specific organizations or people.** It's about mission, not individual interests, and it's about trust, not control.
- **Look at the data and share it with other agencies.**

Maintaining Bipartisan Appeal

- **Focus on overall goals, not partisan goals.** Utilize strategies, such as county incentive grants, that encourage 2Gen implementation regardless of party.
- **Nurture relationships with people from other parties.** Form highly engaged and bipartisan boards and coalitions.

*“Visualize the faces and stories that bring meaning to your work ...
become inspired by individuals who have beat the odds.”*
— KIM HUNTER REED

Innovation in Colorado

Background: While Colorado's partnerships at the national and state level have helped facilitate the adoption of 2Gen, county and local efforts have long been at the forefront of 2Gen in Colorado. The evening program highlighted four local 2Gen efforts, from different regions of the state, that are supporting families across the domains of education, health and employment. Program leaders described how they have tailored their work to meet the needs of specific populations. Additional information about each of the featured programs is available on the Governor's Office [Two-Generation Approach](#) webpage, as part of the conference materials.

Strategies and Insights

- **Meet clients where they are.** Ask: What are your hopes and dreams, and what are you willing to do to achieve them?
- **Partnerships are critical.** Strong partnerships across organizations, agencies, and industries help promote, secure, and maintain program success.
- **Existing programs need to be better communicated and coordinated.** Those most in need of services often don't know where to look to find support.

Speakers:

Jon Fox-Rubin, Executive Director, Valley Settlement Project

Liddy Romero, Founder and Executive Director, WorkLife Partnership

Mary Anne Snyder, Director, Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services

Victor Vialpando, Dean, School of Professional Studies and Sciences, Community College of Aurora

KEY TAKEAWAYS, DAY 1

The first day of the 2Gen Statewide Conference highlighted Colorado's role as a national leader in 2Gen strategies and reviewed the strong foundation of work at the national, state and local level. Relationships and collaborations have been critical to Colorado's 2Gen success to date. During Day 1, attendees heard from key national partners, including Ascend at the Aspen Institute, NGA, CLASP, Colorado Cabinet members and local leaders who have been at the forefront of 2Gen efforts.

In addition to reviewing past and current 2Gen successes, Day 1 also highlighted new tools and opportunities to further expand this work, including the *2Gen Guide*, Colorado's participation in the PACTT Two-Generation State Policy Network, and a new State Two-Generation Program Coordinator in the Governor's Office. Attendees were challenged to work in partnership with the state and each other and utilize these resources not only to advance specific programs and policies, but also to instigate and advance system-level changes that will ensure all Colorado families have access to the resources they need to reach their potential, both now and in the future.

Key themes that emerged on the conference's first day include:

- **Collaborate.** Find partners across sectors. Meet with other providers and become familiar with their operations. Look to the business world for mutually beneficial solutions and work with policymakers from other parties.
- **Coordinate.** Work together to coordinate services and connect clients with other assistance and peers so they have wraparound support. Reach out to noncustodial parents, former foster children and felons.
- **Listen.** The people affected know best what they need. Providers will be most successful if they truly hear clients, respect them and their decisions and opinions, and meet them where they are—physically and otherwise.
- **Prioritize.** Housing, transportation and child care are foundational.
- **Be creative.** Seek “outside the box” solutions.
- **Value equity over equality.** Tailor remedies to suit particular needs. Some people need more support than others.
- **Step aside.** Societal change reaches a deeper level when former clients become leaders in their communities, assuming staff or other roles.

DAY 2: PUTTING THE 2GEN APPROACH INTO PRACTICE

Strategic Communication for 2Gen Policy and Systems Change

Background: Research on framing and messaging about low-income families can inform communication strategies that resonate with the public and policymakers and galvanize stakeholders around 2Gen systems change. Three communications experts discussed the impact various messaging strategies have in different industries with different audiences. The panel presented tools and examples of strategic messages, and stressed the importance of storytelling and tactics to develop fruitful relationships with communications divisions.

