

# **Metropolitan Action Commission**

## **2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Evaluation Report – 2019**

Serving the Children & Families of Davidson County, TN





## METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

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Executive Director

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November 2019

Dear Friends of the Metropolitan Action Commission:

I am pleased to release this much anticipated study of our pilot two-generation and whole family initiative. When we began our pilot in 2015, I believed strongly that we were building the ship as we were sailing it. In large part because we knew we needed to respond to the voices of our customers related to jobs but also because we simply could not afford to wait until everything was in place. We also believed strongly that the evidence we had seen previously from our GED/adult education program was a small glimpse of what is possible in the lives of families as you partner with them to achieve their goals.

This document reflects a portion of our journey with so much more work to do to grow and improve as a NextGen organization. At the time of this writing we have begun a new COMPTIA A+ certification class with 17 new Head Start parents. Fifteen parents from our last cohort are completing their paid internship over the next two months with five Metro Nashville Government IT departments including receiving full benefits and \$20 hourly with one of them stopping by today to share having to now mull over two job offers in the IT field.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our Board of Commissioners for trusting us to step outside of the comfort zone of mostly providing emergency services and establishing a strategic plan that matched our vision and the vision of our families for what is possible. A special thanks to the team at Metropolitan Action Commission for their willingness to go the extra mile and to constantly retool in order to better serve our customers.

I would like to thank our entire Community Services team with special mention of Jennifer Williams-Gleaves, Ricci Gardner, Marvin Cox and of Tiffany Boyd Harris for her editing, coordinating, and serving as the liaison with the Thomas P. Miller team. A special thanks to our national partners at the Community Action Partnership for their feedback on the draft version of this document as well as Dr. Anita Ball Conn. Thanks also to Michelle Fields, for her commitment to and support of our efforts to relentlessly pursue our two-generation and whole family work. Thanks to our Metro IT partners. Thanks also to our families who provided valuable information and feedback and who give us the privilege of partnering with them on their journey.

As we use this document to serve as a part of developing our next steps, we hope that those who believe in and are interested in the resiliency of individuals and families will find this document helpful. We are happy to share the results as we continue to learn and grow together.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Cynthia Croom".

Cynthia Croom

*This document was made possible through pass through Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding from the TN Department of Human Services (TNDHS) provided by the US Department of Human Services' Administration of Children and Families' Office of Community Services.*



**The community action agency for Nashville and Davidson County**



Breaking the cycle of poverty in our community – one child, one person, one family at a time.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1964, the Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) is the designated Community Action Agency for Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee. MAC's organizational mission is to change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve communities and make Nashville and Davidson County a better place to live. As a Community Action Agency, MAC partners with individuals and families with low incomes to help them improve their quality of life. MAC offers evidenced-based programming to break the cycle of poverty.

Thomas P. Miller & Associates, LLC (TPMA) was hired by MAC to conduct a third-party evaluation of MAC's 2-Generation (2Gen) and Whole Family three-year Pilot Initiative, including participant experiences and outcomes, as well as lessons learned by MAC through their implementation of the initiative. As part of the third-party review of MAC's programs, TPMA gathered feedback from MAC leadership and staff, training providers, and current and past program participants through interviews, focus groups, and a participant survey. TPMA also analyzed participant outcomes in existing MAC program data.

The report includes feedback from all stakeholders on their experiences with the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, including programmatic strengths, participant experiences, barriers and accelerators to participation, participant outcomes, lessons learned, and then concludes with recommendations for MAC to consider as it grows and expands its initiatives.

## MAC'S 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVE

MAC aims to break the cycle of poverty by building a system of care based on the whole family, holistically meeting the needs of children and their parents simultaneously. MAC's orientation to approaches to address whole family needs precedes its official adoption of the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach. Previous efforts to break down organizational silos – to have unified programs within the agency rather than working as single entities – and integrate resources and opportunities to customers served as an important foundation for MAC's strategic planning process, which resulted in its reinvigorated focus on mission-impact. As these critical shifts in MAC's organizational framework solidified, MAC's current 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative emerged. MAC leadership explained, "We heard someone at a meeting say something about 2Gen. We read the description and realized what we were doing was 2Gen. It didn't start with, 'Hey, let's go do 2Gen.' It started with looking at our mission and what we were purposed for."

MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative includes both child and adult programs, taking a holistic approach of serving the whole family. This initiative provides short-term, high-yield job trainings aimed to help parents quickly access living-wage jobs while their children are in Head Start or Early Head Start. This type of opportunity creates a pathway out of poverty for many families. The two primary programs in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative with an immediate employment focus include the Child Development Associate (CDA) program and the CompTIA A+ program. Additional 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs to enhance employment include Adult Education (GED or HISET), English as a Second Language (ESL), Father II Father, and a Youth Technology Camp.

| <b>MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Adult Training Programs</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Child Development Associate (CDA)</b>                        | The CDA program teaches about early child development and leads to a Child Development Associate credential. Participants must complete a portfolio including practical classroom experience, either through working or volunteering in an early childhood classroom.   |
| <b>CompTIA A+</b>   | The CompTIA A+ program teaches participants about Information Technology and leads to CompTIA A+ certification, following two certifying exams. Participants are then paired with a local IT company or department for an entry level, hands-on internship and/or assisted in their search for employment in the industry.  |
| <b>English as a Second Language (ESL)</b>                       | The ESL program provides beginner and intermediate English language training for individuals whose primary language is not English. ESL classes provide both basic communication skills and work-specific communication skills (e.g., talking to supervisors, coworkers, etc.).   |
| <b>Adult Education</b>  | The Adult Education program provides high school equivalency instruction for adults (including both 2Gen/Whole Family and non-2Gen/Whole Family individuals). Participants focus on acquiring the skills necessary for success on the HiSET exam through in-class and online instruction. Upon successful completion of five exams, participants can earn a high school equivalency credential (HiSET). |
| <b>Additional MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Programs</b>     |   |
| <b>Father II Father</b>   | The Father II Father program provides mentoring, workshops, and discussion opportunities for fathers of children in Head Start/Early Head Start. Father II Father focuses on supporting fathers and teaching parenting skills.  |
| <b>Youth Technology Camp</b>                                    | The summer Youth Technology Camp provides hands-on technology experiences and IT instruction for older siblings (ages 13-15) of Head Start/Early Head Start children.   |

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### *Accelerators of 2Gen/Whole Family Implementation*

There are six core tenets of MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family programming that lend themselves to successful implementation. These six accelerators are key components that would be beneficial for replication and scaling of MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

**Small, Defined Group of Customers.** By limiting the group of customers in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative to families who have children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start, MAC created a cohort of customers that staff could intentionally engage. Additionally, since many families who enroll in the Early Head Start programs are potentially eligible for up to five years in the program, these families have a longer timeframe for MAC staff to offer programming and resources. Achieving the goals of the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach takes time and creating a limited group of families that can participate for several years places them in a position for long-term success in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

**Building & Maintaining Trust.** MAC staff reported that establishing a foundation of trust with their customers is a key component of the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach. Staff explained, "Most of it is the relationship. The biggest key is trust. When you start dealing with people who've been hurt already, and you don't provide that trust, you fail because they won't come back." In its 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC is able to build off of its previous successes in maintaining trust with its customers, and benefits from word-of-mouth referrals and stories of positive outcomes from previous customers. Additionally, as MAC piloted the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, leadership took additional steps to support staff in building positive relationships with customers such as identifying specific staff to serve as liaisons to Head Start/Early Head Start classrooms, and training staff about resources customers might access in different programs across the organization. This allows staff to build a system to achieve goals alongside the customer as well as work to alleviate any organizational barriers that may hinder the customer from successfully completing the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming.

**Providing Wraparound Resources.** Each participant in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative brings with them a unique family composition and personal context that may present opportunities for and barriers to completion of the programming. To provide comprehensive opportunities to families, MAC provides wraparound resources such as access to other MAC programs (i.e., rent or utility assistance) and intentional referrals to other organizations in the community. In a survey of 2Gen/Whole Family participants, 60.2% of respondents reported receiving additional resources and opportunities from MAC while being enrolled in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming.

**Intentional Staff Engagement with Participants.** MAC leadership reported that MAC staff regularly visit classes to observe and meet with program participants. As a result, this allows



MAC staff to discuss and develop solutions with the participants to address any barriers in an effective and timely manner. One participant described MAC's process by saying, "I like the way they would just drop in on the classes sometimes. Just checking and making sure everyone was okay. And if we needed something, they would write it down and get it for the next class."

**Organizational Collaboration.** Prior to piloting the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC leadership identified the importance of breaking down organizational silos to serve its customers in a more holistic way. These early efforts to provide comprehensive opportunities to customers by using resources across the organization continued and increased as MAC began the pilot and remain an important part of the implementation of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. For example, each Head Start/Early Head Start location was assigned a designated Community Services team member who works directly with those families. This allowed MAC staff to streamline the process for identifying customer barriers and for partnering with the customer to develop solutions that would allow them to remain engaged and to succeed in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming.

**Supporting Staff Health & Wellness.** Staff reported that the work at MAC to partner with families is "not just a 9-to-5 job. You take it home with you." Acknowledging the challenges that the work entails, MAC leadership offers health and wellness supports to their staff. MAC leadership educates team members on the importance of self-care in an effort to promote and maintain both emotional and physical health and also allows staff to take wellness days for self-care or rest.

### *2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Participant Experiences*

Before starting the program, participants reported that they expected the program to be life-changing and that they were optimistic about the effects the program would have on their lives and the lives of their families. Similarly, staff reported that they hoped that the impacts on parents would go beyond job training. One staff member stated that MAC is "doing something external for the parent, but internally too. We're extrinsically motivating them, but they're becoming intrinsically motivated."

During the program, participants generally reported positive experiences with the programs noting that MAC is "doing a phenomenal job" and that "they help the community in so many ways." Additionally, of the 97 surveyed participants, 83.2% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming in which they participated.

### *Barriers to Program Participation*

Participants noted that there were some challenges and barriers that made participating in, and completing, the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming difficult. These barriers included:

- Some parents are not eligible for MAC programs, even though their children are enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start due to differences in financial eligibility regulations.
- Although MAC provides bus passes and gas allowances to program participants, both staff and participants reported that transportation remains a barrier.

- Participants in MAC 2Gen/Whole Family programs face a number of day-to-day responsibilities (e.g., childcare and employment) that could impede their ability to fully participate in career training programs.
- Some participants reported that the rigor of the classes is a barrier to successful completion.
- Some barriers that affect a family's physical health or safety must be addressed immediately and preclude a person from enrolling in or completing programming as part of MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.
- MAC staff and participants reported that personal pride can interfere with participants' engagement with the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

### ***Accelerators of Program Participation***

Several factors were identified by staff, training providers, and participants as accelerators that helped participants stay engaged and succeed in programming:

- MAC staff, training providers, and participants identified that the internal motivation and dedication of participants are keys to their success.
- Participants who had earned degrees in similar fields as to the program in which they enrolled reported that their prior educational background helped to further support their success.
- Connecting with other organizations to attain resources and opportunities such as housing payments or criminal record expungement also helped participants stay engaged with MAC programming.
- Participants across all 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs reported that having support from their children, families, or peers helped them successfully complete the program.
- In addition to direct support from classmates, participants reported being encouraged by hearing success stories of others who have completed the program.

### ***Staff and Participant Feedback***

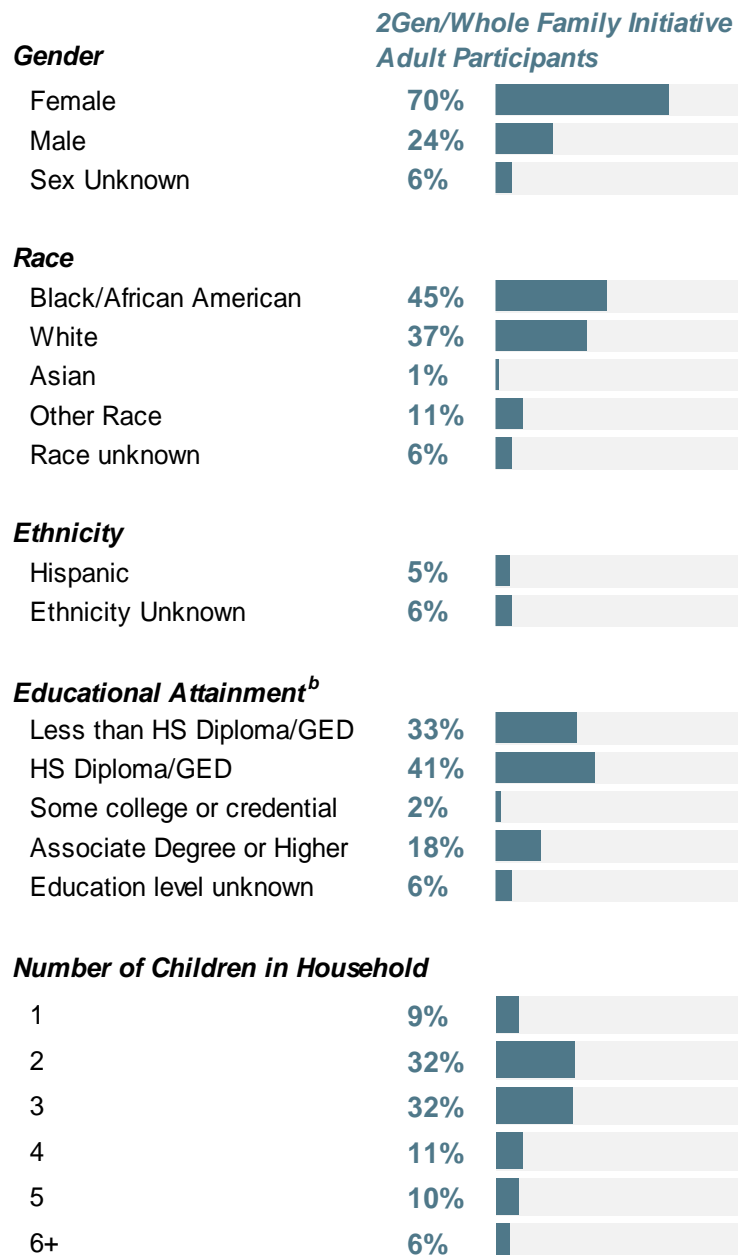
Both staff and participants offered suggestions to continue improving the programming, even while noting that they were pleased with the overall program. In order to improve the program, they offered suggestions to make the classes run more smoothly, such as clear communications regarding program schedules and changes therein, feedback on additional content that could be added including financial literacy and outlining clear expectations at the beginning of the program. Additionally, they recommended offering on-site mental health services and stipends during the internship components of the program, so as to ease the burden on the participants.

Participants reported that MAC was generally able to provide the resources that they needed during the program, though they noted that additional help with finding employment or securing childcare would be welcomed. Participants also offered feedback on the specific training programs in which they were enrolled:

- ESL participants reported a need for a more intensive English program;

- CDA participants suggested that to overcome the difficulty in completing the number of volunteer hours required, either that expectation could be lowered or payment during this period could be considered;
- CompTIA A+ program participants reported that more hands-on learning time would help them hone their skills; and
- Adult Education program participants reported tutors and additional assistance during class time would benefit the program.

## Participant Outcomes



### Participant Profile

Participants enrolled in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs ranged in age (at time of enrollment) from 18 to 67 years old. At the time of enrollment, half of the participants were aged 30-39 years (47.4%), one-third were aged 20-29 years (32.1%), and about one in ten (11.5%) were between the ages of 18-24. This is based on cumulative MAC program data as of August 2019.

Additionally, two-thirds of adult participants in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (64.7%) were unemployed prior to starting the program, while nearly one quarter of participants (24.4%) were employed full-time and 9.6% were employed part-time.

Close to half of all participants (45.6%) reported speaking a language other than English as their primary language. The most commonly spoken languages other than English were Arabic and Spanish.

2Gen/Whole Family Initiative families included between one and eleven children, with the majority of families (63.9%) having two or three children.

## Program Outcomes

The 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative outcomes are defined in three primary categories: parent-specific outcomes, parent-child interaction outcomes, and child-specific outcomes. Within each of these categories are a series of indicators which were collected from program data, interviews, focus groups, and the participant survey. As detailed in the [Survey Limitations](#) section in Appendix A, survey findings in this report should be interpreted with caution as they may not appropriately represent the entire population of individuals served by MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. This section highlights the key findings across data sources for each category of outcomes.

**Parent-specific outcomes** included both programmatic outcomes (i.e., directly related to the technical programs) and intrinsic outcomes.

- Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents that completed either CDA or CompTIA A+ between 2016 and 2019 were employed in full-time jobs at the time of the survey (62.5%).
- Nearly half of program completers reported that their wages had increased “a lot” since before the training (46.2%) and an additional 38.5% reported wages had increased “a little.”
- Respondents were most likely to indicate they were earning \$11.00 - \$14.00 per hour at the time of the survey (76.9%). This data was reported primarily by CDA completers (n=10) as only three CompTIA A+ completers reported wage and employment data.
- CDA completers employed by MAC (based on payroll data) earn between \$12.50 to \$15.00 per hour and all who are employed full-time are eligible for medical insurance/health benefits.
- The three CompTIA A+ completers from the survey reported a wide range of hourly wages, from low hourly wages (\$7.00 - \$10.00) to higher hourly wages (\$19.00 - \$22.00).
- Based on MAC program data, two CompTIA A+ completers earned \$20.00 per hour, two earned more than \$20.00 per hour, and one individual who is self-employed not in the IT field earned \$10.00 - \$14.00 per hour. Additionally, 17 participants from the 2019 cohort earned the CompTIA A+ certification and recently started internships at \$20 hourly working with the following Metropolitan Government of Nashville departments: Information Technology, Public Schools, Justice Information Service, and the Sheriff's Office.
- More than half of participants that were no longer enrolled in the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs reported that they were able to achieve at least one positive financial change since starting the program (e.g., improved credit score, opened a savings account, purchased a home, payed down debt, purchased a vehicle).
- The majority of survey respondents agreed (37.7%) or strongly agreed (43.4%) that the program prepared them for future education or training.
- Parents reported feeling less stressed about providing for their family at the time of the survey compared to before participating in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Additionally, participants reported that they had a positive outlook about their future because of the program.

**Parent/child outcomes** include specific indicators related to how parents and children interact and changes to these behaviors following their participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

- Across 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs, parents reported that they have had more positive interactions with their children as a result of the program and that they were less likely to get angry with their children compared to before enrolling.
- Especially in the CDA and Father II Father programs, participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative exposed parents to information related to child development, which allowed parents to improve their parenting.
- English Language Learners reported that participating in the ESL program allowed them to read more frequently to their children and help with homework.
- Additionally, 53.3% of surveyed parents reported that they participated in Head Start activities more often or a lot more often than they did at the start of the program and 67.2% reported keeping their family on a routine more or a lot more often.

**Child-specific outcomes** are related specifically to child actions in school, at home, and developmental progress.

- Parents reported that children were less likely to act out or misbehave (61.4%) and were more likely to talk to their parents about their day or how they were feeling (37.9%).
- The opportunity to interact with other children at Head Start was reported to help children improve speech, be more social, and focus during the program.
- Parents also reported that children were motivated by seeing their parents attend school and prioritize learning.
- MAC's Head Start/Early Head Start attendance data shows that children who are considered as part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative have significantly higher Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rates (85.9%) when compared to the ADA rates of non-2Gen/Whole Family Initiative children (83.9%).

### *2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Lessons Learned*

MAC leadership and staff reported several lessons learned while implementing the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. These lessons include what staff are learning about working with training providers, partnering with participants, and the organizational structures that best strengthens 2Gen/Whole Family work.

When working with training providers, staff reported the importance of being involved with those who are teaching classes to ensure that classes are meeting participant and leadership's expectations. They also noted the importance of communication, consistency in planning, and finding training providers who were supportive of the organization's goals as keys to a successful relationship between MAC and the training providers.

Staff and leadership reported they found value in sharing success stories of other participants, having patience with incremental progress towards changing a family's trajectory, and focusing on resiliency in addition to content during the classes. Staff also reported that participants' experiences in the classes were positive when there were clear timelines, and that the program was flexible enough to adjust to participants' needs. Finally, staff and leadership reported that

consistent resources were relied upon by the participants and were crucial for families to continue in the program.

MAC leadership also noted that as an organization, breaking down silos allowed them to ensure customers received seamless resources. By working together, MAC staff develops a “full picture of how to partner with each participant.” This also includes providing continuous staff training to ensure that all MAC staff understand the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach and have the capacity and knowledge to work towards shared goals of families’ wellbeing.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative is striving to partner with families who desire to create deep and meaningful long-term change in their lives while also building the organization’s capacity to be a viable partner for families in achieving their goals. This type of change is difficult, takes a long time, and requires addressing a variety of different types of barriers. This evaluation demonstrates that MAC’s fluid and multi-pronged approach has allowed the organization to grow and individuals to overcome many of the barriers that families face while participating in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

MAC continues to provide 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming and strives to reduce the steps required for families to access meaningful opportunities to address their goals. As the program continues to be refined, the following recommendations are offered for consideration:

1. Continue to improve data collection to clearly identify the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by 2Gen/Whole Family Initiatives;
2. Conduct additional research on the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, including wage and impact studies;
3. Consider program eligibility requirements, especially around family income, for sustained program impact;
4. Expand high-demand and high-yield career training opportunities in additional career fields;
5. Increase parenting resources and child developmental information throughout MAC programming; and
6. Amplify customer voices and interests in policy discussions.

