



Human Services Innovation Fund: Economic Mobility Pilot

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Why We Need an “Innovative” Approach

- America long ago declared a “War on Poverty,” and billions have been invested to address these issues
 - Unfortunately, poverty rates have barely budged
- As a snapshot example here in Fairfax, just in the last five years median income has increased greater than 10%, while poverty rates have remained constant at approximately 6%
 - 200% of poverty in Fairfax continues to track about 2½ times that of the federal poverty level (approximately 15%)
 - Important to note these are pre-pandemic numbers; it is difficult to determine where we will land post-pandemic
- Current system penalizes individuals for making economic progress and does not provide strong enough outcomes

UpTogether

An Innovative Anti-Poverty Approach:

- **The power of communities** to create their own solutions and lift people into the middle class, as communities have done for hundreds of years.
- **The creativity of families** in designing ways to stretch their limited incomes and invest in themselves.
- The ways **access to capital**, without outrageous interest rates or strings attached can fuel the initiatives families are already taking to accomplish their goals and dreams.

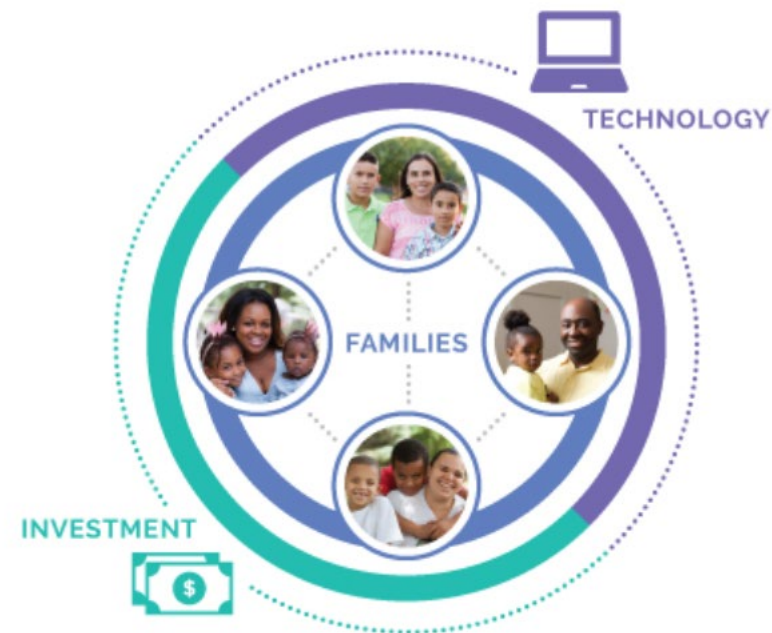
How UpTogether Works

UpTogether trusts and invests directly in low-income families so they can work individually and collectively to achieve prosperity.

UpTogether does this by providing a technology platform where families can strengthen social networks, access cash and support one another in achieving mobility.

UpTogether's strength-based approach includes three elements:

- ✓ **Cash** — direct investments to families
- ✓ **Choice** — freedom for families to use cash as they see fit
- ✓ **Community** — a platform for people to build and strengthen their social networks



Benefits Cliff & State Discussions

- The “Benefits Cliff” is a well-documented phenomenon where low-income families lose eligibility for public assistance as their earned income increases.
- The income threshold for most of these programs is set by federal law *with the exception of* the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) which is set by states.
- In program design, we want to ensure that the initiative does not adversely impact program participants.
- The Virginia Department of Social Services and Department of Medical Assistance have developed a process to allow several jurisdictions pilot programs such as this.
- The cash assistance provided to public assistance beneficiaries (Medicaid, SNAP and TANF) would not be counted – avoiding the benefits cliff for these participants.
- This allowance provides Fairfax the flexibility to broadly consider the target population for this pilot program.

Pilot

Implement a basic income \$1.5M pilot in Fairfax County with household-level impacts on economic mobility and systems-level impacts on local, regional, state, and federal policy and practice.

Phase 1: Design Process (Year 1)

- Convening Stakeholders
- Data Compilation
- Budget Development
- Recruitment of Participants
- Facilitating Connections to Other Jurisdictions

Phase 2: Pilot Implementation (Starting Year 2)

- Timeline TBD in design process

Desired Impacts

FAMILY LEVEL IMPACTS

INCREASE in total income

DECREASE in reliance on public assistance

INCREASE in family total liquid assets

SYSTEM LEVEL IMPACTS

Shift from **deficit focus** → **asset focus**

Access to an **expanded range of indicators** to measure progress:

- Income Sources
 - Balances
 - Activities

Education & Skills • Health & Housing

Resourceful & Leading • Networking & Helping

Anticipated Funding Strategy

- Innovation Fund
- Philanthropy
- Federal Resources (ARPA)



**“The solution to poverty
is to abolish it directly
by a now widely discussed measure:
the guaranteed income.”**

“Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community” 1967

Martin Luther King Jr.’s last book

Questions ?