Strategies and Insights

Tell the Story

- **Analyze data from a number of agencies to understand the bigger picture.** Use research to show that many families face the same issues.
- **Appeal to the right level of thinking at the right time.** Different levels of thinking include: (1) values; (2) issues or movement; and (3) specific proposals.
- **Guide the public through the story.** Expand the message beyond the individual so the public can relate to it and provide action steps toward a solution.

Appeal to Shared Values

- **Shift the stigma from the person to the situation.** For example, say “low-wage job” instead of “low-income person.”
- **Focus on key values that shape views of family.** Such values include: (1) caring for those who cannot care for themselves; (2) accepting responsibility for individual decisions and actions; (3) hard work and discipline; and (4) equal opportunity for all.
- **Avoid zones of controversy.** Framing things in a controversial way stops an initiative’s momentum.

Develop Relationships with Communications People

- **Realize the communications department has a job to do.** Use their expertise to get the message out and be proactive in telling them about positive stories.

Moderator:

Jacque Montgomery, Press Secretary, Office of Governor John Hickenlooper

Panelists:

Kathy Bonk, Executive Director, Communications Consortium Media Center

Nate McDonald, Communication Director, Utah Department of Workforce Services

Lori Severens, Assistant Director for Leadership and Design, Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Investing in Change - Philanthropic Leadership

Background: Philanthropic organizations have been key supporters and valued thought partners in developing and implementing 2Gen strategies in Colorado. Leaders from three philanthropic organizations offered their perspectives on the importance of 2Gen approaches and reflected on how philanthropy can support program, policy and systems change to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty for children and families.

Strategies and Insights

Secrets to Collaboration

- **Pursue strategic, long-term relationships at multiple levels.** Look for people with different perspectives and at different places to help build coalitions.
- **Organize partners to have conversations about what needs to happen in the field, not just the organization.** Make sure everyone is talking about the same thing; definitional haziness is dangerous.

Strategies for Philanthropic Success

- **Be strategic if you're a small foundation.** Partner with the government and other foundations to effect the change they want.
- **Take advantage of opportunities to engage in policy and advocacy work.**

Maintaining Commitment through Political Transitions

- **Distribute money locally to ensure it is protected.**
- **Document where 2Gen has been, look at policy opportunities and resources, and learn to speak with one voice.**
- **Embed, sustain and institutionalize the work to keep making progress.**

“We’ve built these relationships in good and bad times. Partner and collaborate to sustain the progress that has been made.”

– LETTY BASS

Moderator:

Anne Mosle, Vice President, Aspen Institute; Executive Director, Ascend

Panelists:

Letty Bass, Executive Director, Chambers Family Fund

Elsa Holguin, Senior Program Officer, Rose Community Foundation

Susan Steele, Executive Director, Buell Foundation

At the Forefront - County Innovations

Background: Counties throughout the state have been pioneers in developing innovative 2Gen programs that strengthen services for children and families. Because Colorado's counties vary so markedly - in size, population, geography, resources, etc. - each has taken a different approach to social services and the application of 2Gen strategies, based on local needs. In this session, leaders from four counties discussed their various 2Gen journeys, focusing on challenges, successes and lessons learned.

Strategies and Insights

Treating Families with Respect

- **“Listen loudly.”** Believe clients when they describe what they need.
- **Have a sense of urgency.**

Practical Solutions

- **Consider temporary solutions when there is a lack of services or capacity.**
- **Maintain partnerships with other organizations as a continual process.**

Thoughts on Funding

- **Recognize the key role of philanthropy and flexible funds.**
- **Focus on meeting needs over compliance.**
- **Ensure outcomes are appropriately tracked when blending and braiding funding.**

“Have a sense of urgency. We have been talking about early childhood learning for 20 years. Families don't have 20 years—or one. ... What if it was your family?”