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# INTRODUCTION

Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) provides evidenced-based programming to break the cycle of poverty for families and individuals in Davidson County, Tennessee. The organization is driven by its **mission statement**: *“The Metropolitan Action Commission changes people’s lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities and makes Nashville and Davidson County a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.”* This mission led to the adoption of an intentional person-centered 2Gen and Whole Family approach within the agency, which allows MAC to provide integrated resources and expanded opportunities for children and their parents so that both generations can make progress together.

Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) was hired by the Metropolitan Action Commission in May 2019 to conduct an evaluation of MAC’s 2Gen/Whole Family three-year pilot initiative. Together, TPMA and MAC leadership identified the priorities of this evaluation study, which concluded in September 2019, and the research questions that guide the evaluation. Goals of the evaluation include:

- Using qualitative and quantitative data to further explore the impacts of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative;
- Identifying best practices and lessons learned through program implementation; and
- Determining additional data collection, as needed.

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data to measure the effectiveness of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. TPMA gathered data through a participant survey, focus groups of participants, interviews with key program staff and leadership, and existing program data to address the research questions outlined below. The full evaluation methodology is available in [Appendix A](#).

1. What impact does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative have on **parent employment**?
2. To what extent does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative impact **life at home for parents**? (e.g., family routines, parent confidence, parent behaviors with children)
3. To what extent does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative impact **life at home for children**? (e.g., child behavior, stress in the home, routines)
4. What are **parent perceptions** of the program and to what extent did the program meet parent needs?
5. What impact does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative have on **child outcomes**?
6. What **accelerators and barriers** impact the implementation of 2Gen/Whole Family Initiatives?
7. What **lessons did staff learn** during program implementation?
8. Do participant responses point to any **additional resources** that would improve parent outcomes or experience in the program?

9. To what extent are there **additional data points** that could be collected to measure program impact?

## ABOUT MAC

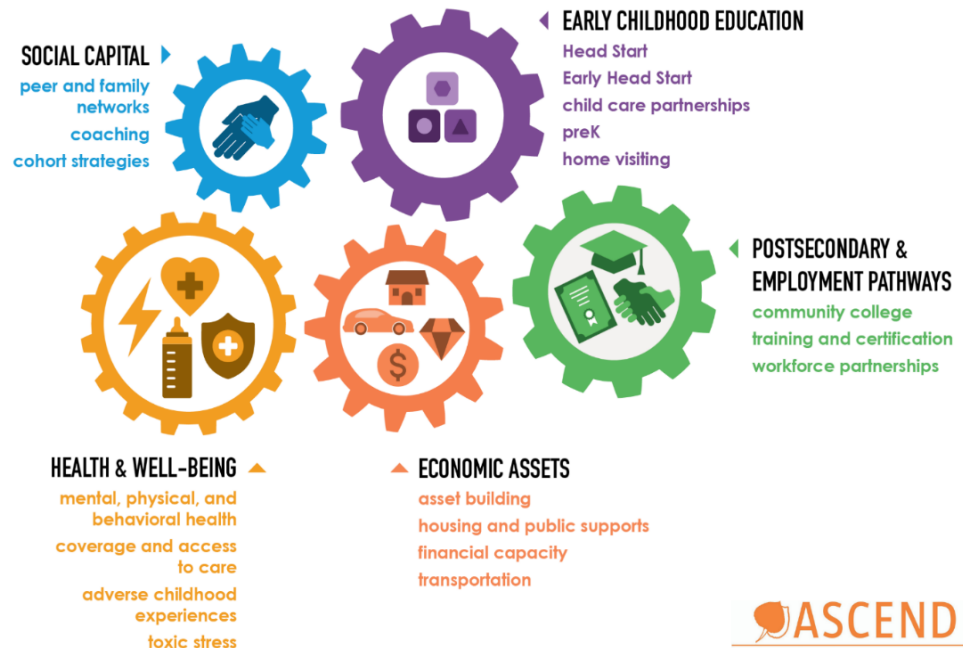
The Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) was created on August 12, 1964 for the purpose of securing and coordinating, federal, state and local resources to eradicate poverty in accordance with regulations. The original funding for the Metropolitan Action Commission was from the Great Society programs that began during the Lyndon Johnson Presidency. MAC has been the designated Community Action Agency for Nashville and Davidson County since 1964 with the purpose to help individuals and families improve the quality of their lives by advocating for the needs of the poor.

## ABOUT THE 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH

The 2Gen/Whole Family Approach focuses on “creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both children and the adults in their lives together. The approach recognizes that families come in all different shapes and sizes and that families define themselves.”<sup>1</sup> Given this, it is important to note that the term Whole-Family Approach is synonymous with 2Gen and is often used interchangeably. 2Gen/Whole Family Approaches focus “equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for the child and the adults in their lives,” and “articulate and track outcomes for both children and adults simultaneously.”<sup>2</sup>



According to Ascend at the Aspen Institute, there are five core components that, when drawn upon simultaneously by families, lead to economic security and stability for current and future generations. These components include Early Childhood Education, Postsecondary and Employment Pathways, Economic Assets, Social Capital, and Health and Well-being.



**ASCEND**  
THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Ascend at the Aspen Institute. Retrieved at: <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

# MAC 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVES

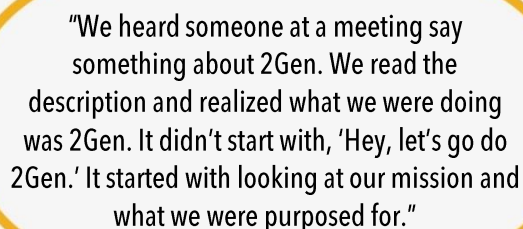
This section provides information specifically about the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative planning and implementation at the Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC). It includes a narrative about the history of 2Gen/Whole Family Initiatives at MAC, a description and map of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative process, an overview of program aspects that are key to its success, and feedback from staff and participants about their perception of the program and what improvements could be made.

## HISTORY OF MAC 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVES

Founded as an organization to alleviate poverty in Davidson County, Tennessee, the Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) shifted its focus in 2000 to eliminating organizational structures (silos) that made partnering with families to achieve outcomes more difficult, with an emphasis on being “One Agency” in its program delivery. The One Agency concept involved a mission- and results-centered focus rather than a focus on individual programs operating as single entities. In 2015, as part of its strategic plan, MAC recognized that while they were serving residents in Davidson County through a variety of programs and initiatives, their internal data did not reflect a substantial number of people moving out of poverty, experiencing upward mobility or wellbeing. Instead, most individuals were receiving emergency payments or resources that addressed barriers to poverty (e.g., household assistance, high school equivalency test assistance, Head Start programming). As a Community Action Agency formed out of the 1964 Economic Opportunity, MAC was charged to fight both the causes and conditions of poverty in the United States. However, over time, MAC’s Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funding became more transactional and targeted emergency payments in addition to a few educational programs, including Adult Education and Head Start. The 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative shifted MAC’s focus away from solely providing emergency assistance and towards addressing Community Action’s mission to affect poverty and inequity by adopting a more comprehensive approach. MAC leadership reported, “Community Action Agencies were always intended to help people move out of poverty. We couldn’t show that we were accomplishing that goal in a broad way, or that it was still our primary focus. We had to do more to help people out of poverty.”

As a result of their strategic planning efforts, MAC developed a vision that seeks to break the cycle of poverty in their community - one child, one person, one family at a time.

To achieve this vision, MAC leadership shifted the agency’s focus to **mission impact** and searched for **evidence-based practice approaches** that could achieve their desired outcomes. This shift moved MAC away from a focus on emergency assistance and meeting output numbers from funders, to an approach that addressed long-term outcomes. To achieve this goal, MAC leaders refocused their work on providing comprehensive programs that would utilize multiple approaches to partner with families to



“We heard someone at a meeting say something about 2Gen. We read the description and realized what we were doing was 2Gen. It didn’t start with, ‘Hey, let’s go do 2Gen.’ It started with looking at our mission and what we were purposed for.”

achieve their goals of moving out of poverty. This programming would eventually be reframed as the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative at MAC.

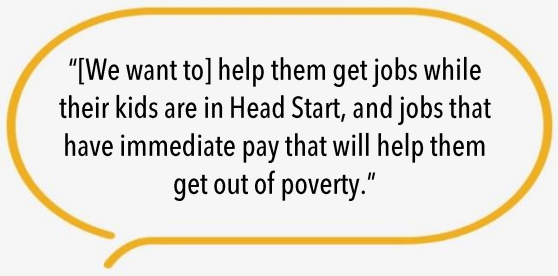
Furthermore, in order to ensure a method of evaluating its organizational effectiveness in achieving outcomes, MAC draws on the Human Services Value Curve (HSVC), a framework that “help[s] leaders envision and create a path for their organization.”<sup>3</sup> The HSVC helps organizations develop organizational capacity to partner with their populations and communities. The goal of the HSVC is to assist programs to refine their business model from focusing on providing services for eligible people under policy and program regulations, to a broader focus on working together to build healthy communities and find solutions for complex socioeconomic challenges that face families.<sup>4</sup> In the process, organizations develop their internal structure and governance (e.g., breaking down silos), as well as technological systems to increase the breadth and depth of outcomes.

### *Identifying the Target Population*

Partnering with families to boost their opportunities for moving out of poverty required shifting the agency to organization-wide goals that extended beyond specific programmatic goals and included the leveraging of resources from multiple internal and external sources of funding. The organization would need to provide high-quality, in-depth opportunities to those they intended to reach. To build opportunities for family well-being, MAC leadership decided to identify a primary target population to invite. Initially, they discussed defining recipients of the energy assistance program, who were primarily working-age women, as the target population. However, after examining best practices in the field, they realized that they needed a group that the organization could partner with long-term. MAC leadership explained, “When you’re really trying to make a difference, you need a group of people whose short and long-term goals afford an opportunity to build together for an extended time. To do this the right way, we need a group we can partner with for a longer time to see impact.” After examining their existing programs, MAC leadership identified Head Start/Early Head Start families as ideal partners, as families could have a child enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start for up to five years if the child began the program in Early Head Start.

### *Identifying Goals*

To develop the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC staff solicited feedback from customers about the existing MAC programs. MAC leadership emphasized the importance of this step, “You can have one plan in your mind about a particular program but when you add customer voice, that plan must shift to meet what the customer wants for their life success.” MAC staff found that the existing college prep program alone did not fulfill the customers’ goals for immediate employment. To address this, MAC identified opportunities for **short-term, high-yield career training** – a program that would



“[We want to] help them get jobs while their kids are in Head Start, and jobs that have immediate pay that will help them get out of poverty.”

<sup>3</sup> Leadership for a Networked World. *Human Services Value Curve*. Accessed via: <https://lnwprogram.org/frameworks/human-services-value-curve>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

provide access to an industry with substantial potential for earnings while not requiring an extended program of study (e.g., four-year degree) to obtain employment in the field. MAC leadership searched for specific trainings/certifications within in-demand fields that would have job openings for participants upon program completion. Based on customer feedback and the strong value of career development, the name of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative became, “Making a Change for Jobs (MAC4JOBS).”

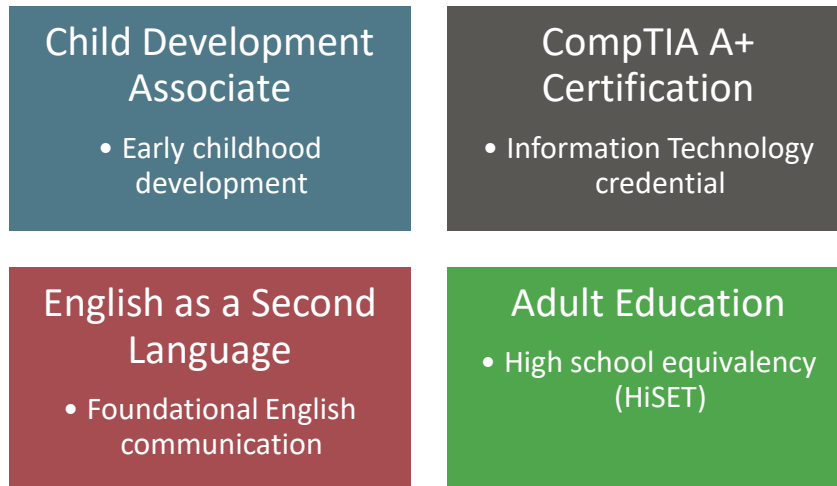
### *Program Components*

The MAC team strategized several career pathways for parents to access employment. These pathways included: Child Development Associate (CDA) certification, CompTIA A+ certification, and prerequisite degrees and certifications including English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Education. The section below summarizes each of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative career pathways.

MAC identified a need for teachers and classroom assistants certified as **Child Development Associates (CDA)**. After participants earned the CDA credential, MAC could hire them within their own Head Start/Early Head Start programs, ensuring immediate employment. However, although early child development provided a career pathway projected to have high career growth, the employment options for CDA completers did not have the immediate high-yield earning potential that MAC leadership had envisioned for the program. MAC leadership explained, “We also wanted something that did not have a pay scale that was so low that they couldn’t move quickly out of poverty.”

MAC leadership identified the technology field as an industry with substantial growth based on regional job projections and attending technology industry meetings in Nashville. However, leadership also recognized that these opportunities were unavailable to their customers due to lack of industry-specific skills. As a response, MAC leadership identified the **CompTIA A+ certification** as a way to provide their customers with the skills necessary to access the fast-growing technology job market. MAC leadership reported that these jobs provide the immediate high-yield potential and room for career growth that MAC customers were seeking.

MAC staff noted that some prospective participants were not prepared to start the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs due to limited English proficiency or their lack of a high school diploma (or equivalent). As a result, MAC initiated the **English as a Second Language (ESL)** program to provide a foundation of English communication skills for speakers of other languages in partnership with the Tennessee Language Center. Although MAC provided **Adult Education** prior to the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC ensured that 2Gen/Whole Family participants without the prerequisite high school degree necessary for the CDA and CompTIA A+ programs could attend Adult Education high school equivalency courses in preparation for the career pathways programming.



### *Additional Opportunities and Resources Available to 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Participants*

In addition to high-yield career training, MAC leadership recognized that many fathers with children enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start program had unique concerns about child development and parent-child interactions.

MAC had operated a fatherhood program for many years; however, the enhanced **Father II Father** program partnered with fathers through a consistent, intentional curriculum and volunteer program administered center wide. The curriculum was introduced by a center leader who had a passion for working with fathers. The **Father II Father** framework gave fathers an opportunity to volunteer in their child's preschool classroom, serve as role models to students in MAC programs (and in other parts of their lives), and meet regularly to discuss what it means to be an involved and caring father. Fathers also were trained in co-parenting, child development, parent-child interactions, and the importance of having a father figure in a child's life. Additionally, fathers were connected to resources and opportunities through MAC4JOBS where they could increase their opportunities for upward mobility (e.g., resources for education, employment, record expungement, reinstate their driver's licenses, etc.). During the 2018-2019 school year, 159 individuals participated in the Father II Father program.

MAC also offered a summer **Youth Technology Camp** for older siblings of Head Start/Early Head Start children, which provided hands-on experience in the field of technology for teens ages 13-15 from Head Start and Early Head Start families. As stated in a Nashville news article, "through a partnership with the Nashville Technology Council, students received daily instruction on information technology as well as visit area IT departments in companies such as Hospital Corporation of America, BNY Mellon, and Hewlett Packard to [gain] first-hand innovation experience in technology."<sup>5</sup> Youth participants created a capstone project based on an area of technology they choose, presented their capstone project during the closing event, and received an \$800 award and a laptop computer upon successful completion of the program.

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<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.nashville.gov/News-Media/News-Article/ID/5476/Mayor-and-Metro-Action-showcase-Youth-Technology-program-during-national-celebration.aspx>

MAC offers a range of other opportunities that are open to all customers regardless of their status as part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. MAC leadership stated that they “provide resources for [customers] if there’s an emergency situation to hold steady until things get better,” allowing participants to successfully complete the program. The Utility Assistance Program provides one-time payment for natural gas, electric, or other energy bills. Under the Household program, customers can receive one-time payment for rent or mortgage and rental deposits, water and property tax bills, and prescriptions and prescribed food or medical equipment. Through MAC4JOBS, customers with criminal record concerns that impede their ability to gain employment are also able to participate in expungement clinics as a result of MAC’s partnership with the courts and other agencies in the city. MAC also offers opportunities for seniors over 65 and for individuals who have recently secured housing after experiencing homelessness. The Food Service Program for Children and Youth provides mobile neighborhood youth cafes and summer meals for children and youth through afterschool programs.

## *Focusing on 2Gen/Whole Family Initiatives*


### *2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Changes*

In 2015, as MAC staff began its strategic focus on the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, they decided to embark on an initial three-year pilot that would allow for adjustments to be made in the implementation of the programming along the way. Initially, adult training and education opportunities were scheduled during Head Start class times to ensure parents could attend. However, MAC leadership learned that many parents had additional children who were not part of the Head Start or Early Head Start programs who needed childcare while the adult programming was in session. Since 2017, MAC has strengthened its partnership with childcare providers to meet the needs of the parents so they can fully participate in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs. In an effort to meet customers’ work, homelife, and learning needs, class schedules also were adjusted over time, including length, frequency, and timing of classes.

Since first initiating the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC has worked with different training providers to teach the CompTIA A+ programs. MAC leadership explained that they contracted with several training providers before finding a provider whose methods and approach best fit the goals MAC customers and leadership had identified for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. MAC leadership also noted the importance of finding training providers for CompTIA A+ with strong industry connections to facilitate matching participants to industry internships and/or employment.

### *MAC Internal Changes*

To strengthen their work in providing comprehensive opportunities for families through the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC leadership recognized the need for internal organizational changes to build the 2Gen/Whole Family framework and goals. First, MAC leadership reoriented agency staff and board around the organization’s **mission- and results-**



“We’ve really transformed from an organization focused on meeting regulations to one focused on innovation and creative ways to help our families.”

**focused mindset.** One staff member described the change, noting that “we’ve really grown to be an organization that’s focused on how we partner with customers to help get them out of poverty, rather than one that helps get them out of an emergency situation. We still provide emergency payments, but we also focus on partnering with and building opportunities for people to change their situation.” MAC also added and trained its team on the use of the Human Services Value Curve (HSVC) as a framework for ensuring it is achieving outcomes for parents. This framework, which describes four levels of agency capacity building, helps the agency focus its actions beyond simply meeting regulations and striving to reach the “generative level,” which involves the entire community. The HSVC also gave the agency a common language and provided a picture for team members of what outcomes should look like and what organizational and community structures needed to align as they advance along each stage of the Value Curve.

As part of this internal focus on the mission of helping people get out of poverty, MAC intentionally began realigning its organizational structures, including **breaking down organizational silos** so that all departments could have regular and open communication. MAC leadership explained, “There’s nobody that just works in Head Start over there and Community Services over here. There’s a connection. It’s unending. As an agency, we understand the interconnectedness.” Breaking internal silos also meant that all of the MAC programs worked together to achieve the organizational mission to help people get out of poverty. MAC leadership reported telling staff, “If a program doesn’t achieve the mission, then it shouldn’t be part of the organization.”

A large aspect of breaking the organizational silos and being able to implement the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative was affecting an internal **culture shift**. MAC leadership explained this shift as a “complete refocusing on achieving outcomes for customers using an agency-wide approach to data collection and analysis versus operating solely within the parameters of an individual program’s regulatory model. Team members had to learn to see themselves as partners with our customers rather than focusing solely on regulatory guidelines; to include the agency as well as partners who could help parents and families achieve the goal of moving out of poverty.”

As part of the culture shift, MAC found that they needed to expand their **organizational capacity**. It required training and retraining staff on the organization’s mission-focused approach and the methods to achieve that aim. It also required intentional cross training between departments and identifying specific liaisons to make connections for customers between MAC programs. Additionally, MAC hired additional staff members with appropriate skillsets such as collecting and utilizing organizational data to inform decision-making.

### **Policy Changes**

Outside of the agency itself, MAC advocated for **policy changes** that would allow them to utilize their main sources of funding to effectively implement the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Initially, the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funds were restricted by the state such that they could only be used to provide emergency payments. However, federal regulations allowed the funds to be used for a wider range of activities. MAC worked with the State Department of Human Services to expand the state-level requirements for the funding, allowing for its use for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiatives. MAC leadership explained,

“Partnership with the state has been a big success; they have provided a lot of support - been a huge champion” of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

An additional policy hurdle came in the form of the certification period for customers. The state requirements for CSBG funds required customers be certified for eligibility every six months. This certification period was a barrier for the comprehensive approach of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. If a participant’s income increased during the 6-month period, they might find themselves ineligible to continue in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. MAC staff explained, “If things go well, their income is going to go up. They’re going to hit this fiscal cliff where their income is going up, but we don’t want them to become ineligible before achieving their goal.” MAC was able to advocate for policy changes so that eligibility certification now lasts for one year, allowing for more time for customers before they would need to be recertified.

