

What is the community challenge?

There is a philosophical gap in the understanding of two-generational approaches for comprehensive service delivery models supporting whole family units aimed at poverty reduction and better youth outcomes in Indianapolis.

What is the promising solution?

Great Families 2020 (GF2020) is based on the 2Gen model developed by Ascend at the Aspen Institute, and uses family case management to direct families in need of financial services to evidence-based interventions and wraparound services. The family unit receives family-focused case management provided by a family coach. The family coaching process involves developing a relationship with a family coach and to create a Family Success Plan (FSP) that helps the family set and maintain goals in the five areas of the 2Gen model—high quality early childhood education, economic assets, postsecondary and employment pathways, social capital, and health and well-being. Additionally, GF2020 connects families to services in those five areas that are provided by participating subgrantee agencies.

What was the purpose of evaluation?

The evaluation of United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI)'s Great Families 2020 by Indiana University Public Policy Institute and The Polis Center began in 2016 and finished reporting in 2020. This evaluation is an implementation study that (1) examines the implementation of the GF2020 service delivery process and model, and (2) an outcomes study that assesses the extent to which the GF2020 model is associated with improvements in outcomes of the GF2020 model to achieve short-term outcomes during the first six months to two years of enrolling families. The implementation study employed a mixed-methods approach, including interviews and focus groups with UWCI GF2020 staff and GF2020 subgrantees and web-based pre- and post-surveys of staff at each subgrantee site, descriptive analysis of GF2020 programmatic and administrative data, participant interviews and surveys, and a review of subgrantee documents. The outcomes study analyzed programmatic data of 675 adult GF2020 participants. The statistical analyses included t-tests, Wilcoxon signed rank tests, general linear models, and multilevel models to understand statistical differences across groups and factors associated with individual outcomes across program components.

What did the evaluation find?

As a grantee of the Social Innovation Fund, UWCI engaged an independent evaluator to evaluate GF2020.

- GF2020 is largely being implemented with fidelity across three core components of early childhood education, economic assets, and employment coaching, with financial counseling standing out as the most popular service. Coaching is largely perceived as an integral component of GF2020.
- Participants are satisfied with all services received through GF2020.

Program At-a-Glance

CNCS Program: Social Innovation Fund

Intervention: Great Families 2020 (GF2020)

Intermediary: United Way of Central Indiana

Focus Area(s): Economic Opportunity /Youth Development

Focus Population(s): Parent/s or caregiver/s with at least one child (age 0-6), living together as part of a family, who need economic support or stabilization services.

Community(ies) Served: Indianapolis, IN

- Over the course of their participation, adults experienced significant improvements in
 - Monthly income
 - Social networks
 - Physical and mental
 - Child development & knowledge of parenting
 - Family functioning and
 - Concrete supports.
- There was no significant difference in the change in monthly income between treatment and comparison groups.

Notes on the evaluation

Due to congressional sun-setting of the Social Innovation Fund program, UWCI was not able to conduct an impact evaluation, and instead conducted an implementation evaluation and exploratory outcome analysis. UWCI's G2020 program activities and data collection efforts during the final year of their evaluation in 2020 were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Indiana Department of Education implemented a state policy change that shifted to new assessment tools, and lack of reporting requirements for child care centers that are not affiliated with a school affected the collection of outcome data for children and ultimately prevented the in-depth analysis related to child outcomes.

How is UWCI using the evaluation findings to improve?

As a result of GF2020, in 2019, UWCI launched a funding mechanism called the Family Opportunity Fund. This effort provides funding for local community-based organizations to build capacity for serving an entire family's needs in areas highlighted by the 2Gen model. The evaluation findings helped highlight gaps and key implementation opportunities in their development of that fund, including:

- Leverage success with GF2020 organizational partnerships and relationships for ongoing programming
- Provide clear and consistent communication with grantees/subgrantees
- Integrate grantees/subgrantees in decision-making processes
- Provide ongoing learning and networking opportunities to increase capacity and relationships among subgrantees
- Consider including transition planning into the program to help families with children prepare for changes as the children age out of the GF2020 program
- Consider the role of policy-related barriers
- Develop an advisory board or other partnership with local agencies and stakeholders
- Invest in data-specific positions

The content of this brief was drawn from the full evaluation report submitted to CNCS by the grantee/subgrantee. The section of the brief that discusses evaluation use includes contribution of the grantee/subgrantee. All original content from the report is attributable to its authors.

To access the full evaluation report and learn more about CNCS, please visit nationalservice.gov/research.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), combines public and private resources to grow the impact of innovative, community-based solutions that have compelling evidence of improving the lives of people in low-income communities throughout the U.S. The SIF invests in three priority areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development.

Evaluation At-a-Glance

Evaluation Design(s): Implementation evaluation and exploratory outcome evaluation (single group pre-post and two groups pre-post)

Study Population: Parents and caregivers

(Independent) Evaluator(s): Indiana University Public Policy Institute and The Polis Center

This Evaluation's Level of Evidence*: Preliminary

*SIF and AmeriCorps currently use different definitions of levels of evidence.