— LYNN JOHNSON

Moderator:

Marjorie Sims, Managing Director, Ascend at the Aspen Institute

Panelists:

Matt Dodson, Director, Archuleta County Department of Human Services

Lynn Johnson, Executive Director, Jefferson County Human Services

Lanie Meyers-Mireles, Human Services Director, Prowers County

Scott Shields, CEO, Family Tree

Cheryl Ternes, Arapahoe County Human Services Director

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Measuring Success: Developing 2Gen Outcomes & Data Systems: Governance and Technology

The Measuring Outcomes mini-workshop track was divided into two sessions: (1) “Measuring Success - Developing 2Gen Outcomes” focused on strategies for measuring family outcomes; and (2) “Governance and Technology” addressed challenges and opportunities for sharing data within and across organizations to improve outcomes for families and communities.

Strategies and Insights

- **Create a culture of evaluation organizationally.** Embedding evaluation within the organizational culture facilitates the regular collection and use of data.
- **Become intentional about measurement.** Identify and focus on the most meaningful measures, and build logic models and theories of change to continuously track progress.
- **Leverage relationships with partner organizations.** Build a network of contacts to help address challenges and achieve organizational goals, identify best practices and look at family data holistically.
- **Pilot before going to scale.** Pilot efforts to utilize or share data before going to scale to address potential gaps and allow for any needed adjustments.
- **Move from compliance to meaning.** Ask “what are we trying to do with the information?”
- **Listen to local “on the ground” expertise.** Engage with and listen to individuals and families, and consult with local service organizations to get a better sense of potentially helpful metrics.
- **Establish trust.** Trust is foundational for data sharing.
- **Standardize lexicon, data classification and platforms.** Creating a standard lexicon or vocabulary may narrow gaps in the conversation between different agencies.

Facilitators:

Tony Gherardini, Deputy Executive Director of Operations, Colorado Department of Human Services

Carrie Paykoc, State Health Information Technology Coordinator, Office of Governor John Hickenlooper

Idea sparkers:

Jude Liguori-Oliver, Interim Division Director, Denver Human Services

Judith Martinez, director, Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement, Colorado Department of Education

Jacob Moy, Manager, Third Sector Capital Partners

Kate Ridings, Upskill Director, WorkLife Partnership

Louise Myrland, Vice President of Programs, The Women’s Foundation of Colorado

Jon Gottsegen, State Chief Data Officer, Office of Information Technology

Deidre Johnson, CEO and Executive Director, Center for African-American Health

Whitney LeBouef, President and Founder, Actionable Policy Research

Robert Prevost, Deputy Director, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services

- **Find common ground.** Establish an informal, conversational dialogue through which parties can identify why it is important to share data.
- **Leverage newer technology to securely share data.** Technologies and platforms that allow data sharing digitally instead of physically might prove more persuasive for data-sharing agreement purposes.

“Technology isn’t often the hardest part. The core of what we help with is governance, partnering with leaders, people on the ground.”

– WHITNEY LEBOUF

COLLABORATION AND ALIGNMENT

Social Determinants of Health across Generations & 2Gen Approach to Higher Education

The Collaboration and Alignment mini-workshop track was divided into two sessions: (1) “Social Determinants of Health across Generations” discussed initiatives related to the social determinants of health and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration; and (2) “2Gen Approach to Higher Education” examined state and federal efforts to support low-income student parents and help them gain postsecondary credentials, as well as job-training initiatives to help workers advance to “family-supporting” careers.

Strategies and Insights

- **Make program rules friendlier and programs easier to access.** Provide services such as child care and eliminate unnecessary limitations to service.
- **Serve people where they are.** Offer hours or schedule appointments during times when parents can meet, respect their time by covering multiple needs and anticipate problems and reach out.
- **Respect parents and their decisions.** Change the internal culture so that “helping families function” is the goal of every staff member.
- **Think regionally.** Services received should not be an accident of geography.
- **Leverage different funding opportunities.** Bring together resources that support the collection of outcomes data.
- **Provide on-the-job training.** Opportunities currently exist through apprenticeships and other industry-aligned efforts, using Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding.
- **Address the “skills gap.”** Train low-wage workers and find opportunities for people with disabilities, the formerly incarcerated and others often left out of the workforce.