### *Looking Forward*

As of October 2019, for the 2018-2019 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants, four had acquired the CDA credential and seven were in the process of finishing the requirements. Additionally, 17 participants had earned the CompTIA A+ certification and started their internships at \$20.00 hourly working with the following Metropolitan Government of Nashville departments: Information Technology, Public Schools, Justice Information Service, and the Sheriff’s Office, and one CompTIA A+ participant was still pending. Twenty-one participants had graduated from the ESL program, and five participants had graduated with a high school equivalency credential (HiSET) with an additional five in progress. Looking ahead, MAC plans to expand the agency’s capacity in a variety of ways, including adding program locations, training and adding staff positions, continuing to improve long-term program outcomes, and continuing intentional data collection and analysis. For example, MAC leadership seeks to add more program locations for their 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative for additional families and provide programs in the neighborhoods where customers live.

MAC intends to increase its organizational capacity to partner with eligible individuals throughout the county by hiring more coaches to assist customers and connect them to opportunities and programs, and by adding dedicated staff positions in key areas (e.g., within the Father II Father program and a parent engagement position). Additionally, MAC intends to continue training staff about the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, especially front-line staff, noting that “some might have knowledge [of 2Gen/Whole Family] and others might not. [We have to] constantly communicate so they are as knowledgeable as the management team.”

To improve long-term program outcomes, MAC is working with career training providers to strengthen the approach used to partner with participants throughout coursework, internship/volunteer hours, and the job search process. Currently the CompTIA A+ training provider is working to ensure that all graduates have opportunities for internships and/or employment once they pass the certification tests. MAC Community Services staff also are working to strengthen connections with employers to provide meaningful linkages between customers and jobs upon completion of any adult education, ESL, or career training courses.

MAC leadership plans to continue using customer voice, data and research on its program successes, and lessons learned to inform its implementation of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. MAC leadership also intends to use research on its experiences with 2Gen/Whole

Family work to provide insight for other organizations seeking to implement and improve their own 2Gen/Whole Family programs.

The MAC team has invested in continuous learning and development around its 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. In 2018, MAC was selected to participate in the National Community Action Partnership's Whole Family Approach Community of Practice funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This team-based learning engagement served as an important support to the team and a precursor for deeper learning and new investments. For example, in recognition of MAC's work related to the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, in 2019, MAC was selected by The Kresge Foundation to participate in its national Next Generation Initiative. The Kresge Foundation invited 500 applicants to apply based on their work advancing the social and economic mobility of children and families with low incomes and selected five non-profit and five government agencies. MAC and nine other non-profit and government human service agencies from across the country will participate in a two-year learning program. Each agency will receive \$500,000 to advance person-centered, outcomes-based, data-driven work that advances racial equity using 2Gen/Whole Family approaches. Looking forward, MAC staff are actively pursuing other grant opportunities to expand the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative opportunities to include more Head Start families.

## MAC 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

To participate in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, a family must first be enrolled in a MAC Early Head Start or Head Start program. According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards, Early Head Start and Head Start eligibility requirements dictate that the family must be living at or below 100% of the poverty line or, under certain guidelines, families may be eligible with income of up to 130% of poverty. Additionally, children with disabilities are eligible for Early Head Start or Head Start, under certain guidelines, regardless of the family's income.<sup>6</sup>

Then, parents/caregivers meet with MAC staff to identify their family's goals such as housing, transportation, or education. MAC staff partner with the family to address the identified goals, which may include making referrals to other community providers. If the family is interested in career training, MAC staff will connect them to the training opportunities offered through MAC or it's community partner if it is a training not provided by MAC. Once a parent is enrolled in one of MAC's adult training programs, their family is then considered "part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative."

There are several conditions under which a participant may exit the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. These include no longer having a child in Head Start, becoming ineligible under the income requirements, moving out of Davidson County, choosing to leave the program, or graduating. For more information about program design, eligibility, and process, see [Appendix B](#).

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<sup>6</sup> Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.12 (c) Eligibility requirement; Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.12 (d) Additional allowances for programs.

## *MAC Adult Training Program Descriptions*

### ***Child Development Associate (CDA)***

The CDA program teaches about early child development and leads to a Child Development Associate credential.<sup>7</sup> Participants must complete a portfolio including 480 hours of practical classroom experience, which can be satisfied either through working or volunteering in an early childhood classroom.

### ***CompTIA A+***

The CompTIA A+ program teaches participants about Information Technology and leads to CompTIA A+ certification, following two certifying exams. Participants are then paired with a local IT company or department for a hands-on internship and/or assisted in their search for employment in the industry.

### ***English as a Second Language (ESL)***

The ESL program provides beginner and intermediate English language training for individuals whose primary language is not English. ESL classes provide both basic communication skills and work-specific communication skills (e.g., talking to supervisors, coworkers, etc.).

### ***Adult Education***

The Adult Education program provides high school equivalency instruction for adults (including both 2Gen/Whole Family and non-2Gen/Whole Family individuals). Participants focus on acquiring the skills necessary for success on the HiSET exam through in-class and online instruction. Upon successful completion of five exams, participants can earn a high school equivalency credential (HiSET).

## *Additional MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Program Descriptions*

### ***Father II Father***

The Father II Father program provides mentoring, workshops, and discussion opportunities for fathers of children in Head Start/Early Head Start. Father II Father focuses on partnering with fathers based on their established goals, interests and improving a variety of child development related skills.

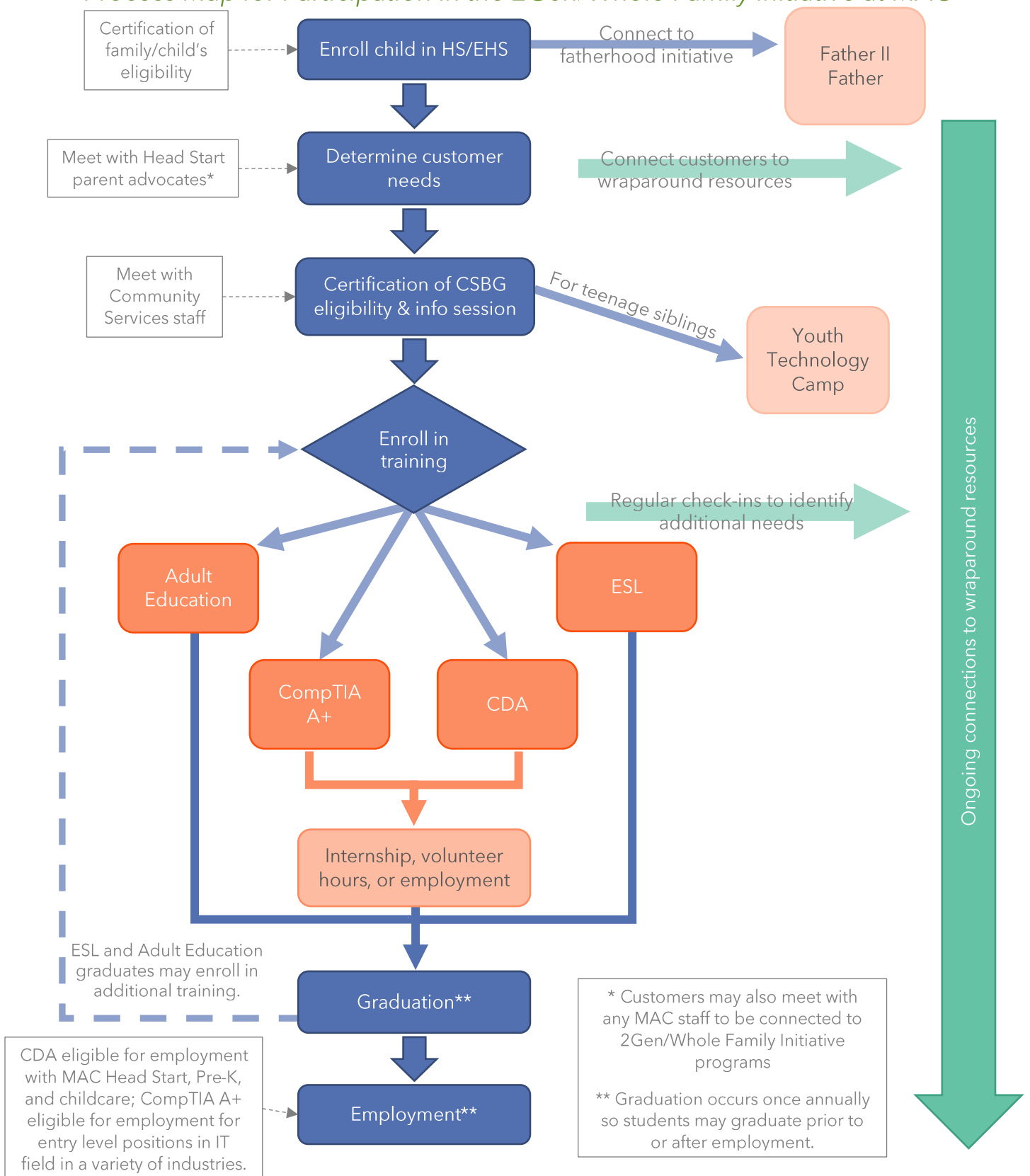
### ***Youth Technology Camp***

The summer Youth Technology Camp provides hands-on technology experiences, IT instruction, and opportunities to build and present a capstone project for older siblings (ages 13-15) of Head Start/Early Head Start children.

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<sup>7</sup> Council for Professional Recognition. 2017. About the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential. Accessed at: <https://www.cdacouncil.org/about/cda-credential>

## Process Map for Participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative at MAC



# EVALUATION FINDINGS

## ACCELERATORS OF 2Gen/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

The key aspects of the program described in this section are accelerators of success in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative program implementation and participant outcomes. These six defining characteristics are core tenets of the program that are crucial for successful replication and scaling of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative program.



### *Focusing on Small, Defined Group of Customers*

When conceptualizing the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC leadership intentionally identified a group of individuals that they could partner with to offer in-depth opportunities for over a meaningful period of time. Participants are only eligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative if they have a child in Head Start or Early Head Start, which limits the size of the group so that they can be served more comprehensively. It also allows MAC to serve families long-term. If a family joins the program while their child is in Early Head Start, they can potentially be eligible for up to five years for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative as their child progresses through Early Head Start and Head Start. This focus on a defined group of customers with a multi-year opportunity for eligibility allows MAC to provide tailored programming to meet families' needs. It also provides time for those families to realize gains from several facets of MAC programming, including wraparound resources and family stabilization opportunities as well as one or more of the language, education, and/or training courses for adults. Children of families in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative also gain the benefit of longer-term education opportunities through the Head Start program.

### *Building & Maintaining Trust*

MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative staff reported that building trust between themselves and the customers was a necessary aspect of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (and the other opportunities provided by MAC). One staff member explained, "Most of it is the relationship. The biggest key is trust. When you start dealing with people who've been hurt already, and you don't provide that trust, you fail because they won't come back." Having dedicated personnel who are fully engaged with their customers and often go out of their way to address customers' needs has allowed staff to build trust with customers. Additionally, MAC has a longstanding reputation in the community for providing meaningful opportunities and resources to families. Staff explained that previous participants have often referred family members or friends to MAC based on the trust built through customer experiences with the staff and programs.

MAC also builds trust by employing staff that have similar backgrounds and experiences to the individuals the organization serves. This allows customers to speak to someone in their native language or candidly discuss specific community norms in their neighborhood. Participants reported that it was important to them that staff came from their neighborhood and could understand the context behind the participant's comments. Staff earn the trust of customers by providing consistent follow-through on referrals both within and outside the organization. Staff adhere to a 'no wrong door' approach, meaning that when staff make a referral for customers, they make the call to the referrals themselves, and make sure the customer gets connected to resources, rather than only providing the customer with the number to call for the referral. This trust, and MAC's intentionality around building and maintaining it, establishes the foundation that supports the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

### *Providing Wraparound Resources*

Both MAC staff and the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants discussed the participants' need for resources in addition to the traditional education and training program; that participants would not be able to attend or engage with the education and training without simultaneously addressing other barriers to completion. MAC offers wraparound resources to participants through other MAC programs and intentional referrals to other organizations in the community (e.g., housing, transportation, expungement, etc.). For those individuals who participated in the survey, 60.2% reported receiving additional resources from MAC while being enrolled in 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming. One CDA training provider explained that MAC staff have conversations with the participants and "if they don't have access to a printer or transportation, [MAC staff does] whatever they can" to address those barriers.

### *Intentional Staff Engagement with Participants*

MAC staff enhance participant progress by frequently engaging with program participants. MAC staff regularly visit classes, check in with participants and encourage them throughout the process. All MAC staff, from frontline staff in the local centers to MAC leadership, are directly involved with participants. MAC leadership explained, "The expectation is [that] we all stay engaged." This frequent, intentional engagement provides regular opportunities to identify additional opportunities or resources that participants may need. One participant noted, "I like the way they would just drop in on the classes sometimes. Just checking and making sure everyone was okay. And if we needed something, they would write it down and get it for the next class." MAC staff also provide emotional support to participants through this regular engagement. Another participant shared, "The people here always push you when you want to give up. They won't let you." Staff encourage participants through the annual graduation ceremonies and by recognizing participant successes. Staff explained that the engagement with participants does not end upon program completion, explaining that "it's important to continue to reach out to them. I still talk to the first cohort. They love that."



### *Organizational Collaboration*

Just as the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach partners with a family holistically, MAC leadership reported a need to restructure internally to build opportunities to support their customers' goals. Over time, MAC leadership has worked to break down organizational silos so that staff

on various teams (e.g., Head Start, Community Services, Human Resources) work together to transition customers between MAC program opportunities. To streamline opportunities and resources for families, the Community Services Division administers the CSBG funding used for MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family work. Family Development specialist in the Community Services Division are assigned to each Head Start location to ensure Family Advocates at the Head Start locations have a direct contact person for referrals to resources requested by parents in each Head Start location. Additionally, MAC organizes cross-team trainings on the agency's mission, the 2Gen/Whole Family framework, and all programs offered at MAC so that all staff remain mission-focused, rather than solely focused on their own tasks. To allow staff to better connect their customers to other resources and opportunities available, MAC provides staff with a reference handbook. Breaking down these silos has facilitated open communication between and among program staff including twice monthly organization wide video conference meetings, as well as cross training.

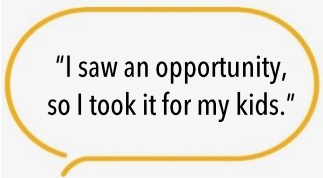
MAC has prioritized this open communication with their contracted training providers, so that training providers are able to share feedback with MAC staff related to the additional resources requested by their students. One training provider stated, "We are able to talk frankly about what some of the barriers are [for participants in our program] and they're able to go back and handle those through the right chain of command." MAC staff are then able to connect customers to the necessary resources within the agency.

### *Supporting Staff Health & Wellness*

MAC provides staff with resources for maintaining health and wellness to ensure that staff can continue providing in-depth program opportunities to customers. Staff reported that working at MAC is "not just a 9-to-5 job. You take it home with you" and the health and wellness supports give staff "an opportunity to reset." MAC provides staff with training on the importance of self-care in an effort to promote and maintain both emotional and physical health as well as preserving a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, MAC allows staff to take wellness days for self-care or rest and provides Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to help staff deal with personal and family related issues.

## **2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVE PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES**

### *Goals for Participation*



"I saw an opportunity,  
so I took it for my kids."

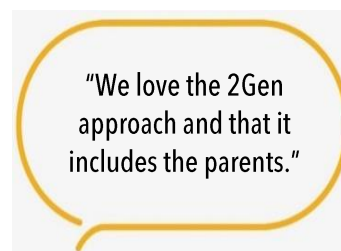
After learning about the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, particularly the career training programs (i.e., the CDA and CompTIA A+ programs), participants reported that they were optimistic about the positive effects the program would have on their lives and the lives of their families. Participants explained that they expected the program to be life changing. One current participant saw the program as an opportunity to a career path that would allow her to better provide for her family and want to "be financially responsible for my kids. I saw an opportunity, so I took it for my kids."

MAC staff expressed their hopes that the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative would help people lift themselves out of poverty. Staff stated that the ultimate goal of the programming would be to

ensure that it is no longer necessary because “you want to empower people, so they don’t need your services anymore.” Additionally, staff discussed not only the effects on participants’ material lives, but the impact of the programming on participants’ outlooks and emotional health as well. One staff member stated that MAC is “doing something external for the parent, but internally too. We’re extrinsically motivating them, but they’re becoming intrinsically motivated.”

### *Participant Feedback on 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative Participation*

Program participants generally reported a positive experience in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming. Of the 97 survey respondents, 83.2% of respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the program in which they enrolled. Focus group participants reported that MAC is “doing a phenomenal job” and that “they help the community in so many ways.” One Father II Father participant recommended the program, stating that “it’ll be the best thing you ever did.”



Participants, however, reported that it can sometimes be challenging to stay motivated and ensure their personal responsibilities do not get in the way of class attendance. They noted that the engagement of and partnership with MAC staff made it possible for them to stay engaged and complete the courses.

### *Barriers and Accelerators for Families’ Participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative*

A variety of contextual factors in program participants’ lives impact their ability to persist and complete the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs. These barriers and accelerators to success are most often out of the control of MAC program staff but do have the potential to impact participant outcomes. The themes outlined in this section were derived from participant and MAC staff interviews, participant focus groups, and participant surveys. Participant barriers, which prevented their ability to fully participate in the programming, and accelerators to success are outlined in the graphic below and described in detail in the following sections.

#### **Barriers**

- Program Eligibility
- Transportation Access Impacts Attendance
- Family Responsibilities
- Program Rigor
- Mental/Physical Health and Safety
- Personal Pride

#### **Accelerators**

- Intrinsic Motivation
- Previous Education
- Additional Resources
- Family, Child, and Peer Support
- Success Stories

#### ***Barriers to Participation***

Six key barriers emerged across all stakeholder groups which prevented or limited the ability of families to fully participate in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. While MAC staff intentionally

partner with participants to overcome the barriers, these factors delayed or limited progress in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs for some participants.

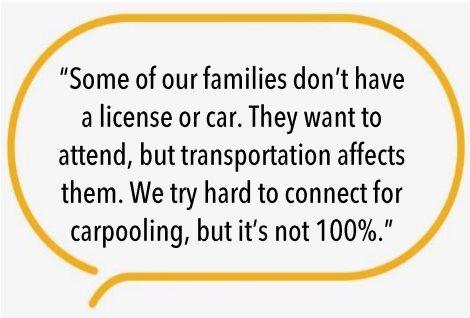
**Some parents are not eligible for MAC programs, even though their children are enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start.** For example, children can be enrolled in Head Start up to 130% of poverty. Even though children are able to participate in Head Start/Early Head Start, the family might exceed the threshold of 125% of poverty for CSBG. For others, citizenship/residency status can affect eligibility for MAC programming.

Continued eligibility for enrollment in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative is dependent upon a family's income; however, the program aims to increase parent earnings. In some cases, families may experience a fiscal benefits cliff wherein they become ineligible for additional opportunities and resources from MAC because they have increased their earnings due to employment success. Families could experience this when a child graduates from Early Head Start and has to recertify eligibility to enroll in Head Start, or when MAC annually reassesses an individual's eligibility for programs and opportunities funded through MAC's Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG), eligibility is contingent on not exceeding the 125% of poverty threshold. Additional information regarding program eligibility is available in [Appendix B](#).

Individuals with criminal records that would disqualify them for jobs may be ineligible to participate in the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs, as they may not be eligible to work in a classroom or in specific areas of the IT field, including the CompTIA A+ program internship at Metro Government IT. For those with a record, MAC staff explained that they explore the possibility of expunging those records or trying to find an employment opportunity where the background will not be a barrier. However, individuals whose records cannot be expunged are eligible for the ESL, Father II Father, and Adult Education programs.

**Although MAC provides bus passes and gas allowances to program participants, both staff and participants reported that transportation remains a barrier to participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.**

The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority estimates that 70% of Davidson County households earning less than \$35,000 per year are within ½ mile of a bus stop.<sup>8</sup> However, participants reported that not everyone lives close to a bus route, which limits their ability to access MAC programming. Participants explained that this is particularly an issue for anyone who lives outside of the formal boundaries of Nashville or along the county borders (e.g., Antioch). MAC staff explained that they have tried to minimize the impact of transportation for some ESL students by providing classes closer to the communities where the participants live.



"Some of our families don't have a license or car. They want to attend, but transportation affects them. We try hard to connect for carpooling, but it's not 100%."

Additionally, sudden changes in transportation availability or program location can affect a family's participation. For example, some participants reported that their Head Start location

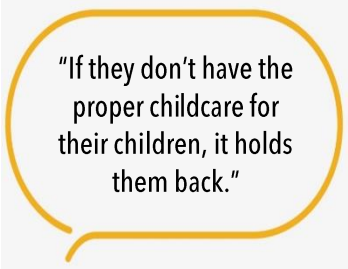
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<sup>8</sup> Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority. 2009. Nashville Strategic Transit Master Plan. Accessed at: <https://www.nashville.gov/portals/0/SiteContent/MTA/docs/StrategicTransitMasterPlan/04Ch2DemographicTrends.pdf>

moved to accommodate a school remodeling, and that they may be unable to enroll their child in that location without transportation. Others explained that MAC's bus for Head Start students is not available to all children. MAC staff members clarified that there was a new regulation on transportation eligibility and "not all kids will be able to receive transit" and also that an industry shortage of CDL drivers has made it difficult to retain bus drivers. Participants explained that without transportation, their children could not attend Head Start or Early Head Start; however, if a child cannot attend Head Start or Early Head Start, the family loses eligibility for all 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs.

