



Connecticut Two-Generational (2Gen) Initiative

Report to the Connecticut General Assembly, Pursuant to C.G.S. [Sec. 17b-112l](#)

December 2020

Connecticut's [2Gen Initiative](#), structured as an advisory board with policy work groups, represents a diverse collaborative of executive, legislative, and judicial branch leaders; nonprofit and private sector partners; and parent leaders. Despite the unique challenges, including a public health crisis, civic unrest from racial injustice, tropical storms and budgetary challenges, the 2Gen Initiative advanced work in key areas. Below are the pertinent updates from 2020.

Parent Engagement

In spring 2020, 2Gen Advisory Board parent membership increased from two to nine parents to constitute 25% of the Board, as required by C.G.S. [Sec. 17b-112l](#). In July 2020, Connecticut 2Gen leaders presented a plan for integration of parents into 2Gen work groups at an Administration for Children and Families Whole Family Approach to Jobs meeting. Through summer 2020, there was a four-part training and onboarding series for 2Gen parent leaders that included an overview of the 2Gen Initiative, state government, legislative process, and presentations by the 2Gen work group co-chairs.

In fall 2020, parents who successfully completed the training and onboarding series joined existing work groups on benefits cliffs and workforce. Work groups are now structured to ensure that meetings are conducive to parent participation, including preparatory and debrief meetings prior to and following each 2Gen Advisory Board or work group meeting. Philanthropic funds compensated parents for their participation through 2020, and a parent compensation plan is in place for 2021.

Benefits Cliffs

The 2Gen Benefits Cliffs Work Group, formed in June 2019, has led statewide efforts to address [benefits cliffs](#) through data collection and analysis and development of policy solutions. These efforts have made Connecticut a national leader in this work. The 2Gen work group is providing support and guidance to Maine, Kentucky, and other states as they pursue similar direction. Below are the major milestones from these efforts.

In January 2020, the Human Services, Children, Labor, Public Health, and Appropriations Committees held a joint informational forum on benefits cliffs. The forum prompted a [Hartford Courant article](#) on benefits cliffs and the Governor holding a press conference the following week on the smoothing of the child care cliff, then featured on [CT WNPR, Channel 8](#), and [CT Mirror](#). The Governor then highlighted benefits cliffs in his State of the State Address, honoring an [impacted family](#). While [Senate Bill 397: An Act Promoting Employment Advancement and the Economy by Addressing the Benefits Cliff](#) did not see a public hearing, the [Governor's Workforce Council Strategic Plan](#) includes a focus on reversing the adverse effects of benefits cliffs.

In summer 2020, the 2Gen work group in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (Atlanta Fed) created – at no cost to Connecticut – Connecticut's Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF). The CLIFF tool illustrates the interaction between career paths, wages, public benefits, and tax credits in bringing (or failing to bring) families to economic stability. CLIFF also demonstrates the significant taxpayer savings that result from career advancement.

The Atlanta Fed will work with Connecticut through 2021 and will simulate several specific policy proposals for analysis by state leaders. In partnership with the Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC), the 2Gen work group will test use of the CLIFF tool at six Connecticut sites, including early childhood education centers, high schools, community colleges, and job centers, to inform optimal use and a broader adoption of the tool statewide. There was a session for 2Gen parent leaders to provide feedback on the CLIFF tool. Parents will continue to inform its development and use. Additionally, the GWC and 2Gen work group are exploring a pilot that would leverage philanthropic funds to smooth cliffs along a specific career pathway, using the outcome data to inform policy.

Workforce

In fall 2020, the 2Gen Workforce Work Group collaborated with key state agencies to develop and submit 2Gen recommendations for the state’s proposed 2020-2023 [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) plan](#). All of the group’s recommendations were included in the plan. These recommendations led to partnerships with American Job Centers to implement family-centered coaching and other 2Gen approaches.

The group developed a memo outlining proposed changes to the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to support family economic mobility. This memo was shared with members of the GWC and legislature. In the short-term, the group is working with state agencies to pursue administrative changes to the jobs element of the program. Efforts for better aligning workforce and child care systems and integrating parent leaders into other state workforce bodies, are also underway.

2Gen Interagency Plan and State Data Plan

Pursuant to C.G.S. [Sec. 17b-112l](#), the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) developed a [2Gen Interagency Plan](#) aimed at systems change in state government that addresses intergenerational poverty and supports for families in overcoming barriers to economic success. The 2Gen Interagency Plan, implemented beginning January 2020, identified six initiatives as 2Gen “proofs of concept” across executive state agencies, developed a strategy to track outcomes, and outlined the development of a data-sharing infrastructure and strategies for advancing racial equity.

As part of the 2Gen Interagency Plan, the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) and the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston facilitated a training and conversation on racial equity. Fifty state leaders attended representing 10 state agencies, judicial, legislature, and philanthropy.

Pursuant to C.G.S. [Sec. 17b-112l](#), the Office of the Attorney General, in consultation with OPM, the Chief Data Officer, and the P20 WIN system, developed a uniform interagency data sharing protocol and legal and governance framework. The 2021-2022 [State Data Plan](#) integrates this framework and other elements central to the 2Gen Initiative: a whole-person perspective, racial equity, improvements in use and access of data, and improved delivery of government services.

Regional and Federal Partnership

Connecticut is an active member of the Administration for Children and Families’ [Whole Family Approach to Jobs](#) public-private partnership across the six New England states. In January 2020, the U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, requested a briefing on the regional 2Gen work. Four delegates from Connecticut joined 10 other New England leaders to brief the Surgeon General on how 2Gen may inform his Community Health and Economic Prosperity Initiative. The regional work on benefits cliffs led the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to adopt a national resolution on benefits cliffs and publish a [New England report](#).