Facilitators:

Tista Ghosh, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health Programs, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Jeff Kuhr, Executive Director, Mesa County Health Department

Idea sparkers:

Mary Baydarian, Director, Garfield County Human Services

Samantha Brown, Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Denver

Murielle Romine, Program Innovation Section, Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing

Cheryl Secorski, Deputy Director, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Diane Duffy, Chief Operating Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education

Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy

Kelly Folks, Division Manager, Arapahoe/Douglas Works!

Rich Jones, Director of Policy and Research, The Bell Policy Center

Martin Simon, Associate Director, Economic Opportunity Division, National Governors Association

- **Support students who are parents.** Provide child care and other needed supports (e.g., transportation, housing and food). Recognize children can be motivators for parents and ensure access to high quality child care and early childhood education.
- **Align programs to cover financial aid gaps.** For low-income students, Pell grants may not cover all expenses. Middle-income families may have to rely on loans, which also might not cover the full cost of attendance.
- **Be realistic, not pessimistic.** Address the “belief gap” that leads people to assume they can’t afford higher education. Discuss certificates and technical schools, which can be more attainable than a college degree.
- **Acquire and use data.** Data should be used to improve understanding of the factors and situations that help parents complete secondary education and help their children thrive.
- **Listen.** Include students and workers at the discussion table.

RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Leveraging Existing Resources to Support Innovation & Engaging Employers in 2Gen

The Resources and Sustainability mini-workshop track was divided into two sessions: (1) “Leveraging Existing Resources to Support Innovation” addressed federal and state funding sources that are currently used to serve families across multiple generations, as well as strategies to leverage existing programs and resources to promote 2Gen approaches; and (2) “Engaging Employers in 2Gen” discussed strategies to engage businesses in 2Gen efforts so they can effectively tap into pools of talent and ensure their needs are met while better supporting families.

Strategies and Insights

- **Ask for permission and forgiveness.** Identify areas where funding changes or adjustments are possible, and adapt them to become 2Gen-friendly.
- **Tailor or “dose” programmatic services to meet the appropriate level of individual and family needs.** Not all families need the same level of support, and services should be calibrated to address those with minor or temporary needs, as well as those requiring more complex and comprehensive services.
- **Encourage innovation and creativity, using data to make connections across programs and identify gaps.** Engage the community in establishing priorities and finding solutions.
- **Align organizational goals and services with state and federal priorities, and other local partners and funders’ interests.** Use private money as a catalyst for smaller, specific solutions, and shift funding practices and philosophies to incentivize improved family outcomes rather than program compliance or performance monitoring.
- **Place responsibility on businesses.** Clarify to business leaders how family-friendly strategies help retain employees and support job growth, and engage business leaders in actionable steps that will help gain traction.

Facilitators:

Roger Low, Pay for Success Project Manager, Office of State Planning and Budgeting

Lee Wheeler-Berliner, Assistant Director, Public Engagement, Colorado Workforce Development Council

Idea sparkers:

Dena Jardine, Workforce Director, Larimer County Workforce Center

Claire Levy, Executive Director, Colorado Center on Law and Policy

Ki’i Powell, Director of Office Economic Security, Colorado Department of Human Services