**Participants in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative face a number of day-to-day familial responsibilities (e.g., childcare and employment) that could impede their ability to fully participate in career training programs.** For example, some families have multiple children, and not all their children can attend Early Head Start or Head Start, because they are too young or too old to attend, and these children require separate childcare. It was also noted that Early Head Start often has a waitlist, which forces some families to consider daycare for their youngest children, even if they are eligible for the program. Additionally, one staff member shared, "daycare is a problem across programs, not just for toddlers, but pre-teens as well." Parents struggle to find before- and after-care for their children of all ages. Additionally, participants and staff stated that childcare for older children is especially an issue when parent classes occur during school breaks.

Although it was not an original component of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC staff shared that they worked to find additional funding for childcare and connected parents to the state's Smart Steps program, which provides childcare funding for working families. Also, starting in 2019, MAC has been able to provide supplementary childcare for those who need it. While participants noted that this change helped in some cases; childcare remains a barrier for many participants. One staff member reported that she had recently been working with a parent who had to delay enrolling in the Adult Education program until she could arrange childcare for her child.



"If they don't have the proper childcare for their children, it holds them back."

Participants and staff reported that participants often need to balance their jobs and the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programming and that work schedules can interfere with class attendance. Participants discussed former classmates who "started with us, but the hours didn't match their work hours, so they had to quit to support their family." In addition to preventing some participants from completing the courses, one MAC staff member explained that some participants "want to enroll but need to work and take care of their family." Even work schedules that do not directly conflict with programming can affect a family's ability to participate. One participant reported that because she was working night shifts, she was not able to fully engage with the classes, explaining "I work 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. and I have to come in here tired. I have to get my kids ready and they're late, and by the time I come here I'm already tired. I can't pay attention like I need to."

MAC provides 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants with a small stipend for gas while attending Adult Education, CompTIA A+ and CDA programming; however, one staff member wished MAC could "give them a substantial amount for rent" so participants could focus on the

program. Participants also reported that the need for income was particularly disruptive during the CompTIA A+ internship and CDA volunteer hours. One participant explained, “After I finished the class I thought, I’m not volunteering. If I’m going to work, I’m going to get paid.” MAC staff have worked to address this issue, finding opportunities to hire CDA participants as classroom aides during their volunteer hours so that they can earn money while completing the required hours.

**Some participants reported that the rigor of the classes is a barrier to successful completion.**

One Adult Education participant explained that “it is very discouraging. If I fail at something, I’ll pick up and strive for more. But when that failing is constant, it’s like, what’s the point? Why keep doing it?” Staff, participants, and training providers reported that this is also true for the CompTIA A+ program. They reported that the curriculum is challenging, and the certification tests are difficult. MAC staff explained that the challenges of completing the coursework can dissuade participants from participating in or completing the course. One CompTIA A+ training provider worked to mitigate this challenge by being available on a holiday for extra study time and tutoring. Participants reported that staff encouragement helped them believe that they could persist in the program, as one participant shared, “When I started the class, I knew this was a challenge, but I saw the whole team believe in me; they always encouraged me, always [pushed me more].”

For those enrolled in the CompTIA A+ and CDA programs, both participants and staff reported that English proficiency could still be a barrier to participation and completion of the course. One ESL participant stated that her main difficulty in pursuing her CDA certification was having to write in English to complete program requirements. A training provider explained that there were challenges for participants with lower English proficiency and that there was “a lot of contention at the beginning with the language barrier, but we found solutions.” Training providers and MAC staff work to mitigate the challenges caused by language by enrolling parents in ESL courses prior to career training courses, and by having multilingual staff members who can serve as translators, when necessary. Participants reported that the ESL classes helped them better understand their coworkers, store clerks, and their children.

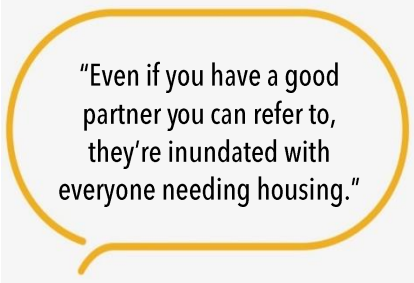
**Some barriers that affect a family’s physical health or safety must be addressed immediately and preclude a person from enrolling in or completing MAC’s 2Gen Whole/Family Initiative programs.** Many barriers can be mitigated through wraparound resources provided through MAC and its partner organizations, allowing 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants to continue participation in the program. Some of these health and safety barriers include acute mental or physical health issues, domestic violence, and a loss of housing. Program participants and staff both discussed how family issues, such as domestic violence or pregnancy, can cause a person to temporarily drop out of a MAC program. MAC staff reported that, in one case, a participant was able to rejoin and complete the class after dropping out because of domestic violence.

MAC staff reported that mental health challenges can prevent both child and adult participants from fully engaging in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Staff explained that “students come in here really broken, with a lot of emotional trauma” and are unable to learn until those issues are resolved. MAC staff listened to program participants and suggested solutions to their issues, including connecting to mental health or substance abuse professionals when needed,

however they are limited in their capacity to provide these resources on site. When referring participants to resources and opportunities outside of the MAC, those partners are also limited on capacity, as MAC staff explained that "you can reach out to them, but they have a waiting list to even get in to be counseled."

Furthermore, affordable housing is difficult to find and maintain in Davidson County. One participant explained, "Thank god my landlord would let me live there with my Section 8 voucher because I've got eight kids. If you've got more than three kids, it's hard to get housing." In some cases, participants reported they had to "move out of the county because they got rid of affordable housing in Nashville" and eligibility for MAC programs is dependent on residing in Davidson County.

Both staff and participants identified the limited availability of affordable housing as a barrier for 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants. The Nashville Human Rights Relations reported that Nashville is a rapidly growing city and this development within the city has led to a severe shortage of affordable housing options.<sup>9</sup> MAC leadership noted this issue explaining, "we have an awful affordable housing shortage in our county" and housing assistance providers do not have the capacity to serve all those needing housing.



"Even if you have a good partner you can refer to, they're inundated with everyone needing housing."

**MAC staff and participants reported that personal pride can interfere with participants' engagement in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.** One participant stated that some participants had dropped out when the gas stipends were delayed because "even though we are of low economic statuses, we still have pride. We didn't want to say anything and ask for it." MAC explained that "parents have too much pride" to admit they need help, and staff work to build trust with customers because "once they trust you, they can be more open about what they need."

Staff and participants also reported that when participants begin the program many do not believe in their ability to succeed. One participant explained, "When I started, I didn't have faith in myself. I dropped out in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In class I thought the people were smarter than me." MAC staff reported that one participant had dropped out of the class because "it was too much pressure for her because no one had ever believed in her."

### *Accelerators of Participation*

Several factors were identified by staff, training providers, and participants as accelerators that helped participants stay engaged and succeed in programming.

**MAC staff, training providers, and participants identified the internal motivation and dedication of participants as a key to their success.** MAC staff explained that the participants'

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<sup>9</sup> Metro Human Relations Commission. 2018. Affordable Housing Primer – Part 1: Affordable for Who? Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County. Accessed at: <https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Human%20Realations%20Commission/docs/publications/HousingGuide.pdf>

“willingness to stay no matter if they get knocked down,” and to “pick up and keep going” when they face challenges is an accelerator to participant success. One participant stated, “You have to sacrifice. You have to cut out a lot of things to finish it. [It] depends on how much you want it,” while another participant agreed, “It was challenging but if you want it, you go after it.”

**Participants who had earned degrees in similar fields to the program in which they enrolled reported that the experience accelerated their success in the program.** These participants had primarily earned degrees in foreign countries and for some, their degree was not formally recognized in the United States. However, participants explained that prior exposure to the content assisted their learning in their programs. For example, one CompTIA A+ completer had earned a computer engineering degree before immigrating to the United States, and while she had not been working in the computer engineering field for many years, she reported that these prior experiences provided valuable background knowledge to facilitate her success in the CompTIA A+ program. Similarly, one CDA participant was a teacher prior to coming to the US but noted that teacher or teacher’s assistant positions in the US required a degree. Pursuing the CDA credential allowed her to return to the classroom, as she stated, “I could get a job and it changed my career.”

**Receiving resources from other providers also helped participants stay engaged with MAC programming.** Often, these resources were the result of MAC connections and referrals. More than half of survey respondents reported that they received additional resources from MAC while enrolled in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (60.2%). Participants described feeling more stable and that they were able to participate in MAC’s 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative because they had Section 8 housing or because they received treatment for an addiction, which allowed them to be sober so that they could take advantage of the programs offered by MAC. When asked about additional resources that might be beneficial to them, participants often described resources that they already utilized because of a connection that MAC staff made to outside organizations. These included organizations that provided resources such as record expungement or degree translation, or helping a participant get a driver’s license, find childcare, or identify affordable housing options. According to the survey results, participants were most likely to report receiving housing support (28.4%) followed by childcare resources other than Head Start or Early Head Start (21.6%).

**Participants across the programs reported that having support from their children, families, or peers helped them successfully complete the program.** Participants told stories of how their children had encouraged them to persevere through challenges in their classes, including a participant who explained that their children told them, “Don’t give up. Do it for us.” Additionally, MAC staff reported that, in some cases, family members attend the trainings together (e.g., spouses or parent and an older child), providing each other support throughout the process.

Participants and training providers also noted that students build social capital by supporting each other through the technical trainings. One training provider was impressed by the solidarity amongst the students, stating, “The camaraderie among the students - they’re their own community now.” Participants discussed “helping one another” and encouraging each other throughout the program. One participant explained that the encouragement of the other participants “gives me positive energy. I can go through the challenge [with their support].”

**In addition to direct support from classmates, participants reported being encouraged by hearing success stories of others who have gone through the program.** MAC staff reported that previous participants sometimes come back to share their successes. For example, a previous CompTIA A+ participant who was hired full-time as an IT professional returned and reported that she was “so excited and motivated. She comes to talk to our cohort and tells them, ‘You can do this.’” When one participant expressed concern about failing a HiSET (high school equivalency) test multiple times, another shared the story of a previous participant, who took “three to five years to pass math, but he finally did.” Participants shared that these stories of success in overcoming the challenges of the program encourage them to work through their own challenges.

### *Participant and Staff Suggestions for Improvement of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative*

Participants and staff both identified opportunities to further improve the implementation of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs. These suggestions include:

- Provide more detailed information upfront about programs prior to enrollment, so as to ensure participant expectations match the goals and realities of the program;
- Ensure consistent follow-through on all opportunities and resources offered to participants, such as consistently distributing stipends according to the established schedule;
- Pay participants during internships and increase the stipend while participants are in class;
- Provide financial assistance for participants to transfer and/or translate degrees from other countries;
- Discuss next steps with participants earlier in the process to enhance and further their continued progress and forward-facing outlook;
- Increase participant buy-in by expressing the value of programming to participants, for example, the retail cost of certification courses and the potential benefits for changing their lives;
- Add a required financial literacy and budgeting skills element to the program;
- Add mental health supports on site, both for program participants and for MAC staff;
- Provide an after-hours “hotline” so that people can talk to someone about their issues outside of normal work hours;
- Maintain a consistent class schedule and communicate in a timely manner with participants and training providers about any changes; and
- Advocate for policy changes that would increase eligibility levels and allow customers to continue participating after their child ages out of Head Start or after gaining a moderate increase in income, providing a transition period and preventing them from losing benefits.

### *Additional Resources and Opportunities Suggested*

Some survey respondents reported that MAC was able to address any area where they needed assistance through collaboration and resources, while other 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants suggested additional resources that could have helped them during the program.

Participants were most likely to suggest additional opportunities in job and internship placement, including options for those with a criminal record. Respondents also reported additional childcare assistance as a barrier, including aftercare. Lastly, while MAC offered some housing assistance, respondents reported this as being a continued barrier.

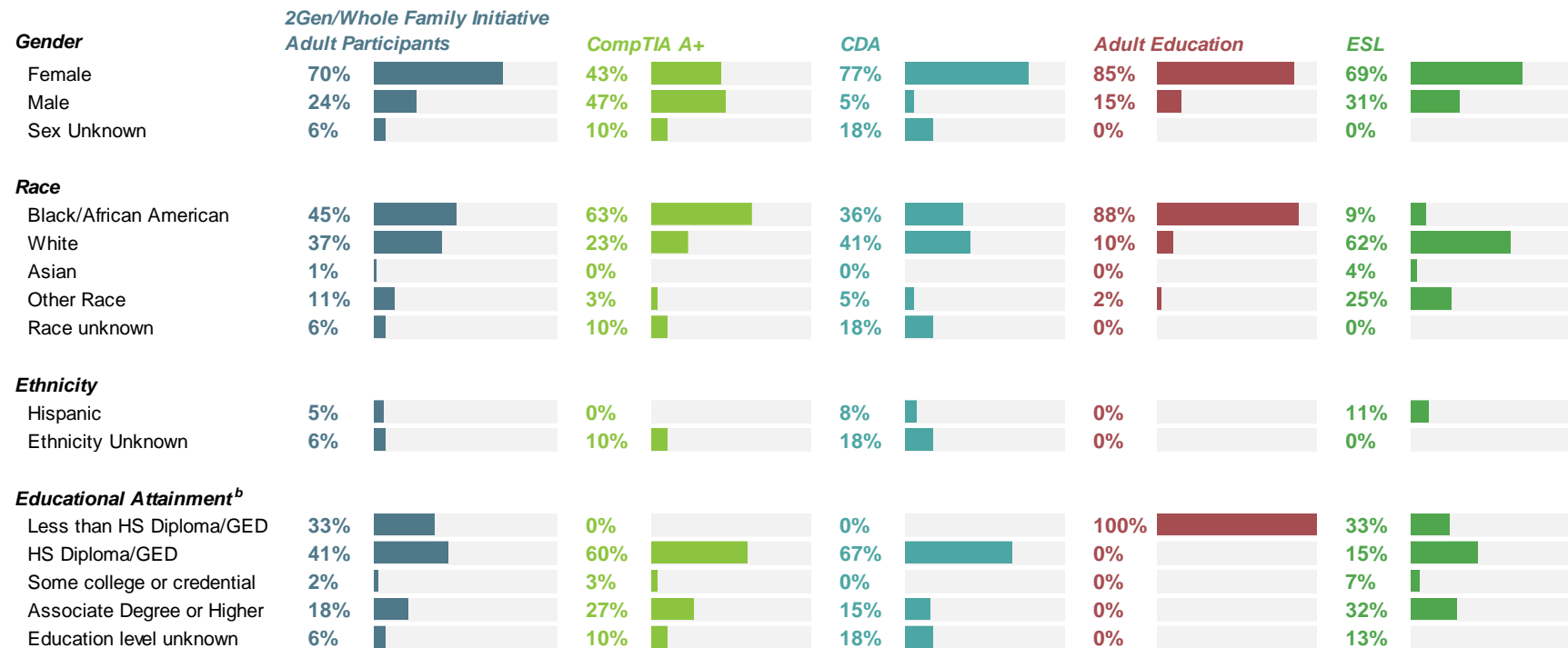
Additionally, some suggestions that were identified by the participants were specific to individual programs. ESL students were interested in more intensive English courses and wanted the classes to meet more often so that they can still attend weekly, even when appointments and other responsibilities get scheduled over their regular class time. CDA program participants expressed difficulty in completing the required number of volunteer hours and suggested decreasing the number of hours or ensuring participants are paid during these hours. For the CompTIA A+ program, participants requested more hands-on practice, so they could have more opportunities to apply the concepts and skills they were learning through the lectures. Participants in the Adult Education program suggested hiring additional teaching staff with a range of teaching approaches to better match the variety of learning styles students have. They also suggested hiring additional tutors to provide more targeted assistance during class time. Finally, one staff member suggested providing on-site food and clothing assistance at the various Head Start locations and at the MAC offices, in addition to providing referrals to outside resources.

## PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

This section provides information about the participants in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. It includes a profile of demographic information about participants in each of the different types of career training courses, accelerators and barriers for families, and parent and child participant outcomes.

### Participant Profile

The participant profile below is based on MAC program data as of August 2019. In total, 166 adults have enrolled in programs offered in MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative since 2015, including 39 in the CDA program, 30 in CompTIA A+, 56 in ESL, and 41 in Adult Education.<sup>10</sup>

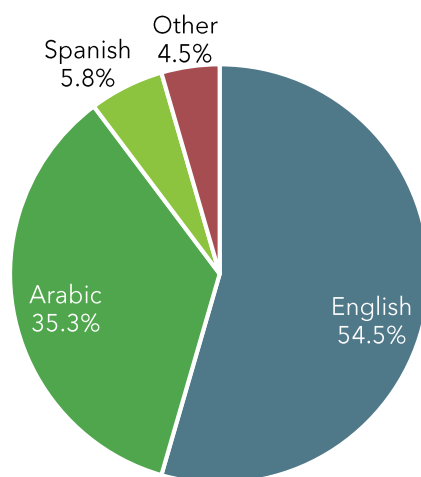


<sup>10</sup> This only includes Adult Education students who were part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, with a child in Head Start or Early Head Start.

Participants enrolled in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs ranged in age (at time of enrollment) from 18 to 67 years old. At the time of enrollment, half of the participants were aged 30-39 years (47.4%), one-third were aged 20-29 years (32.1%), and about one in ten (11.5%) were between the ages of 18-24.

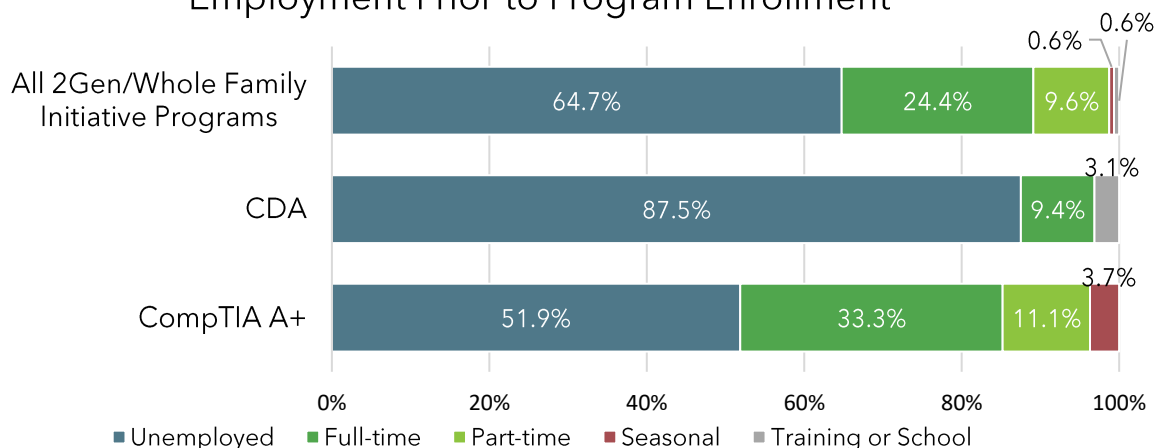
While more than a third of the program participants identified as White, the majority of these participants reported speaking Arabic as their primary language. Close to half of all participants (45.6%) reported speaking a language other than English as their primary language. The most commonly spoken languages other than English were Arabic and Spanish.

Primary Language of Participants



Two-thirds of adult participants in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs (64.7%) were unemployed prior to starting the program, while nearly one quarter of participants (24.4%) were employed full-time and 9.6% were employed part-time. The majority of CDA participants were unemployed prior to enrolling in the program (87.5%). Conversely, nearly half of CompTIA A+ participants (48.1%) had some form of employment prior to the program, including one-third of participants (33.3%) who were employed full-time.

Employment Prior to Program Enrollment



## Outcomes

Program outcomes were gathered from a variety of sources throughout the project including program data, parent participant survey findings, focus groups and interviews, and a MAC Correlation Study previously completed for MAC. Once data were collected from these sources, TPMA used a triangulation technique to collect and validate data from several sources to paint a holistic picture of the program's outcomes. Quantitative data provided in this section are reported as frequencies (i.e., number of times a value occurs), while qualitative data are reported as frequent themes and concepts that were extracted. Upon achievement of theoretical saturation (i.e., the emergence of no new findings), findings were extrapolated and are provided in this section. As detailed in the [Survey Limitations](#) section in Appendix A, survey findings in this report should be interpreted with caution as they may not appropriately represent the entire population of individuals served by MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. This is due to misalignments in self-selected program enrollment in the survey compared to program enrollment based on MAC data. The table below illustrates the programs in which the survey respondents reported participating.

| Program                           | Survey Respondents | Total Program Enrollment | Survey Response Rate |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Adult Education (GED/HiSET)       | 22                 | 54                       | 40.7%                |
| Child Development Associate (CDA) | 45                 | 52                       | 86.5%                |
| CompTIA A+                        | 25                 | 50                       | 50.0%                |

The program outcomes examined as part of this project are divided into the following three groups:

- Parent-specific outcomes;
- Parent-child interaction outcomes; and
- Child-specific outcomes.

Findings within these groups are described in the subsequent sections.

### Parent-Specific Outcomes

The parent-specific outcomes provided in this section include both programmatic outcomes (e.g., program completion, employment and wage data) and intangible outcomes (e.g., self-confidence, parent stress).

#### Programmatic Outcomes

Programmatic outcomes of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative are defined in the following table. Findings are broken down by each outcome in the following sections.

| Indicator Definition  | Data Source(s)  |
|---|---|
| <b>Completion:</b> completion of the program, including passing the tests and obtainment of the certification and/or degree   | Parent participant survey; program data                   |
| <b>Employment:</b> self-reported as employed or unemployed, includes specific outcomes for employed participants (e.g., medical benefits and ongoing education opportunities) | Head Start Correlational Study; parent participant survey |
| <b>Wages:</b> hourly wages and wage increases/decreases   | Parent participant survey; interviews and focus groups    |
| <b>Other financial outcomes:</b> purchasing a home or vehicle, improving credit scores, and opening bank accounts   | Interviews and focus groups; parent participant survey    |
| <b>Continued education:</b> plans to continue education or training upon program completion   | Parent participant survey                                 |
| <b>Applying skills in other contexts:</b> leveraging content outside of the classroom (in their personal and professional lives)  | Interviews and focus groups                               |

### Completion

Rates of program completion and rates of earned certificates/degrees were captured through the existing MAC program data and the parent participant survey. Data from these sources show inconsistent completion rates for the CDA and CompTIA A+ programs. More specifically, the CDA program has an 81.8% completion rate based on MAC data, whereas data from survey respondents indicate a completion rate of 42.9%. Additionally, the CompTIA A+ program has a 44.4% completion rate based on MAC data, whereas data from survey respondents indicates a completion rate of 23.1%.

As noted previously, some survey respondents reported being enrolled in a specific 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative program; however, according to MAC data, these individuals were not enrolled in the program that they identified in the survey. Additionally, the survey did not capture responses from all MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants. Therefore, the self-reported completion data from the survey is presented in this section to provide context for the employment and wage data, rather than to contradict the MAC program data.

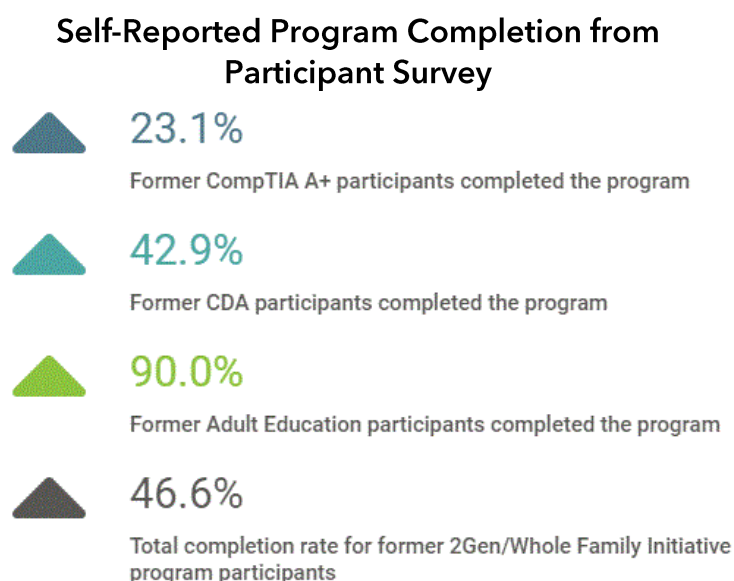
### MAC Program Data

MAC program data included completion rates and certification rates for CDA and CompTIA A+ participants for the previous three program years (2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018). Of the 34 CDA participants, 28 had completed the program (82.4%) and of those, 15 had acquired their CDA certification (53.6% of completers). The completion status of seven participants was unknown. Of the 30 CompTIA A+ participants, 12 had completed the course (40.0%), and 11 of those had acquired the CompTIA A+ credential (91.7% of completers). Three participants had unknown completion statuses.

As of September 2019, MAC staff reported that 18 participants from the 2019 CompTIA A+ cohort had passed the Core 1 and Core 2 test and achieved their CompTIA A+ certification. The current outcomes represent the highest completion rate for the program to date.

### Survey Respondents

Survey respondents were asked to indicate all MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs in which their family participated, and then indicate the specific education program (i.e., Adult Education, CompTIA A+, or CDA) in which they themselves participated.<sup>11</sup> At the time of the parent participant survey, 23.7% of respondents were currently enrolled in their education program. However, of those that indicated they were no longer enrolled in programming, 46.6% reported they completed the education program (i.e., Adult Education, CompTIA A+, or CDA) in which they were enrolled.



Overall, 92.3% of participants who completed their education program reported they received the degree or certification. More specifically, 86.7% of CDA graduates indicated they received the certification and all adult education completers received the degree. CompTIA A+ alumni from previous cohorts before 2019 were the least likely to report completing the program (23.1%), however, all of the program completers (n=3) indicated that they had received the certification.

### Employment

According to MAC leadership, one goal of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative is to help participants acquire the skills and credentials necessary to gain employment. Through the survey, those who exited their education program (i.e., were not currently enrolled at the time of the survey), were asked to report current employment and wage information. Data on employment and wages from the participant survey were only reported for those who had exited the CompTIA A+ program or the CDA program.

At the time of the parent participant survey,<sup>12</sup> three-fourths of respondents who had exited the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs reported that they were currently employed (75.6%). With this, half indicated that they held full-time jobs (55.6%) and only one respondent was working multiple jobs at the time of the survey. Those who had completed either CDA or CompTIA A+ were more likely to be employed<sup>13</sup> at the time of the survey (81.3%) than non-completers. All CompTIA A+ survey completers reported being employed at the time of the survey (n=3) compared to 76.9% of CDA program completers.

Nearly all of the surveyed program completers reported that the CDA or CompTIA A+ program prepared them for a job in the field (92.9%). More than three-fourths of surveyed program

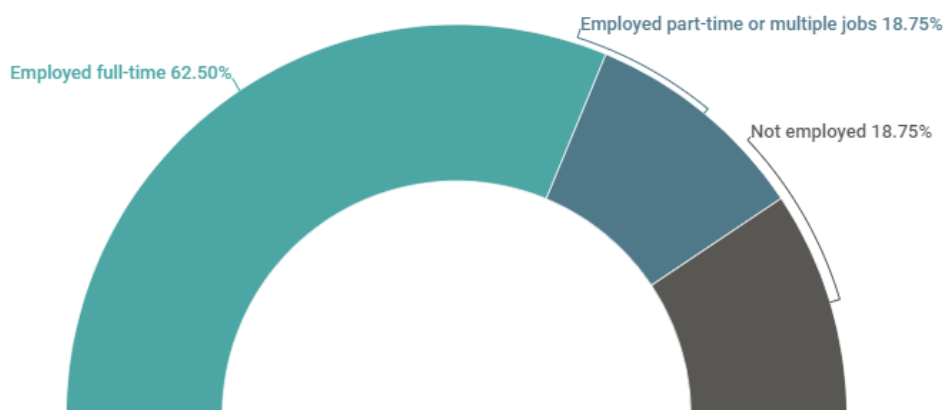
<sup>11</sup> Survey respondents could only select one education program in which they enrolled.

<sup>12</sup> See [Appendix A](#) for detailed methodology

<sup>13</sup> n=13 for CDA completers and n=3 for CompTIA A+ completers

completers who were employed at the time of the survey were employed in jobs that used their CDA or CompTIA A+ training (76.9%), while those who did not complete the training were most likely to be employed in a different industry (90.5%). Surveyed program completers in different industries reported working in fast food, warehouses, and production jobs. For focus group and interview participants, several from the CompTIA A+ program reported working in the IT industry, including at Metro Government IT (the host for the CompTIA A+ internships) or as IT training providers for various companies. MAC staff also indicated hiring many graduates from the CDA program for Head Start/Early Head Start locations.

### Employment Status for Surveyed Program Completers at Time of Survey



Regarding medical benefits, more than half of employed participants reported in the survey that they were eligible for health insurance/medical benefits through their current employer (61.5%) and 15.4% reported that they were unsure. For surveyed CDA program completers, 70.0% reported being eligible for health insurance/medical benefits. However, all CDA participants who are employed full-time with MAC are eligible for health insurance/medical benefits.

### Family Well-being Matrix Data

Data about program participant employment is also available from MAC's Family Well-being Matrix, which is completed by MAC staff for participants when they enroll in the program and after they complete the program. The Matrix data in this report includes information

on employment related to 2018-2019 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants only. The 21 participants who had completed either the CDA or CompTIA A+ program and had both pre- and post-program matrix scores, including 16 CDA completers and five CompTIA A+ completers. Of the 21 participants, all but one participant had improved employment following the program. The one participant who did not show improvement participated in the CDA program and was already employed full-time with MAC at the time of entry into the program. Following completion of the CDA or CompTIA A+ program, 19 participants were employed full-time and two CompTIA A+ participants were employed part-time. The Matrix has since been revised for 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative participants in the 2019-2020 program year.



**20 out of 21**

**Participants improved employment  
after completing the program**

## Wages

MAC leadership reported that a significant goal of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative is to assist participants in acquiring higher incomes because “if you can increase a family’s income by \$3,000, it impacts the future earnings of the child.”<sup>14</sup> With this, the MIT Living Wage Calculator<sup>15</sup> estimates living wages for a variety of household sizes and is based on the number of adults (working or non-working) and children in the household. For example, in Davidson County, TN, the living wage for a family with one adult and two children has a living wage of \$26.69 per hour, while a family with two working adults and two children have a living wage of \$14.62 per hour. MAC staff reported that their goal is for participants who complete the CompTIA A+ program to earn wages between \$17 to \$20 per hour as a starting wage, with movement toward the MIT living wage for one adult and one child of \$23.20 per hour.

### Family Well-being Matrix Data

The Family Well-being Matrix provided data on participant wages after completion of the program for 16 CDA completers and five CompTIA A+ completers.

Wage data was recorded for two individuals prior to enrolling in the CDA program, both of whom earned \$10.00 - \$12.00 per hour. After completing the program, all 16 of the CDA participants were employed full-time with one earning less than \$10.00 per hour and the remaining 15 earning \$10.00 - \$14.00 per hour. CDA completers who were employed by MAC as teacher assistants (based on payroll data) earn between \$12.50 to \$15.00 per hour.

Similarly, prior to the CompTIA A+ program, wage data was recorded for two individuals prior to enrollment, with one earning less than \$10.00 per hour and one earning \$10.00 - \$14.00 per hour. After completing the program, two participants transitioned from being unemployed or seasonally employed to having part-time employment in the field of Information Technology, earning \$20.00 per hour. The remaining three were all employed full-time with two earning more than \$20.00 per hour, and one self-employed but not in the IT field earning \$10.00 - \$14.00 per hour.

### Survey Respondents

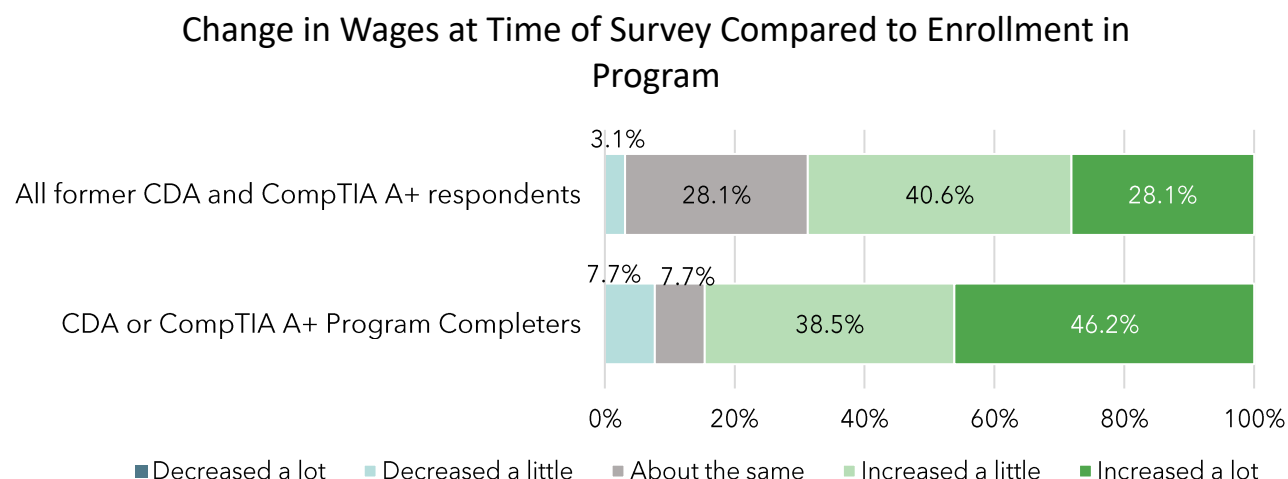
The majority of survey respondents who had completed the CDA or CompTIA A+ program reported earning \$11.00 - \$14.00 per hour at the time of the survey (76.9%). The majority of data on post-program wages for program completers are from those who completed the CDA program. The three CompTIA A+ completers from the survey reported a wide range of hourly wages, from low hourly wages (\$7.00 - \$10.00) to higher hourly wages (\$19.00 - \$22.00). Nearly half of program completers reported that their wages had increased “a lot” since before the training (46.2%) and an additional 38.5% reported wages had increased “a little.” Only one

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<sup>14</sup> A 2011 study showed that, for low income families making less than \$25,000 per year, an additional \$3,000 per year during early childhood increased the child’s future earnings by 17%. (Duncan, G.J. & Magnuson, K. (2011). ‘The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty.’ *Pathways Winter*. Retrieved from: [https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/media/\\_media/pdf/pathways/winter\\_2011/Pathways\\_Winter11\\_Duncan.pdf](https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/media/_media/pdf/pathways/winter_2011/Pathways_Winter11_Duncan.pdf))

<sup>15</sup> Retrieved from: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>

program completer reported their wages decreased following program completion, while the remainder of program completers reported no change in wages.



When including all survey respondents who were no longer enrolled in the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs, more than half of employed participants reported earning \$11.00 - \$14.00 per hour at the time of the survey (62.5%), and one out of five participants earned \$15.00 - \$18.00 per hour (21.9%). Additionally, 68.8% of all respondents who were no longer enrolled reported that their wages had increased following MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, regardless of completion status.

Staff shared one notable success story of a participant who had been providing for herself and her child with special needs on just \$800 per month at the time of program enrollment. After completing the program, staff reported that the participant was employed full-time making more than \$47,000 per year - a significant increase.

#### Other Financial Outcomes

The parent participant survey measured the extent to which participants that were no longer enrolled in the programs achieved changes in their finances since the start of their training, including purchasing a home or vehicle, improving credit scores, and opening bank accounts. For example, nearly one-fourth of respondents no longer enrolled in CDA or CompTIA A+ indicated that they were able to improve their credit scores (25.9%). Additionally, 14.8% of respondents were able to purchase a vehicle since they had started the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative and three individuals purchased a home. Other participants were able to open a savings account or increase the amount of money in an existing savings account (13.0%) and some were able to actively pay down their debt (11.1%). However, two-fifths of

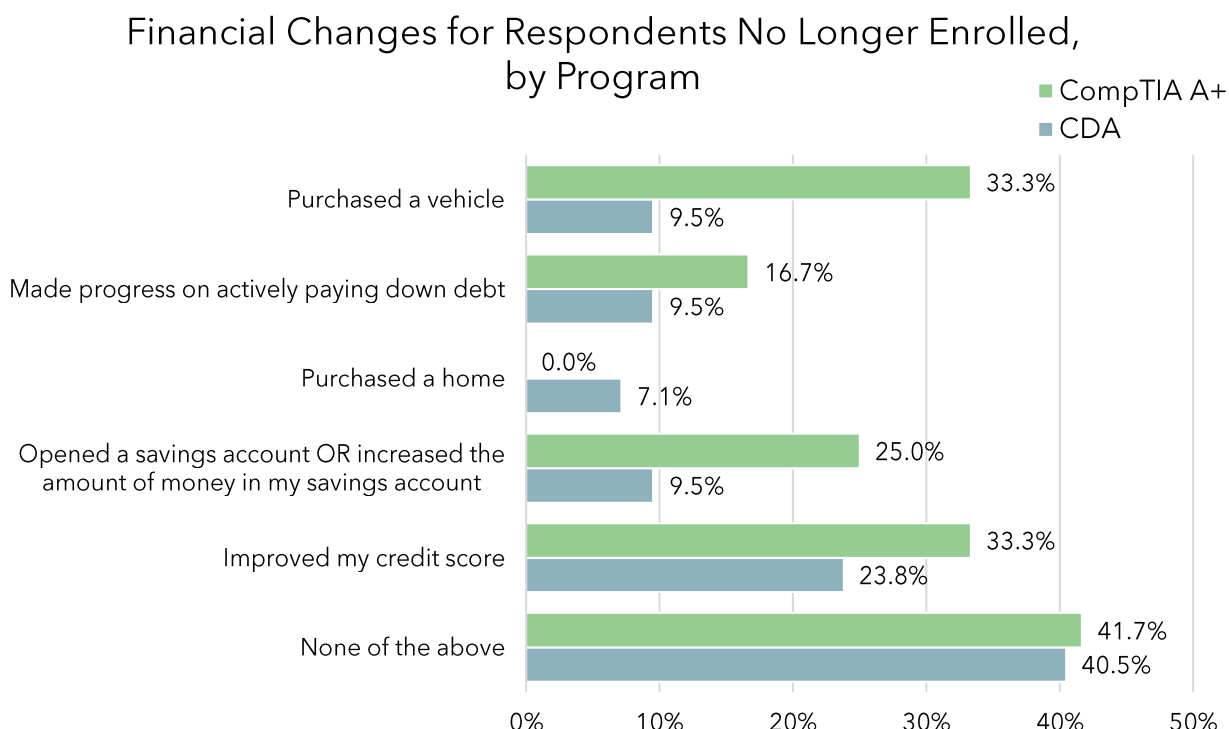
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MAC staff reported in interviews and focus groups that alumni are excited to share when they have been able to purchase a new car or house as a result of improving their employment. One MAC staff member noted that children also noticed this change as one child shared, "My momma has money now! I have a room now and a table to sit at and eat."

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participants reported that they were not able to make any of the additional financial changes since they started the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (40.7%).

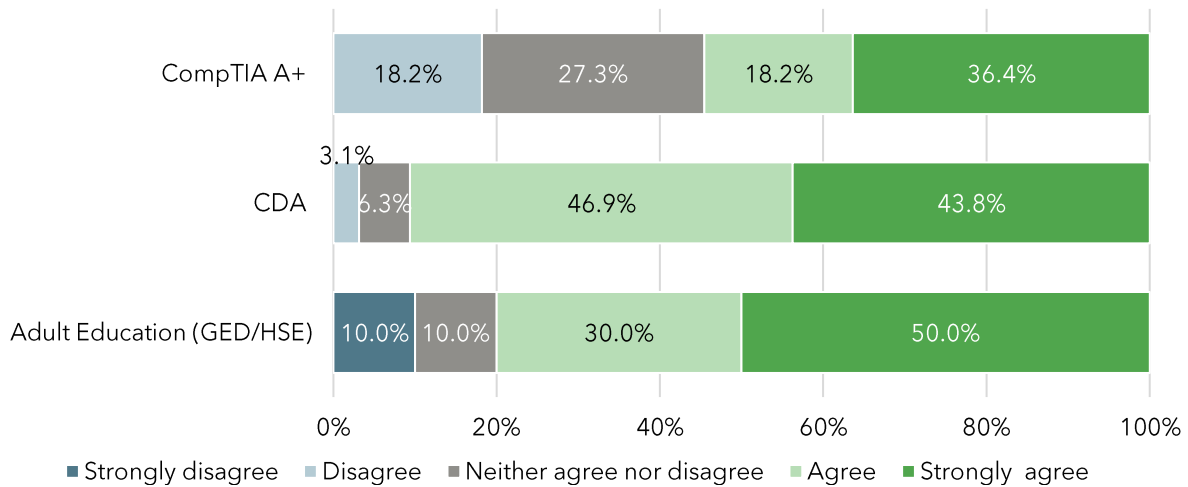
One-third of CompTIA A+ participants were able to improve their credit score (33.3%) compared to 23.8% of CDA participants. One-fourth of CompTIA A+ students were able to open a savings account or increase the amount of money in their savings account (25.0%) compared to 9.5% of CDA participants.



### Continued Education

Parent participant survey respondents who were no longer enrolled in the education programs (i.e., Adult Education, CDA, and CompTIA A+) were asked about continued education upon completion of the training. Nearly half of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that the program prepared them for future education or training (43.4%), while less than one-tenth of respondents reported that they did not feel the program prepared them for future education (7.5%).

## Agreement about Preparedness for Future Education and Training



Half of those no longer enrolled in an education program reported that they plan to enroll in additional education or training related to the program in which they enrolled (50.0%). One-third of participants were unsure about their plans around continued education (33.9%), and less than one-tenth did not intend to continue their education or training (7.1%).