Katherine Shamraj, Managing Director, Third Sector Capital Partners

Molly Yost, Senior Project Manager, Early Milestones Colorado

Suzanne Banning, President and CEO, Florence Crittenton Services

Andy Davies, Director, Cradle to Career, Aspen Community Foundation

Lanae Davis, Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Research

Gloria Higgins, President, Executives Partnering to Invest in Children

Hollis Salway, Director of Development, CareerWise

- **Use language the business community understands.** Use “family-friendly business practices and policies” instead of (or in addition to) 2Gen to avoid confusion, and present 2Gen as an investment that will support and enhance profitability.
- **Streamline the pipeline to employers.** Support opportunities for workers to begin working (e.g., offering or covering costs for trainings, apprenticeships, certifications and credentialing) and provide more opportunities for upward mobility.
- **Reverse stereotypes.** Frame parenthood as a strength instead of pigeonholing certain groups (e.g. teen moms, noncustodial parents and highly committed parents) into stereotypes with negative connotations in the business world.
- **Hear and leverage the voice of business leaders.** Many have their own stories about struggles with child care and other family-related barriers.
- **Encourage connections that focus on support and learning.** Institutions such as libraries can be powerful allies and partners in filling the gaps for family-centric services such as child care. Additionally, connections among business leaders can help shift perspectives and lead to better workforce outcomes.

POLICY AND PRACTICES

Policy Landscape for 2Gen Solutions & Challenges and Opportunities of Program Implementation

The Policy and Practices mini-workshop track was divided into two sessions: (1) “Policy Landscape for 2Gen Solutions” examined challenges and opportunities to implement 2Gen strategies through state and national policies; and (2) “Challenges and Opportunities of Program Implementation” explored strategies that organizations can use to facilitate adoption of 2Gen and identified best practices related to culture change and partnering across sectors.

Strategies and Insights:

- **Build flexibility into state policies.** Allow for differences at the regional, county and local levels, and recognize state programs are subject to local appropriations and people in all counties do not have equal access to state services.
- **Make pilot projects sustainable and scalable.** Use private funding or establish structures to support collaboration among like-minded groups to ensure sustainability after pilot program funding ends.
- **Create economic policies that support families.** End the “predatory economy” by eliminating or reducing financial fees and penalties, and ending policies that enable a cycle of debt. Provide more incentives for college savings, as well as tax credits for caregivers. Expand program eligibility to address the “cliff effect.” Eliminate library fees.
- **Use funding wisely.** Spend money on what’s most effective, not “work that isn’t working.” Lean on philanthropic bridge funding for proven programs.
- **Use 2Gen terminology.** Using the same terminology consistently allows groups to compare apples to apples.
- **Recognize “the community” is all of us and includes providers and clients.** Employ strategies informed by staff doing the work, and create

Facilitators:

Jerene Petersen, Deputy Executive Director for Community Partnerships, Colorado Department of Human Services

Ethan Hemming, Executive Director, Warren Village

Idea sparkers:

Letty Bass, Executive Director, Chambers Family Fund

Nikki Hatch, Regional Administrator, Region 8, Administration for Children and Families

Duy Pham, Research Assistant, Center for Postsecondary Education and Economic Success, Center for Law and Social Policy

Nancy Sharpe, Arapahoe County Commissioner

Keri Batchelder, Two-Generation Manager, Colorado Department of Human Services

Lauren Casteel, President and CEO, The Women’s Foundation of Colorado

Elsa Holguin, Senior Program Officer of Child and Family Development, Rose Community Foundation

Mark Kling, Executive Director, Family Resource Center Association

Josiah Masingale, Executive Director, Colorado Community Action Association

dedicated 2Gen positions within organizations to break down silos between departments or programs.

- **Meet clients where they are, and pursue goals THEY define.** Move clients into leadership roles through strategies such as “homegrown” organizations run by community members, or grant requirements stipulating that boards be one-third low-income.
- **Create policy that makes child care accessible and affordable.** Support child care that meets the needs of all parents. Pay child care workers a living wage.
- **Fund new nonprofits if necessary.** Philanthropies can often take risks on new and innovative projects that government may not be able to support.

“Each of our resource centers is community grown. It’s not the Front Range going out and starting them; these were started by communities. That’s one way to make sure those voices are heard.”

– MARK KLING

“(Funders) have to be the risk takers... Government is not as able to take the risk, but we can.”