Nearly one-fifth of employed survey respondents (regardless of program completion status) reported that they did not know if their employer would offer opportunities for continued education or training (18.4%), while 42.1% reported that their employer did not offer this opportunity.

### Applying Technical Skills in Other Contexts

Participants in the CompTIA A+ program reported through interviews and focus groups that they often used the computer skills learned in the class outside the classroom. This was also reported for those that did not complete the certification or who now work in jobs outside the intended IT career path. These interview/focus group participants reported feeling more comfortable using and working with computers upon completion of the program.

One previous participant stated in an interview that despite not completing the certificate, the computer instruction still “helped me, gave me confidence around computers.” Other participants explained that if there is an issue with their computers at their jobs outside the IT industry or even at home, they felt confident attempting to address the issue themselves before calling technical support due to the program.

### *Intangible Outcomes*

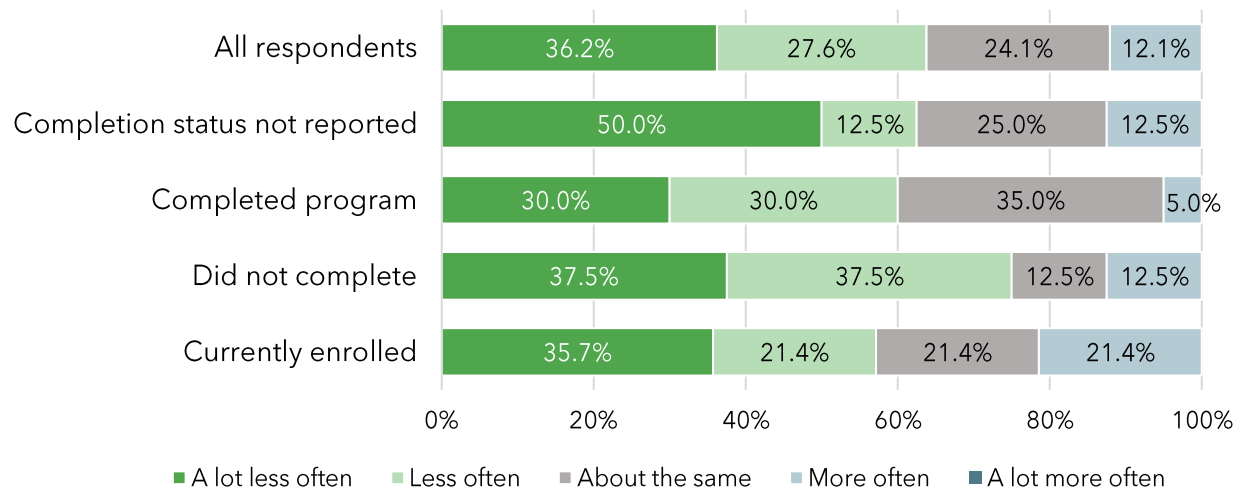
Intangible outcomes of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative are defined in the table below. Findings are broken down by each outcome in the following sections.

| Indicator Definition   | Source(s)                   |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Level of stress:</b> level of perceived stress as compared to before the program and at the time of the survey  | Parent participant survey   |
| <b>Looking toward the future:</b> self-reported outcome of the program on considering the future   | Interviews and focus groups |
| <b>Building self-confidence:</b> self-reported outcome on the participants' beliefs they can achieve their goals and increase self-confidence because of the program | Interviews and focus groups |
| <b>Building relationships with peers:</b> developing relationships with those in the program   | Interviews and focus groups |
| <b>Spreading impacts to the wider community:</b> interest in the program from others and impact on others (outside of the participants)                              | Interviews and focus groups |

### Level of Stress

Overall, nearly two-thirds of parent survey respondents reported that they felt less stressed about providing for their family at the time of the survey (63.8%) than before the program. Those who had completed their education program (i.e., Adult Education, CDA, or CompTIA A+) had similar rates of reduced stress (60.0%) compared to those currently enrolled in the program (57.1%). However, currently enrolled students were the most likely group to feel stress more often at the time of the survey than before the program (21.4%), and completers were least likely (5.0%). CDA participants were the most likely to report that they felt stressed less often at the time of the survey (51.1%), compared to 41.1% of CompTIA A+ participants and 42.9% of Adult Education participants.

## Reported Changes in Stress from Providing for Family between Enrollment and Time of Survey



### Looking Toward the Future

MAC staff and training providers reported on future-oriented outcomes through focus groups and interviews. These staff and training providers indicated that participants in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative gained a forward-facing outlook through the program that was provided. More specifically, one provider explained that the training reoriented participants to focus on future goals, so that participants could begin asking, "What can I do to get me there?"

Current participants from interviews and focus groups discussed the program as a steppingstone stating, "If you get the certification, get a good job, and really be in the field, you can think about something more advanced. This is the biggest step, a beginning for you."

### Building Self-Confidence

Through interviews and focus groups, MAC staff and providers discussed how the program could build self-confidence for participants as well as the belief that participants could achieve their goals. MAC staff reported in focus groups that some participants "walk in the door with no self-confidence," but through partnerships with MAC staff and peer support as well as hard work, they develop determination to succeed. Furthermore, one provider noted, "The technical things we're teaching are a means to an end, but ultimately it's hope: hope to dream, hope to succeed."

### Building Relationships with Peers


"If you need somebody to talk to, there is someone there."

Participants and staff reported in focus groups and interviews that participants developed strong relationships with their peers through the program. One participant discussed the possibility of building a business in conjunction with their peers. With this, a participant in the Father II Father program noted that the "camaraderie and the love" in the group has impacted his life.

One training provider was surprised by how quickly the class became “a unified group that felt that they’re in this together.” The relationships participants built with their peers provided them with a group to discuss the problems they were facing in/outside the program and seek advice on how to overcome barriers, with one participant stating in a focus group that peers “are my backbone when I’m struggling.”

#### Spreading Impacts to the Wider Community

In interviews and focus groups, participants discussed the wider impacts of the program, noting that the program had a ripple effect on the people around them. Several discussed encouraging their friends and families to get involved in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, with one participant from the Father II Father program sharing that his church was interested in implementing a similar program. This individual stated that even wearing the Father II Father shirt spurs interest- “It engages conversations with people. When I tell them about it, they want to get involved too.”



“It’s a cycle: the first [person] can help the next one and the next one.”

#### Parent/Child Outcomes

Parent/child outcomes of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative are defined in the table below. Findings are broken down by each outcome in the following sections.

| Indicator Definition   | Source(s)  |
|--|--|
| <b>Improved parent-child interactions:</b> self-reported improvements in interactions                                | Interviews and focus groups; parent participant survey |
| <b>Learning tools for parenting:</b> parenting tools gathered through program participation                          | Interviews and focus groups; parent participant survey |
| <b>Communication:</b> self-reported improvements in communication within ESL families (between children and parents) | Interviews and focus groups                            |

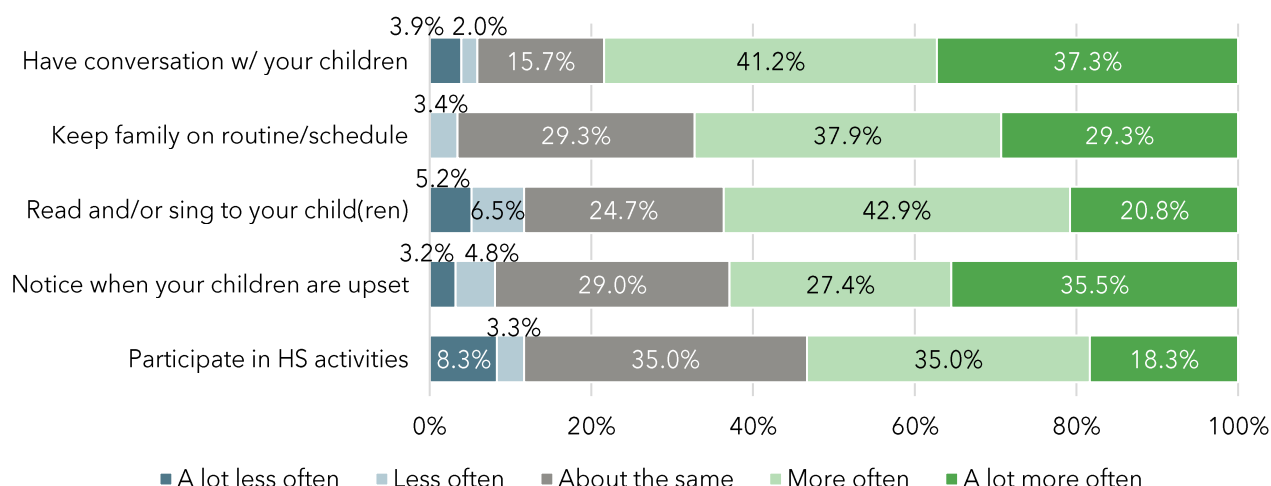
#### Improved Parent-Child interactions

Participants reported that their interactions with their children had improved through their participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Several parents shared in focus groups that they were more engaged with their children and spent more time with them because of their participation in the program. A father reported an increased interest in the details of his children’s lives, including, “making sure to help with homework, flashcards, stuff that was mom’s role [before].” Parents in the Father II Father program also reported showing more affection to their children, with one participant stating, “We as men are afraid to show affection. ... It’s important for my sons to know it’s okay for my dad to show he loves me.” MAC staff also reported observing changes in parents’ interactions with their children through the course of the program, such as greeting their children and saying goodbye during drop-off at Head Start.

Furthermore, drawn from the parent participant survey, the majority of respondents reported that they got angry with their children less often or a lot less often (79.3%) at the time of the survey compared to before the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. On average, parents reported that they used more positive parenting actions than before the survey. While the data cannot be attributed directly to the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative’s programming, the findings suggest

that parents involved in the initiative felt they made positive changes in their own social-emotional health and noticed positive changes in their children's social-emotional health.

### Frequency at Time of Survey Compared to Start of Program



### Learning Tools for Parenting

Both parents and staff reported that, through the program, they learned the tools and skills to help their parenting. Through focus groups and interviews, it was reported that this sentiment was particularly true of participants in the CDA program, which was attributed to the curriculum that focuses specifically on child development. Focus group participants who had enrolled in the CDA course discussed a variety of tools they learned in the classroom that were implemented at home, including establishing routines, being mindful of word choice, redirecting children, and coping with challenging behaviors. One participant explained that the program's content around child development "opened my eyes." However, parents that were not in the child-focused program also reported improved skills and tools that they used in their parenting. One parent shared that others had commented on her improved parenting, and she told them, "I'm a good parent because of Metro Action. Because when I came here, I didn't know how to [be a good parent]."

Respondents to the parent participant survey also reported that they learned more about how children develop through the programs in which they were enrolled. For example, one parent reported that the program helped them learn "ways to get them [children] to pay attention" and another explained "it helped me learn more about the challenges that come with parenting and being more patient." Additionally, parents reported that the program helped them become more engaged with their children's education, as one parent reported "I can honestly say had it not been for the program, I probably would not be as actively engaged in my children's education as I am now."

### Communication

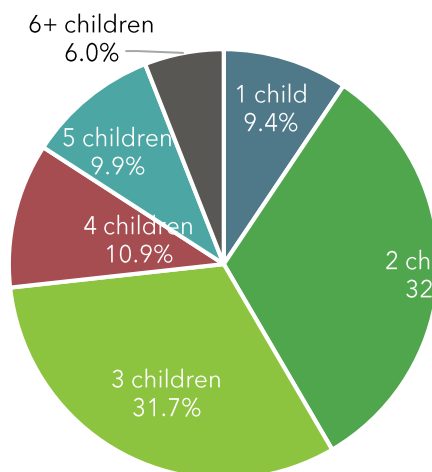
Several parents, especially in the ESL classes, reported that their communication with their children had improved. One MAC staff member noted in an interview that, in some cases, children were learning English and forgetting their native languages, which led to

communication barriers between the parents and their children. However, through the ESL classes, the parents indicated they were better able to communicate with their children at home. One parent said, “ESL helped me be able to pronounce words in books so I can read to my child.” Another parent reported being able to understand and help her children with homework because of the ESL classes. Additionally, some parents reported they were better able to advocate for their children in school or at Head Start.

### Child-Specific Outcomes

While this study focused on outcomes related to the parent participants, participants and staff also reported observing outcomes for the children of 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative families, particularly through their involvement in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative families included between one and eleven children, with the majority of families (63.9%) having two or three children.

Number of Children in Household



Child-specific outcomes of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative include the following:

| Indicator Definition  | Source(s)  |
|---|--|
| <b>Child behavior at home:</b> changes in child behaviors (e.g., openness, affection, learning American customs and culture for ESL students, and sharing information) occurring between initiative enrollment and the time the survey was administered | Interviews and focus groups; parent participant survey |
| <b>Child behavior in school:</b> reductions in negative behavior (e.g., cursing and fighting) following participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative   | Interviews and focus groups                            |
| <b>Children learn by example:</b> self-reported learning by parents' example, particularly perseverance   | Interviews and focus groups                            |
| <b>Developmental assessments:</b> Differences in Head Start children's scores on developmental assessments, which were correlated with parent status in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative  | MAC Head Start Correlational Study                     |

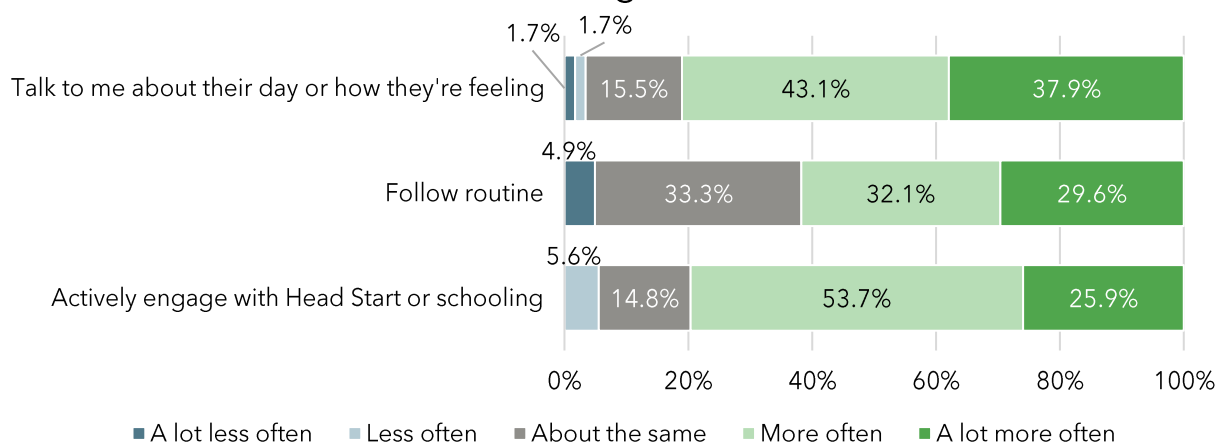
### Child Behavior at Home

Through the parent participant survey and focus groups, parents were asked about changes in child behaviors from prior to enrollment in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative to the time of the survey. Parents reported behavior changes among their children at home, including being more open to their parents, especially their fathers, and showing affection. One parent in the Father II Father program explained in a focus group that, “I can see benefits where my kids gravitate towards me. It was almost an instant change when they saw a more loving me. They are more affectionate. You can't beat that.” One participant shared that a peer was surprised

by how much his child started talking to him after the father started attending Father II Father activities.

A majority of parents that completed the parent participant survey reported that their children talked to them about their day or how they were feeling more frequently than prior to enrollment in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (81.0%). Only two parents that completed the survey reported that children talked to them less frequently (3.4%). Parents were least likely to report a change in children following a routine, with one third of parents reporting that there was no change compared to before participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (33.3%). Additionally, more than half of parents reported that children were less likely to act out or misbehave (61.4%) and three-fourths of parents reported that children appeared less stressed or upset than before the family participated in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

Frequency at Time of Survey Compared to Start of Program



During focus groups, parents who had immigrated to the United States (US) from other countries also discussed how their children were learning about American customs and culture through their involvement in Head Start. Several parents from the ESL program reported that their children would learn American customs at Head Start - including not talking at the food table, not eating with their mouths open, not talking too loud, cleaning up their toys, washing hands after using the bathroom - and then bring those cultural lessons home to share with their parents. A parent in the Adult Education program who had grown up and originally attended school in Africa shared in a focus group that her child was teaching her about how to study in the US and be successful in the American school system.

### *Child Behavior in School*

Several focus group participants, including parents and staff, reported observing changes in how the children behave in school following participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. One parent shared that her son's behavior had "come a long way" since attending Head Start, specifically that "my son used to fight a lot and he used to curse. Once he was around other kids, he came up out of it." Another parent noted, "It opened up my son a lot. He stuttered a little. But when he got around other kids his age, it settled him a little. It was not as much. Being in that nice welcoming atmosphere calmed him." Although not exclusively

discussing children in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, a MAC staff member commented on the success of Head Start children, even after they have aged out of the Head Start program. The staff member stated that “when kids went to different schools at age 5, the teachers would call us and say they knew the students that were doing well came from Head Start.”

Several participants in the Father II Father program reported observing an impact not only on their own children, but also on other children in the school. One father who had been volunteering at the school stated, “It calmed the kids down, so they started on a good foot. Some kids come in and don’t have a home with a positive atmosphere. To get that at school, it changed the outlook for some kids. It passed around.” Another father echoed how the impact of the Father II Father program spread among the children, sharing that his son would “get in class and just go hug his best friend. Then my daughter started doing it, too. So now there are more of them. It’s just like everybody wants to be a family.”

#### *Children Learn by Example*

Both participants and MAC staff noted in focus groups and interviews the importance of children learning by their parents’ example, particularly the parents’ perseverance. A staff member explained, “When you teach the parent, you also teach the child.” One participant explained how her participation in the program encouraged her high school-aged son to stay in school, stating, “As he saw me going to school, I guess I motivated him to keep going. If they see you’re not doing anything, they’ll say, ‘Ah, well, my mom and dad aren’t doing anything, so I don’t have to do anything.’”

#### *Head Start Correlation Study*

A 2018 study examined outcomes for the children in the Head Start program at MAC.<sup>16</sup> The study analyzed the correlation between having a parent in one of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs (i.e., CompTIA A+, CDA, ESL, Adult Education, or Father II Father) and child’s scores on two developmental assessments:

1. **Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment**, which evaluates child growth in the domains of social emotional development, physical development, language development, literacy development, math development, and cognitive development; and
2. **Brigance Developmental screening**, which provides a snapshot of early child development and academic skills.

The findings from this study were mixed, partially because the sample size for this study was relatively small. However, the study did reveal some significant positive differences for students whose parents participated in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative when compared to students whose parents did not. For example, students whose parents completed the CDA courses scored almost eight points higher on their end of the year Brigance screening than students whose parents did not complete the CDA courses.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, students whose parents earned their CompTIA A+ certification scored significantly higher in Literacy during their third Teaching Strategies Gold assessment when compared to students whose parents did not gain

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<sup>16</sup> Burch, M. (2018). MAC Correlational Study.

<sup>17</sup> In this portion of the study, while the differences between the two groups was not statistically significant, the interaction between the two groups was, with students whose parents did *not* participate in CDA classes starting with higher scores and the students whose parents *did* participate ending higher.

certification. Furthermore, the study showed that students with fathers who participated in the Father II Father program scored significantly higher on the Teaching Strategies Gold assessment in Language across the entire school year when compared to students with fathers who did not participate in the program. Complementary MAC data shows that children who are considered as part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative have significantly higher Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rates (85.9%) when compared to the ADA rates of non-2Gen/Whole Family Initiative children (83.9%).<sup>18</sup>

## 2GEN/WHOLE FAMILY INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS LEARNED

MAC leadership and staff identified a number of lessons that they learned while implementing the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. These lessons include what staff learned about working with training providers, partnering with participants during program opportunities, and what organizational structures best optimize 2Gen/Whole Family work.

### *Lessons for Working with Training Providers*

**Be involved with training providers.** MAC leadership emphasized the importance of being closely involved with the training providers who teach the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult classes. Leadership explained that staff should observe classes and visit class regularly to ensure that the training providers are consistently upholding the expectations and goals of the program participants and MAC. Similarly, **communicate regularly with training providers.** MAC leadership and training providers expressed the importance of maintaining communication so that all parties know the schedule for the program and provide clear communication to participants. **Be consistent: have a plan and stick to it.** Training providers identified challenges with changes in class start dates or condensed timeframes for the training. Following a clear plan for the program allows both the agency and the training providers to provide consistent educational enhancement opportunities to participants.

It also is important to **find the “right fit” between organization and training provider.** Training providers must understand and align with the organization’s goals. The training providers must also have the qualifications to achieve those goals. For example, training providers who have industry connections can connect participants to job or internship opportunities and provide participants with industry-relevant soft skills.