– ELSA HOLGUIN

KEY TAKEAWAYS, DAY 2

The second day of the conference featured a series of panel discussions addressing the topics of strategic communications, philanthropic support of 2Gen and innovative county strategies for implementing 2Gen approaches. Key themes emerging from these sessions included the importance of truly listening to people’s stories, and the need to ignite passion about supporting families within organizations as well as with the public. Utilizing local expertise, incorporating the voice of families being served, and building sustainable relationships across agencies and industries were identified as key strategies to ensure sustainability during administration transitions as well as funding droughts.

On Day 2, participants were also asked to actively engage in mini-workshops focused on key objectives identified in the *2Gen Guide*: 1) measuring outcomes (data, data systems and evaluation); 2) organizing and collaboration; 3) resources and sustainability; and 4) policy and practices. These sessions were participant-driven and allowed for a deeper dive into specific content areas.

Key issues identified during the mini-workshops included:

- **Measuring Outcomes (Data, Data systems and Evaluation)**—Discussions revolved around the central idea that data outcomes should point to the best interests of families in Colorado, rather than focusing on programmatic or organizational compliance. Currently, the lack of communication and interoperability across agencies presents a significant challenge in tracking children and caregivers, individually and as a family unit, across systems. Yet resources do exist that would help increase the interoperability of systems and build trust around data sharing. Strategies for bringing a 2Gen lens to data systems include digital technologies that facilitate secure data sharing, partnerships across agencies, the identification of shared interests, and the use of new methodologies.
- **Collaboration and Alignment**—A grounding theme was that programs, policies and service delivery systems should all reflect basic respect for families and for their time. Rules and requirements should be well-reasoned and assume competence and good intentions. Navigators provide a key service and ideally should serve their clients across sectors. Additionally, the need for high-quality child care is acute throughout the state, and solutions must be wide-ranging to meet the need. Gaps in funding for higher education also need to be filled.
- **Resources and Sustainability**—A central concern was the lack of funding available to promote 2Gen strategies. Finding creative solutions and innovative strategies to maximize existing funding sources is critical to the sustainability of this work. Private and public funding sources must be merged to support 2Gen programs, and broader conversations must shift toward collaboration in order to see long-lasting change. Building a case for businesses to take on family-friendly strategies and cover costs for related services can also increase funding streams from a third, currently less involved, source.
- **Policy and Practices**—Recurrent themes included “meeting people where they are” and allowing individuals to define their needs. The need for community alliances and flexibility around local program implementation were also identified. Differences among Colorado counties make it essential that any state-launched program consider and allow for geographic variances. In addition, a first step for state policy action might be to fully implement the federal laws and programs on the books. The acute need for high-quality, affordable child care and the failure to effectively communicate the state resources that are currently available to counties were also major topics of discussion.

OVERALL THEMES AND NEXT STEPS

Throughout the conference, participants and experts reiterated the importance of client-directed assistance—the people affected know best what they need. Providers will be most successful if they listen to clients and respect their decisions and opinions, and meet them where they are without unnecessarily tough requirements or restrictive rules. 2Gen partners from all sectors should embrace the philosophy that “the community is us” and make way for the people served to take leadership roles.

Housing, transportation and affordable child care are basic necessities if 2Gen advocates are to effect multigenerational change. However, wraparound care means looking at client needs holistically. Navigators must be familiar with available services and connect clients across sectors. Social service agencies must do a better job of communicating with each other and reaching out to clients.

As Colorado and the nation face a shortage of skilled workers, the state also needs to provide more broad and reliable support to the 26 percent of postsecondary students who are parents. Providers need to engage the business sector as well, enlisting its help particularly around postsecondary training and education. 2Gen partners must continue to gather data on outcomes in a way that serves families, as well as find ways to share data across agencies. They must also look at innovative ways to maximize funding.

Colorado is a leader in applying 2Gen strategies, which appeal to the public and to policymakers on both sides of the political aisle, in rural and urban settings. Policymakers and social service sector leaders are generally optimistic that 2Gen cultural changes are gaining momentum and are starting to become a “new normal” in the state. However, collective action is needed to ensure that past and current 2Gen successes are not only maintained, but also leveraged to expand the adoption of 2Gen across new sectors.

The *2Gen Guide* developed by stakeholders represents a key milestone in Colorado’s 2Gen journey, outlining a common statewide vision for 2Gen and providing a framework and action plan for next steps. The 2Gen Statewide Conference was a next step in the journey, bringing leaders from across the state together to start filling in the details of that action plan. The issues, ideas and priorities summarized in this report will now be used to inform the development of a statewide 2Gen Action Plan. The action plan will provide a more detailed road map of Colorado’s short-, medium- and long-term objectives for 2Gen and the specific actions and activities required to achieve them.

The Governor’s Office will compile an initial version of this plan, to be released in early spring 2018, and all stakeholders interested in serving children and families will be invited and encouraged to participate in refining and implementing this guiding document. Ultimately, public-private partnerships that reach across sectors, and a strong collective commitment to improving the well-being of children and families, will be fundamental to Colorado’s success in instigating and driving system-level change that will ensure the long-term sustainability of 2Gen work in Colorado.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Parent Stories

Working Hard at Fatherhood

Aaron Roybal grew up not knowing his biological father and as a result, made poor life choices which led him to become involved with drugs and gangs. After a stint in the Navy he was married and had his first child. Shortly before his son was born Aaron met his biological father who had just been released from prison. This had a major impact on the kind of father he wanted to be, and he made a commitment to always be present in his children's lives. As a father of 3 boys Aaron was having trouble finding balance at home until his youngest started attending Head Start and he found the Jeffco Prosperity Project. After receiving coaching, being connected to resources, and getting a mental health screen, he was able to address his depression and take the lead role in his own life as well as becoming far more engaged with his family. Today he has one son in college and the others are striving towards their goal to attend college. Aaron is starting a non-profit for youth with similar backgrounds to his, providing guidance and support needed to maintain a healthy and productive lifestyle.

Aging out of Foster Care

When Michaela Harman grew too old for foster care services, she left, she said, with no resources. No support, no money or financial knowledge— “no life skills.” She and her young son, since diagnosed with autism, spent two years homeless. She listed a few common fates of former foster children: homelessness, incarceration, lack of a high school diploma or a college degree. There is a shortage of appropriate programs, Ms. Harman said. And those that exist have waiting lists. She eventually found help through United Way's Bridging the Gap program, but, she said, “We need a lot more of these programs.”

A Child of the Streets

Lona Juarez was born in East Los Angeles to a 14-year-old mom. She spent much of her youth being passed from one family member's home to another's, “a child of the streets,” she said. “It disconnected me from everything. ... I didn't have anybody to teach me about life and parenting and what was important.” She came to Colorado when she was 18. At 19, she had her first child, vowing never to put her children through what she experienced. JPP came into her life, too, when one of her children entered Head Start, and its wraparound services helped her go back to school. Today, Ms. Juarez is a single mom with eight children. She works four jobs and is proud of what she has provided her family.

Life on the Cliff

Lisa Kordisch says her parents did everything they could to help her have the life they wanted for her. She has a college degree. She has an “amazing,” well-paying job. Yet she and her children live with family because she can't afford her own home. “I cannot afford to give my children any of the things I had while growing up,” she said. She does not qualify for

government assistance because her income is too high. But much of her paycheck is eaten up by credit card debt she incurred as a young teacher. She is living on a “cliff,” she said, and feels “invisible.”

“(Jeffco Prosperity Project is) the parent, the husband, the friend I never had.”

– LONA JUAREZ

Appendix B: 2Gen Definitions

Child-Focused: An intervention that is primarily focused on the child, age 18 and under. For example, early childhood care and education and/or after-school care.