### *Lessons Related to Working with Participants*

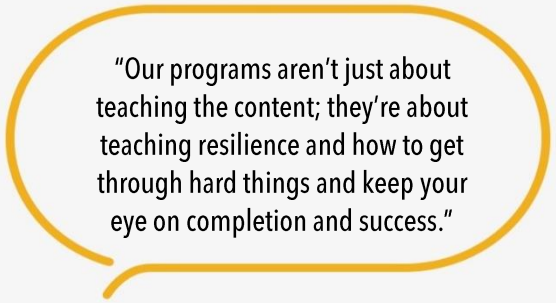
**Peer success stories matter.** Participants’ success stories can encourage others to persevere through struggles in the class and see completion and success as something that may be possible for them, too. Parent champions who are passionate about the program can be a valuable resource to recruit new participants.

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<sup>18</sup> MAC Head Start/Early Head Start Program Attendance Data

### **Participant success will be incremental and slow.**

Raising families out of poverty, MAC leadership noted, does not occur overnight, and that “success is a stairstep. It’s incremental.” MAC staff and leadership have learned that it is important to practice patience and “walk with our participants,” maintaining regular communication and providing wraparound resources. **The program must teach resilience in addition to content.** MAC



“Our programs aren’t just about teaching the content; they’re about teaching resilience and how to get through hard things and keep your eye on completion and success.”

staff and training providers reported that, beyond the program content, the most successful participants learned how to implement a routine in their lives and had a positive outlook for them to proceed to the next step in their careers.

**Have a clear timeline for participants and maintain consistent expectations.** MAC staff explained the value of mapping the requirements and expectations of the program for participants. One staff member stated, “We had a calendar with check-ins and what they had to do each month. That made it more successful this year.” However, **the program must be flexible.** The program must be responsive to the barriers and complications that arise for participants. Through the implementation of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, MAC has adjusted the program format to respond to customer needs, such as changing the class schedule to remove barriers due to childcare. Other life circumstances may force participants to miss class or to withdraw from the program, and in these cases, the program should be flexible enough to provide other opportunities, resources and second chances to families when these challenges arise.

**Do not use “cold handoffs”** when referring customers to other resources. MAC staff noted the importance of having a point person to make the process feel seamless to the customer. This applied both to linking participants to MAC resources and opportunities in different departments, as well as to referring participants to partner agencies for additional resources. Maintaining strong relationships with other agencies and organizations allows MAC staff to ensure consistent and reliable care for customers. Similarly, **be consistent with resources offered to participants.** As with a partnership, participants trust MAC to be reliable when offered additional resources, such as transportation stipends, and for MAC to ensure that participants receive such resources in a consistent and timely manner.

### *Lessons Related to Agency Operations*

MAC leadership reported that it is important to **break down organizational silos and work across teams** to ensure customers receive seamless resources. By working together, MAC staff can build a “full picture of how to partner with participants and how they can achieve each participant’s goals and aspirations collaboratively.” This also includes providing **continuous staff training** to ensure that all MAC staff understand the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach and have the capacity and knowledge to work towards shared goals of lifting families out of poverty. MAC leadership drew on the Human Services Value Curve to expand agency capacity and to focus work on improving outcomes and program impact. MAC also regularly trained staff on the 2Gen/Whole Family Approach and available resources. However, MAC leadership noted that **culture shift takes time.** MAC leadership explained that there is always more work

to do when changing organizational culture and ensuring all staff are working towards a shared understanding of the organization's mission. Communicating information regularly to staff is also a key component mentioned by MAC leadership. Specifically, MAC has an organization-wide all staff video conference every two weeks to keep team members informed as well as to allow questions to be asked and answered in real time. Team members can also submit questions or concerns ahead of time to discuss.

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the MAC 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative is working to create deep and meaningful long-term change in the lives of its customers. This type of change is difficult, takes a long time, and requires addressing a variety of different types of barriers. This evaluation shows that MAC's fluid and multi-pronged approach has allowed families to overcome many of the barriers to completing the programming. However, achieving results, and measuring those results, requires a long period of time for program implementation and collecting data for continuous program improvement.

Training parents and guardians for high-demand, high-yield careers while providing high-quality early education and intensive wraparound resources is yielding positive early results for MAC families. MAC leadership and staff have learned important lessons about what works and what does not in 2Gen/Whole Family programming and have thoughtfully utilized program data and the feedback of their customers to make informed decisions to enhance program implementation.

As MAC continues to provide 2Gen/Whole Family programming and strives to improve both parent and child outcomes to affect generational change, the following recommendations are offered for consideration as the program continues to be refined.



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### Continue to Improve Data Collection

MAC can continue to **improve data collection** infrastructure and metrics to clearly identify the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by its programming.

The following considerations are offered for improving data collection:

- Regularly collect data on participant's perceived social/emotional outcomes through end of course surveys
- Link Father II Father participants to unique child identifiers in the data set
- Gather additional well-being information such as health, safety, stress, resilience, and social networks through the Family Well-being Matrix
- Ensure demographic data is collected and tracked consistently for program participants
- Build data collection into class time to ensure data can be collected for all participants



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### Conduct Additional Research

MAC can continue to prioritize research and analysis of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative data to provide additional opportunities to enhance and refine the programming. Consider working with the Tennessee Labor & Workforce Department to study wage changes among MAC-served individuals. Additionally, MAC could conduct additional outcomes or impact studies using MAC program data or assess which combinations of MAC programming have the largest effects on participant outcomes.

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### **Consider Program Eligibility**

So as to continue to serve families in the programs, consider whether 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative eligibility could remain in place after job entry, even if government funding ceases to cover a participant due to family income increases or if the child graduates from Head Start. Allowing these families to remain eligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative may result in a stronger, more sustained impact on a family, as they are able to stay in the program longer.



### **Expand High-Demand and High-Yield Career Training**

Consider offering additional types of high-demand, high-yield career training opportunities for customers who are not interested or eligible to pursue a career in IT or Early Childhood Education. Additionally, framing internship or volunteer hours to participants as a long-term interview for a job in the field and partnering with companies that are able to move MAC customers from internship to employment may better position participants for employment.



### **Embed Child Development and Parenting Throughout Programming**

Consider incorporating additional child developmental and parenting information into MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative and integrating information into the technical trainings, as participants in programs that enhanced their knowledge of child development and parenting through these additional learning opportunities reported it to be valuable.



### **Amplify Customer Voices & Interests in Policy Discussions**

MAC should continue to leverage its status as an important community asset to elevate the voices of its customers in policy and advocacy, as appropriate. This includes speaking on behalf of customers on issues that would affect how MAC serves its customers and addressing how policy affects the opportunities that are afforded to individuals with low incomes at the local and state level.

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## APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) was hired by the Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) in May 2019 to conduct an evaluation of MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. The study was completed between May 2019 and September 2019. Together, TPMA and MAC leadership identified the priorities of the evaluation and TPMA developed research questions based on the evaluation goals. These questions guided the evaluation's design, data collection, and analysis strategies. This study applies a mixed methods evaluation approach using data from a participant survey, focus groups of participants, interviews with key program staff and leadership, and existing program data to address the research questions outlined in the table below.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

| Research Question  | Data Source(s)                     | Analysis Methods   |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| What impact does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative have on parent employment?  | Program Data; Focus Groups; Survey | <b>Quantitative data:</b> descriptive analysis<br><b>Qualitative data:</b> grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis |
| To what extent does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative impact life at home for parents?<br>(e.g., family routines, parent confidence, parent behaviors with children) | Program Data; Focus Groups; Survey | <b>Quantitative data:</b> descriptive analysis<br><b>Qualitative data:</b> grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis |
| To what extent does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative impact life at home for children?<br>(e.g., child behavior, stress in the home, routines)                      | Survey                             | <b>Quantitative data:</b> descriptive analysis<br><b>Qualitative data:</b> grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis |
| What are parent perceptions of the program and to what extent does the program meet parent needs?  | Focus Groups; Survey               | <b>Quantitative data:</b> descriptive analysis<br><b>Qualitative data:</b> grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis |
| What impact does participation in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative have on child outcomes?   | Program Data; Focus Groups; Survey | <b>Quantitative data:</b> descriptive analysis<br><b>Qualitative data:</b> grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis |
| What accelerators and barriers impact the implementation of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative?  | Focus Groups; Interviews           | Thematic analysis  |
| What lessons did staff learn during program implementation?  | Interviews                         | Thematic analysis  |
| Do participant responses point to any additional resources that would improve parent outcomes or experience in the program?  | Focus Groups; Survey               | Grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis  |
| To what extent are there additional data points that could be collected to measure program impact?   | Focus Groups; Survey               | Grounded theory analysis; thematic analysis  |

## DATA COLLECTION

TPMA used the following qualitative and quantitative sources of data to complete the evaluation of MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. This approach provides dependable feedback on a range of measures, depth of program understanding, and enhancement of the reliability, validity, and utility of the evaluation findings.

### Survey

TPMA developed a survey for current and past parent participants. Both open-ended response (qualitative) and closed-ended response (quantitative) questions were included. The survey was developed on an online platform (i.e., Survey Legend) and a link was provided to the MAC team for survey administration. The survey link was distributed via email and text message to current and former 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative parent participants. MAC staff conducted targeted follow-up with participants of the CDA, CompTIA A+, and Adult Education programs. The survey was open for responses for a period of two weeks (July 12, 2019 – July 26, 2019). TPMA offered an incentive - a drawing for a Kroger gift card - to maximize survey response rates.

The purpose of the survey was to gather quantitative and qualitative data from parents about their experiences in the program. It asked parents about their wage and employment outcomes, changes with their children, and other resources that might be useful for the family. Additionally, the survey captured information about parent's perceptions of the most beneficial aspects of the program and their suggestions for improvement. The survey questionnaire is available in [Appendix C](#).

A total of 97 individuals responded to the survey. The majority of participants participated in Adult Education, CDA, or CompTIA A+, with only five respondents indicating they did not actively participate in any of the technical trainings themselves. The survey had the highest response rate from CDA students, with 86.5% of students responding to the survey.

| Program                           | Survey Respondents | Total Program Enrollment | Survey Response Rate |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Adult Education (GED/HiSET)       | 22                 | 54                       | 40.7%                |
| Child Development Associate (CDA) | 45                 | 52                       | 86.5%                |
| CompTIA A+                        | 25                 | 50                       | 50.0%                |

### Survey Limitations

To bolster MAC's overall data collection efforts, the survey requested respondent's names so that outcomes information could be matched and recorded in their MAC program data files. When this match was conducted, TPMA and MAC found that nearly one-third of respondents who identified themselves as CompTIA A+ participants (31.6%) and half of those who identified as CDA participants (55.9%) were not enrolled in that program based on MAC's program data. TPMA suspects that this discrepancy could be due to survey respondents not knowing exactly which MAC program they were enrolled in and selecting the incorrect program. Only four respondents to the survey were not identified in MAC's records at all, which may be due to spelling differences, respondents using a nickname, or respondents not wanting to use their real name on the survey. This difference between survey respondent identification of program

enrollment and MAC program data could cause the estimates in this report to be under- or over-estimated for the population of individuals served in MAC's 2Gen\Whole Family Initiative.

### *Focus Groups and Interviews*

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with three different groups of stakeholders to examine the various perspectives and needs of program participants:

1. Past and current program participants
  - a. Questions explored concepts related to motivation for attending classes, the ways in which the classes did or did not benefit the participants, and suggestions for program improvement.
2. Program staff and leadership
  - a. Questions explored the history and implementation of MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, accelerators and barriers that impacted program implementation, and lessons learned.
3. Training & internship providers
  - a. Questions explored their relationship to the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, what accelerators and barriers impacted program implementation, and suggestions for the future.

Topics that were addressed focused on the research questions and discussion guides that were developed prior to all visits in collaboration with MAC staff. During all interviews/groups, TPMA provided a facilitator and a notetaker who took verbatim notes to ensure that detail and context were not lost. Additionally, MAC staff served as interpreters when participants in focus groups had limited English proficiency.

A total of 66 individuals participated in focus groups and interviews across five stakeholder groups: MAC leadership, MAC staff, training and internship providers, current participants and past participants.

| Stakeholder Group               | Number    | Format                               |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| MAC Leadership                  | 3         | 3 interviews                         |
| MAC Staff                       | 13        | 3 focus groups                       |
| Training & Internship Providers | 7         | 4 interviews; 1 focus group          |
| Current Participants            | 27        | 4 focus groups                       |
| Past Participants               | 16        | 6 interviews; 1 focus group          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>66</b> | <b>13 interviews; 9 focus groups</b> |

### *Program Data*

TPMA analyzed program data provided by MAC to measure participant outcomes, including data from the CDA, CompTIA A+, ESL, Adult Education, and Father II Father programs. This analysis also included information from the Family Well-being Matrix, which is used to assess participant mobility with regards to education and employment. The data were used to investigate the changes in employment and educational attainment among program participants. Additionally, a previous study of Head Start child outcomes was used to highlight the program's impact on children involved in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. The following table summarizes the program data and sources.

| Source(s)   | Data  |
|---|---|
| <b>Family Well-being Matrix</b>   | Employment scores, before and after participation<br>Employer and wages, after participation<br>Education scores, before and after participation<br>Comparison of scores to prevention line   |
| <b>CDA Program Data</b><br><b>CompTIA A+ Program Data</b><br><b>ESL Program Data</b><br><b>Adult Education Program Data</b> | Participant demographics<br>Dates of enrollment<br>Completion of certification (for CDA and CompTIA A+ participants)<br>Education level before and after program participation<br>Employment before and after program participation<br>English pre- and post-test scores (for ESL participants) |
| <b>Father II Father Program Data</b>  | Attendance at Father II Father events   |
| <b>Head Start Correlation Study</b>   | Descriptive Statistics of Child Outcomes  |

## DATA ANALYSIS

This study uses a mixed methods approach in which the results from qualitative data collection were directly compared with results from quantitative data collection. Using mixed methods and triangulating the findings through both qualitative and quantitative approaches increases the validity of conclusions made.

The **quantitative** portion of the evaluation study focuses on the impact that the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative has on participant outcomes. Using Excel and/or SPSS, TPMA calculated outcomes and examined trends and patterns in the data. This analysis included analyzing descriptive statistics such as frequencies (i.e., counts of responses), percentages, and means, as well as conducting cross-tabulations to determine the relationships between variables.

**Qualitative** data collected for this study was coded and analyzed to identify categories, subcategories, and themes. These data allow for a richer understanding of the implementation process of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Further, qualitative data was combined with quantitative data to draw conclusions about specific factors that may have acted as accelerators or barriers to achieving desired outcomes.

For open-ended survey responses, TPMA conducted a grounded theory analysis where responses are organized into codes (i.e., frequent themes and concepts that are extracted from survey responses) and assigned counts based on the number of times those themes appeared in the data. Open coding was used to classify data into categories with consistencies and differences in responses, and patterns and connections within and between categories identified.

TPMA employed several key tactics to solidify and strengthen the **accuracy and credibility** of evaluation findings:

- Researcher effect. By using dynamic debriefing, the evaluator regularly monitored for potential researcher bias.

- Triangulation. By comparing findings based on different data sources and using approaches that incorporate both evidence and negative evidence (i.e., data that do not support findings), TPMA created a robust and dynamic depiction of implementation.
- Collaborative inquiry. TPMA periodically presented the findings to the MAC leadership and updated the analyses accordingly. By sharing findings as they emerged, TPMA built a collaborative relationship with the leadership, thus increasing the likelihood of timely, user-relevant findings.

## APPENDIX B: PROGRAM DESIGN

The following provides a detailed account of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative design, eligibility, and process at MAC.

### *2Gen/Whole Family Initiative and Head Start/Early Head Start Eligibility*

Eligibility for MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative begins with having a child enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start. According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), a family is eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start if the family has an income at or below 100% of the poverty line and, under certain guidelines, may be eligible with income up to 130% of poverty. Children with disabilities are also eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start, under certain guidelines, regardless of the family's income.<sup>19</sup> MAC must certify the family's eligibility under the Head Start guidelines, after which eligible children are admitted into Head Start or Early Head Start and the family becomes eligible for MAC's 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Families are only required to re-certify as eligible for Head Start when transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start or upon the child's third year in Head Start.

While eligibility for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative is based on having a child in Head Start/Early Head Start, a family is not considered to be fully part of the program until at least one parent and child are enrolled in the programs. 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs include CDA, CompTIA A+, ESL, and Father II Father. MAC's Adult Education program is also considered part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, however, eligibility for Adult Education is not contingent upon having a child in Head Start/Early Head Start. Thus, Adult Education includes both 2Gen/Whole Family participants and non-2Gen/Whole Family participants. Similarly, although most participants in the adult programs are part of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative (with a child in Head Start/Early Head Start), individuals can also qualify to participate as non-2Gen/Whole Family participants if they completed their high school equivalency through the Adult Education program, even if they don't have children in Head Start/Early Head Start.

In order to enroll in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs, participants must be certified for income eligibility under the Community Services funding requirements. Current eligibility guidelines from the Community Services Block Grant require family income to be at or below 125% of the poverty line. Once a participant has been certified as eligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs, they receive an eligibility waiver for one year. Participants must re-certify for eligibility annually.<sup>20</sup>

### *Joining the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative*

Parents are recruited for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs through parent advocates at the Head Start/Early Head Start locations, referrals from other MAC staff, or by seeing informational flyers. MAC parent advocates are embedded at each Head Start location to connect families to additional resources and opportunities as needed and generally to

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<sup>19</sup> Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.12 (c) Eligibility requirement ; Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.12 (d) Additional allowances for programs.

<sup>20</sup> This does not affect the child's eligibility for Head Start/Early Head Start, which is only re-certified when they transition to Head Start from Early Head Start or upon the child's third year in Head Start.

provide an accessible first point of contact within the agency. Bilingual parent advocates are available to partner with families with limited English proficiency.

### *Meeting with Community Services Staff*

After being recruited, prospective participants are referred to Community Services staff to discuss the specific programs and complete an application for enrollment. Each parent advocate and Head Start location has an assigned Community Services staff member to facilitate and streamline this connection. The conversation with Community Services includes a discussion of the customer's needs and interests, a description of the available programs, and how these programs can help address the needs of the customer and their family. The Community Services staff also completes an initial background profile of the customer at this time, using a Family Well-being Matrix. This matrix records family employment and education information to allow MAC to track program outcomes.

After the initial meeting, Community Services staff meet with participants an additional 3-4 times prior to the program start to provide a more detailed overview of the program and to keep participants engaged in the process between application and the start of the course.

All participants must complete a background check prior to enrolling in the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs. If a prospective participant has a criminal record, the Community Services staff works with the individual to obtain a record expungement when possible. Staff also work with customers to determine any additional barriers that might prevent them from completing the program (e.g., lack of high school diploma or equivalent, substantial language barrier, income ineligibility, etc.). If a customer does not have a high school diploma or if they have limited English proficiency, they are referred to the Adult Education and ESL classes.

### *Program Overviews*

With the exception of the Father II Father program, MAC contracts with outside training providers to conduct the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs.

#### *Child Development Associate (CDA)*

The CDA program instructs participants on early child development and prepares participants to acquire a Child Development Associate credential. The class currently meets for three hours twice per week for 12 weeks. Following successful completion of the course, participants must gain 480 hours of practical classroom experience, either through working or volunteering in an early childhood classroom. Participants must also assemble a portfolio detailing their work experience in the classroom to acquire the CDA credential. Successful graduates are qualified for early childhood education positions at Head Start/Early Head Start, pre-K, and childcare providers.

#### *Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA A+)*

The CompTIA A+ program provides instruction on Information Technology and prepares participants for the CompTIA A+ certification exams. The class currently meets for three hours twice per week for 12 weeks. Instruction involves in-class lectures and self-study to prepare participants for two certifying exams: Core 1 and Core 2. Following successful completion of the course and certification tests, participants are paired with a local IT company or department

to complete a hands-on internship in the industry. With a CompTIA A+ credential, graduates are qualified for employment in entry-level IT positions in a variety of industries.

#### *English as a Second Language (ESL)*

The ESL program provides beginner and intermediate English language training for speakers of other languages. MAC currently offers two ESL terms per year. During each term, classes meet for three hours once per week for eight weeks. Depending on the level of the course (i.e., basic or intermediate), ESL classes focus on both basic communication and work-specific communication (e.g., talking to supervisors and coworkers). Participants take pre- and post-proficiency tests to measure their progress through the program. At the end of the term, ESL participants may re-enroll in an additional ESL term, or they may progress to one of the other adult programs.

#### *Adult Education*

The Adult Education program provides high school equivalency instruction for adults (including both 2Gen/Whole Family and non-2Gen/Whole Family individuals). The classes currently meet for four hours, four days per week. Enrollment is open throughout the year, with the exception of a break from late June to late July. Participants progress and graduate from the program by passing the subject matter tests (HiSET) and earning their high school equivalency credential. Following graduation, Adult Education participants are eligible to enroll for the other adult programs.

#### *Father II Father*

The Father II Father program offers workshops, discussion, and mentorship opportunities for fathers of children in the Head Start/Early Head Start program. These activities focus on providing additional opportunities and resources to fathers, such as opportunities to enhance their knowledge on parenting. Father II Father also provides site-based trainings for fathers on topics such as co-parenting, child development, parent-child interactions, and the importance of having a father figure in a child's life. Fathers are also connected to resources and other opportunities where they can further their education, gain employment, expunge records, reinstate their driver's licenses, etc.

#### *Youth Technology Camp*

In addition to the adult-oriented 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs and the Head Start/Early Head Start program, MAC also offers a summer Youth Technology Camp. This 8-week camp is available to older siblings (ages 13-15) of children in Head Start/Early Head Start and provides hands-on experience in the field of technology. According to a Nashville News article, "through a partnership with the Nashville Technology Council, students receive daily instruction on information technology as well as visit area IT departments in companies such as Hospital Corporation of America, BNY Mellon, and Hewlett Packard to [gain] first-hand innovation experience in technology." Youth participants receive an \$800 award and a laptop computer upon completion of the program.

#### *Successfully Finishing the Course*

If participants successfully complete the relevant course requirements, they graduate from the training. MAC hosts an annual graduation ceremony to celebrate the students' successes.

Some students, particularly from the ESL and Adult Education classes, may choose to enroll in an additional 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative program. ESL students may enroll in another term of the ESL course to further improve their English skills. ESL and Adult Education graduates may choose to enroll in the CDA or CompTIA A+ programs. Graduates may also work with MAC's College Entry Assistance program to prepare for college enrollment.

### *Leaving the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative*

In addition to graduation, there are several conditions under which a participant may exit the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. These include no longer having a child in Head Start/Early Head Start, becoming ineligible under the income requirements, moving out of Davidson County, or choosing to leave the program.

#### *Child No Longer Enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start*

In order to participate in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative, families must have a child enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start. If the child leaves Head Start/Early Head Start, the family is no longer eligible for other 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative programs. This can happen by the child aging out of Head Start and moving into kindergarten, in which case Head Start staff partner with families to assist in transitioning the child into kindergarten. Families may also withdraw their child from Head Start/Early Head Start for other reasons (e.g., lack of transportation). If the child is removed from Head Start/Early Head Start for any of these or other reasons, the family no longer qualifies for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

#### *Income Increases Above Eligibility Level*

Families can become ineligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative through increases to the family income, due to the income eligibility requirements. Recertification for parents enrolled in 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative adult programs occurs annually. If during the year the family income increases, they may become ineligible to participate. In this case, the child is not removed from Head Start, however the parent will not be able to participate in the adult programs and the family is no longer considered eligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

Although children do not need to be recertified as eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start after initial enrollment, they do need to recertify when transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start or upon the child's third year of Head Start. If the family income increases above the eligibility level while the child is in Early Head Start, they may no longer qualify when certifying for Head Start. Without a child in Head Start, the family is no longer considered eligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative.

#### *Family Moves Out of County*

If a family moves outside of Davidson County, they become ineligible for the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative. Families are expected to obtain resources through the designated Community Action Agency (CAA) in their county of residence. MAC is the CAA for Davidson County, while other agencies serve the surrounding counties. Additionally, some funding for MAC programs is provided by city/county sources, which require residency within Davidson County. For children in Head Start who move out of the county, Head Start allows for a 2-month transition period to collaborate with parents in finding alternate childcare. It may be possible, dependent on specific funding and agency regulations, to provide a similar transition period for participants in the other programs who relocate outside of the county.

### *Parents Drop Out of Program*

Parents may choose to drop out of the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative for a variety of personal and family reasons. Some reasons may include conflicts with work schedules, the strenuousness of the coursework, or other personal life issues that interfere with their ability to remain enrolled.

### *Resources and Opportunities for Participants*

Participants in the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative receive several additional resources and opportunities to ensure their ability to successfully complete the program. MAC covers all course fees, including exam fees and study/course materials. MAC offers bus passes or gas stipends and a small weekly stipend to participants. Childcare is also covered while the parents are in class, either through the Head Start/Early Head Start program or other childcare (for older or younger children).

In addition to these 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative-specific resources, 2Gen/Whole Family participants are also eligible for other resources and programs through MAC, which are available for customers outside the 2Gen/Whole Family Initiative as well. Participants have access as needed to MAC's other programs, including the Utility Assistance Program, Household Program, and Food Service Program for Children and Youth. For those with criminal records, MAC collaborates with customers on record expungement. For any resources or opportunities that are not available in-house, MAC extends warm referrals to outside resources, making direct phone calls to contacts in other organizations to ensure customers are provided with the necessary resources.

# APPENDIX C: EVALUATION GUIDES & INSTRUMENTS

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about the experiences of parents who have participated in the Metropolitan Action Commission's (MAC) 2GEN/Whole Family programming. MAC has hired Thomas P. Miller and Associates to complete an independent study of the program.

You are being asked to complete this survey because you have participated in MAC's 2GEN/Whole Family programming.

By selecting "Next," you are agreeing to complete the survey. You may stop the survey at any time but can only take the survey once. The survey is expected to take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary, and your responses will be kept completely anonymous.

Thank you for your participation!

### *Background Information*

1. When did you first start receiving Whole Family programming from MAC (Whole Family Programming means receiving both Head Start for your child and either CDA, CompTIA or GED/HiSET for yourself)?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_  
MM                      YYYY
2. In which MAC program(s) have **you or your family members** taken part? (Choose all that apply.)
  - a. CompTIA A+ Certification
  - b. Child Development Associate (CDA)
  - c. Adult Education (GED/HiSET)
  - d. Father to Father
  - e. English as a Second Language
  - f. Head Start
  - g. Early Head Start
3. (If more than one of CompTIA or CDA is chosen) Which program did **you**, personally take part in?
  - a. CompTIA A+
  - b. Child Development (CDA)
  - c. Adult Education (GED/HiSET)

### *Outcomes*

4. Overall, were you satisfied with the programming you received from MAC?
  - a. Very unsatisfied
  - b. Unsatisfied
  - c. Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied

- d. Satisfied
  - e. Very satisfied
5. Compared to before you started the MAC Whole Family programs, how often do **you** do each of the following currently? (For each: a lot less often, less often, about the same, more often, a lot more often) (Multiple statements—select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- a. Read and/or sing to your child(ren)
  - b. Participate in Head Start family activities
  - c. Get angry with your child(ren)
  - d. Feel stressed about providing for your family
  - e. Keep your family on a routine/schedule
  - f. Have conversations with your child(ren) about their feelings
  - g. Notice when your child(ren) are stressed or upset
6. Compared to before you started the MAC Whole Family programs, how often do **your children** do each of the following currently? (For each: a lot less often, less often, about the same, more often, a lot more often) (Multiple statements—select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- a. Follow a routine
  - b. Act out/misbehave
  - c. Appear stressed/upset
  - d. Actively engage with Head Start or schooling
  - e. Talk to me about their day or how they are feeling
7. Did you receive any additional supports from MAC while you and your family were enrolled in the program? (Choose all that apply.)
- a. Accessing government benefits
  - b. Childcare other than Head Start
  - c. Housing support (rent/mortgage and/or energy assistance)
  - d. Help looking for a job
  - e. Referral to doctor
  - f. Transportation
  - g. Other
  - h. No, I did not receive any additional supports from MAC
8. What additional programs, services, or resources would have been helpful to you if they had been available while you were completing the program? (Open ended)

### CompTIA A+ Track

9. Did you **complete** the CompTIA program?
- a. Yes [*skip to Q10*]
  - b. No [*skip to Q11*]
  - c. I am currently enrolled in the program but have not yet completed. [*skip to Demographics*]
10. [Yes only] Did you receive CompTIA A+ Certification?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Have you or do you intend to continue on to further education or training?

- a. I am currently enrolled in additional education or training.
  - b. I plan to enroll in additional education or training.
  - c. No, I am not enrolled and do not intend to enroll in further education or training.
  - d. I am unsure at this time.
12. Please rate how much you agree with the following statement: The CompTIA program prepared me for future education or training. (Multiple statements—select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
13. Please rate how much you agree with the following statement: The CompTIA program prepared me for a job in IT.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
14. Are you currently employed?
- a. Yes, part time [*will skip to questions related to employment*]
  - b. Yes, full time [*will skip to questions related to employment*]
  - c. Yes, multiple jobs [*will skip to questions related to employment*]
  - d. No, not employed [*will skip to question related to looking for employment*]
15. [*not employed only*] Are you actively looking for work? If so, where?
- a. Not actively looking for work
  - b. Looking specifically for work that uses the CompTIA A+ Certification
  - c. Looking for work that **does not** use the CompTIA A+ Certification
  - d. Looking for any work I can get
16. [*employed only*] What type of job do you have?
- a. One that uses CompTIA A+
  - b. A different job (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
17. [*employed only*] Which of the following hourly rates best describes your current earnings?
- a. \$7.00 to \$10.00
  - b. \$11.00 to \$14.00
  - c. \$15.00 to \$18.00
  - d. \$19.00 to \$22.00
  - e. \$23.00 to \$26.00
  - f. \$27.00 to \$30.00
  - g. More than \$30.00
18. [*employed only*] In what way has your hourly wage changed since you entered the program?
- a. Decreased a lot
  - b. Decreased a little

- c. About the same
  - d. Increased a little
  - e. Increased a lot
19. *[employed only]* Are you eligible to receive health insurance/medical benefits through your employer?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
20. *[employed only]* Does your employer offer support for continuing education or training?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
21. Since the start of the program, I have... (select all that apply)
- a. Improved my credit score.
  - b. Made progress on actively paying down debt.
  - c. Opened a savings account OR increased the amount of money in my savings account.
  - d. Purchased a vehicle.
  - e. Purchased a home.
  - f. None of the above.

### CDA Track

9. Did you complete the CDA program?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I am currently enrolled in the program but have not yet completed. *[skip to Demographics]*
10. *[yes only]* Did you receive CDA certification?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Have you or do you intend to continue on to further education or training?
- a. I am currently enrolled in additional education or training.
  - b. I plan to enroll in additional education or training.
  - c. No, I am not enrolled and do not intend to enroll in further education or training.
  - d. I am unsure at this time.
12. Please rate how much you agree with the following statement: The CDA program prepared me for a job in early childhood education. (Multiple statements—select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree

13. Please rate how much you agree with the following statement: The CDA program prepared me for future education or training. (Multiple statements—select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
14. Are you currently employed?
- Yes, part time [*will skip to questions related to employment*]
  - Yes, full time [*will skip to questions related to employment*]
  - Yes, multiple jobs [*will skip to questions related to employment*]
  - No, not employed [*will skip to question related to looking for employment*]
15. [*not employed*] Are you actively looking for work? If so, where?
- Not actively looking for work
  - Looking specifically for work that uses the CDA training
  - Looking for work that **does not** use the CDA training
  - Looking for any work I can get
16. [*employed only*] What type of job do you have?
- One that uses the CDA training
  - A different job (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
17. [*employed only*] Which of the following hourly rates best describes your current earnings?
- \$7.00 to \$10.00
  - \$11.00 to \$14.00
  - \$15.00 to \$18.00
  - \$19.00 to \$22.00
  - \$23.00 to \$26.00
  - \$27.00 to 30.00
  - More than \$30.00
18. [*employed only*] In what way has your hourly wage changed since you entered the program?
- Decreased a lot
  - Decreased a little
  - About the same
  - Increased a little
  - Increased a lot
19. [*employed only*] Are you eligible to receive health insurance/medical benefits through your employer?
- Yes
  - No
  - Unsure
20. [*employed only*] Does your employer offer support for continuing education or training?
- Yes

- b. No
  - c. Unsure
21. Since the start of the program, I have.... (select all that apply)
- a. Improved my credit score.
  - b. Made progress on actively paying down debt.
  - c. Opened a savings account OR increased the amount of money in my savings account.
  - d. Purchased a vehicle.
  - e. Purchased a home.
  - f. None of the above.

### Adult Education/HiSET

9. Did you **complete** the Adult Education (GED/HiSET) program?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I am currently enrolled in the program but have not yet completed. *[skip to Demographics]*
10. *[yes only]* Did you receive your GED/HiSET?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Do you intend to continue on to further education or training?
- a. I am currently enrolled in additional education or training.
  - b. I plan to enroll in additional education or training.
  - c. No, I am not enrolled and do not intend to enroll in further education or training.
  - d. I am unsure at this time.
12. Please rate how much you agree with the following statement: The Adult Education program prepared me for future education or training. (Multiple statements–select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
13. Please rate how much you agree with the following statement: The Adult Education program prepared me to apply for jobs. (Multiple statements–select a response or click the arrow to proceed to the next statement)
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
14. Are you currently employed?
- a. Yes, part time *[will skip to questions related to employment]*
  - b. Yes, full time *[will skip to questions related to employment]*
  - c. Yes, multiple jobs *[will skip to questions related to employment]*

- d. No, not employed [*will skip to question related to looking for employment*]
- 15. [*not employed only*] Are you actively looking for work? If so, where?
  - a. Not actively looking for work
  - b. Looking specifically for work that requires a high school diploma or GED/HiSET
  - c. Looking for work that **does not** require a high school diploma or GED/HiSET
  - d. Looking for any work I can get
- 16. [*employed only*] What type of job do you have?
  - a. One that requires a high school diploma or GED/HiSET
  - b. A different job (*please specify*) \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. [*employed only*] Which of the following hourly rates best describes your current earnings?
  - a. \$7.00 to \$10.00
  - b. \$11.00 to \$14.00
  - c. \$15.00 to \$18.00
  - d. \$19.00 to \$22.00
  - e. \$23.00 to \$26.00
  - f. \$27.00 to \$30.00
  - g. More than \$30.00
- 18. [*employed only*] In what way has your hourly wage changed since you entered the program?
  - a. Decreased a lot
  - b. Decreased a little
  - c. About the same
  - d. Increased a little
  - e. Increased a lot
- 19. [*employed only*] Are you eligible to receive health insurance/medical benefits through your employer?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
- 20. [*employed only*] Does your employer offer support for continuing education or training?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
- 21. Since the start of the program, I have... (select all that apply)
  - a. Improved my credit score.
  - b. Made progress on actively paying down debt.
  - c. Opened a savings account OR increased the amount of money in my savings account.
  - d. Purchased a vehicle.
  - e. Purchased a home.
  - f. None of the above.

### *All Survey Takers Demographics*

*Your name and date of birth will not be shared in reporting. This data will allow us to match your responses to program data, but your name will not be tied directly to any of your answers when reporting to MAC.*

22. What are the current ages of your children? (select all that apply)
- a. 0 to 1
  - b. 2 to 4
  - c. 5 to 8
  - d. 9 to 15
  - e. 16 to 18
  - f. 19 or older
23. What is your name?
- a. First:
  - b. Last:
24. What is your date of birth?
- a. (MM/DD/YYYY)

### *All Survey Takers Open Ended*

26. What was the most memorable part of your experience with MAC's 2GEN/Whole Family programming? (open ended)
27. In what way, if any, did the whole family programming impact your parenting skills or your involvement with your child(ren)'s education?
28. What was the most difficult part of participating in or completing the program? (open ended)
29. What recommendations do you have for MAC to improve its programming in the future? (open ended)

### *Thank you*

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you would like to be considered for the drawing for a \$50 gift card to Kroger, please enter your phone number and email address below.

Phone number:

Email address:

## FACILITATION GUIDE: PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS (FOCUS GROUP)

### *Brief Introductions*

[Brief introduction to evaluation outlining who we are, why we are there, and how we will use and report the information gathered from the focus group. Purpose is to gather information on experiences and satisfaction with programming or the implementation of the programming. Improve services and provide information about best practices.]

Your participation in this focus group is voluntary. There are no right answers and we hope to hear from all attendees on the variety of topics we'll discuss. All of the information you provide during the focus group is confidential, and we ask that all participants agree to maintain confidentiality with the comments made. We will not report or present the information you share with us in any way that will identify any specific individual.

- Please state your name.
- Which program were (or are) you involved in?
- Why did you want to be involved in the program?

### *Discussion Questions*

#### *Background and Participation*

1. Tell me about your experience in the program.
2. Was the program what you expected it to be? Why or why not?
3. What do you feel was the best part of the program?
4. Were there any aspects of the program that made it difficult to attend or participate regularly?
5. Were there any outside factors that made it more challenging to participate or attend the program regularly?
6. What additional services or supports would have been helpful to you as you participated in the program?

#### *Employment Outcomes*

7. What skills did you learn through the program? To what extent have you been able to use those skills at your current job?
8. In what ways, if any, do you think this program will change your employment situation? / In what ways, if any, did your employment situation change after completing the program?
9. Do you feel the program prepared you for your employment goals? Why or why not?

#### *Family Outcomes*

10. Do you feel that your participation in the 2Gen programming has changed how you interact with your children or family?
11. Have your child(ren)'s behavior changed since entering the program? In what ways?

#### *Advice Moving Forward*

12. If you could change something about the program to improve it for future participations, what would you change?
13. How would you describe the program to someone who might want to enroll? What advice would you give them?

14. How important was it that you and your children were in programming at the same time?

## FACILITATION GUIDE: MAC STAFF (FOCUS GROUP)

### *Brief Introductions*

[Brief introduction to evaluation outlining who we are, why we are there, and how we will use and report the information gathered from the focus group. Purpose is to gather information on experiences and satisfaction with programming or the implementation of the programming. Improve services and provide information about best practices.]

Your participation in this focus group is voluntary. There are no right answers and we hope to hear from all attendees on the variety of topics we'll discuss. All of the information you provide during the focus group is confidential, and we ask that all participants agree to maintain confidentiality with the comments made. We will not report or present the information you share with us in any way that will identify any specific individual.

- Please state your name.

### *Discussion Questions*

#### *Program Background and Implementation*

1. Please describe your role at MAC and how you are involved in the 2Gen programming.
  - (If they worked with 2Gen interns) What was your experience with employing participants?
2. Describe the process of being involved with the program? In what ways, if any, has that changed over time?
3. Was the program what you expected it to be? Why or why not?
4. In what ways do you think the program succeeded? What factors were important to the program's success?
5. What are some notable challenges you have faced in the implementation of the programming?
6. What would you do differently if you could go back and start your involvement with the program again? (i.e., what lessons did you learn throughout your work with the 2Gen programs)

#### *Participant Outcomes*

7. To what extent are you aware of which participants are part of the 2Gen initiative and which are not?
8. From your perspective, how has the program impacted the children and their parents involved in 2Gen/Whole Family programming?
9. From your perspective, how has the program impacted participant employment?
10. From your perspective, to what extent has the programming changed how parents interact with their children?
11. Did you hear anything about participant experiences that surprised you?
12. What stories of success have you heard from the participants?
13. Did participants face any barriers to participation/engagement in the program? If so, what?

14. What additional services do you think might be helpful for participants as they participate in and complete the program?
15. Is there anything that could have improved family outcomes?

## **FACILITATION GUIDE: TRAINING PROVIDERS (INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUP)**

### *Brief Introductions*

[Brief introduction to evaluation outlining who we are, why we are there, and how we will use and report the information gathered from the focus group. Purpose is to gather information on experiences and satisfaction with programming or the implementation of the programming. Improve services and provide information about best practices.]

Your participation in this focus group is voluntary. There are no right answers and we hope to hear from all attendees on the variety of topics we'll discuss. All of the information you provide during the focus group is confidential, and we ask that all participants agree to maintain confidentiality with the comments made. We will not report or present the information you share with us in any way that will identify any specific individual.

- Please state your name and your company/affiliation.

### *Discussion Questions*

#### *Program Background and Implementation*

1. Please describe your role and how you are/were involved in the programming at MAC. Which years were you involved? Which classes were you involved in?
2. How did you become involved in the program and with MAC?
3. What was your approach to the program curriculum?
4. Was the program what you expected it to be? In what ways?

#### *Participant Outcomes*

5. What are the major impacts you see for the individuals involved in program?
6. From your perspective what aspects of the program contributed the most to participant outcomes?
7. Did your students face any challenges to participating or engaging in the program?
8. What, if anything, could be changed to improve participant outcomes?
9. Did you hear anything about participant experiences that surprised you?

#### *Lessons Moving Forward*

10. What are some notable challenges you faced in running the program?
11. What would you do differently, if you were to lead this course again?
12. What feedback have you heard from participants and MAC staff?

## FACILITATION GUIDE: LEADERSHIP (INTERVIEWS)

### *Brief Introductions*

[Brief introduction to evaluation outlining who we are, why we are there, and how we will use and report the information gathered from the interview. Purpose is to gather information on experiences and satisfaction with programming or the implementation of the programming. Improve services and provide information about best practices.]

### *Discussion Questions*

#### ***Program Background and Implementation***

1. How did the 2Gen/Whole Family initiative get started?
2. What are your goals for the 2Gen/Whole Family initiative?
3. What expectations did you have for the initiative? To what extent has the initiative met your expectations?
4. In what ways do you think the program succeeded? What factors were important to the program's success?
5. What are some notable challenges you have faced in the implementation of 2Gen/Whole Family programming?
6. What are the key lessons you have learned about implementing a program like this?

#### ***Participant Outcomes***

7. In what ways has the programming impacted participating families?
8. What do you perceive to be the impact of the programs on participant employment?
9. What success stories have you heard about the initiative?
10. What barriers or challenges have impacted participant outcomes?
11. What, if anything, has surprised you about participant experiences?

#### ***Lessons Moving Forward***

12. What could this initiative do differently to lead to better family outcomes?
13. What other data points could be collected to measure program impact? What important insights are not being captured by the data you currently collect?