Comprehensive Services: Service delivery systems that identify family strengths and needs and connect families with a wide range of relevant services and supports.

Cultural Competency: Programs and services that are respectful of and responsive to the unique combination of cultural variables—including ability, age, beliefs, ethnicity, experience, gender, gender identity, linguistic background, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status—that the service providers, individual clients, and families bring to interactions.

Economic Opportunity: Developing pathways for parents to become financially secure and support their children’s healthy development and academic success. For example: connecting low-income families with early childhood education, job training, financial coaching and other tools to provide information on how to create and use budgets, manage checking accounts, access credit scores, repair credit, pay off debt, and save for the future.

Economic Security: When families are able to obtain jobs that pay good wages and are able to build both short- and long-term assets that allow them to consistently meet their daily living expenses and support their children’s healthy development and academic success, while also building assets that enable them to handle unanticipated expenses or a temporary loss of income over time.

Economic Stability: When families can meet their daily living expenses as well as build and protect financial assets that will enable them to handle unanticipated expenses or a temporary loss of income over time.

Evaluation: For the purpose of two-generation projects, evaluation means the systematic investigation of the implementation and effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives.

Family: The definition of family varies for the different health and human services a family may access. The two-generation model views family as a child or children and the individuals parenting the child or children. Individuals in a child's life who fulfill the parenting role may be grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, stepparents and others.

Family Capacity: The ability of the family to function in any number of areas (e.g., financial, emotional, communication, and problem-solving).

Family Engagement: A holistic approach to incorporating the families' experiences, capabilities, goals and values into an ongoing, strengths-based partnership between the family and service providers.

Family-Focused: Primarily focused on the family as a whole.

Family Well-Being: A measure of how well family members are doing at a point in time, including measures of the stability and quality of relationships between family members, as well as their financial resources, physical and mental health, and housing.

Holistic: Characterized by comprehension of the parts of something as intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole. In medicine, characterized by the treatment of the whole person, taking into account mental and social factors, rather than just the physical symptoms of a disease.

Impact: The demonstrable effect of an intervention measured relative to a limited or no-services counterfactual. Examples include an improvement in a family's well-being, household earnings/income or health status.

Interoperability: The ability of a system or component to function effectively with other systems or components.

Mutual Motivation: Parents and children experience "mutual motivation" when service delivery systems are integrated to support the well-being and success of both parents and children. For example, when parents experience their child learning and being cared for in a quality early childhood setting, this may motivate parents to fulfill their own educational and career goals (Chase-Lansdale & Brooks-Gunn, 2014; Sommer et al., 2012).

Mutual Reinforcement: Mutually reinforcing activities that ensure the significant efforts and activities of collaborators are aligned toward achieving the common agenda and shared measures.

Outcomes: The knowledge/insights, skills, attitudes and behaviors that are targeted and thus expected to be achieved by a program.

Outcome Measure: A systematic way to assess the extent to which a program has achieved its expected results.

Parent: The individuals in a child's life who fulfill the parenting role, including parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, stepparents and others.

Parent-Focused: Primarily focused on the parent/caregiver (e.g., adult education or occupational skills training).

Social Capital: The collective value of all social networks, including family, friends, co-workers and others, and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other.

Two-Generation (2Gen) Approach: A mindset for designing programs and policies that serve children and parents simultaneously. For example, an adult education program designed to also provide quality care for young children.

Two-Generation (2Gen) Program: A program designed to provide services to both child and adult simultaneously and track outcomes for both. For example, an adult education program tracks the education gains of participants while tracking the attendance of their children in a Head Start program.

Two-Generation (2Gen) Strategy: A plan to coordinate services with other organizations to meet the needs of all family members. For example, an adult education program coordinates services with Head Start to offer parents classes at the same time children attend the Head Start program, in addition to providing quality child care for younger siblings in collaboration with local child care providers.