



# Human Services Innovation Fund: Economic Mobility Pilot

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# Why We Need an “Innovative” Approach

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- 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

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## 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.

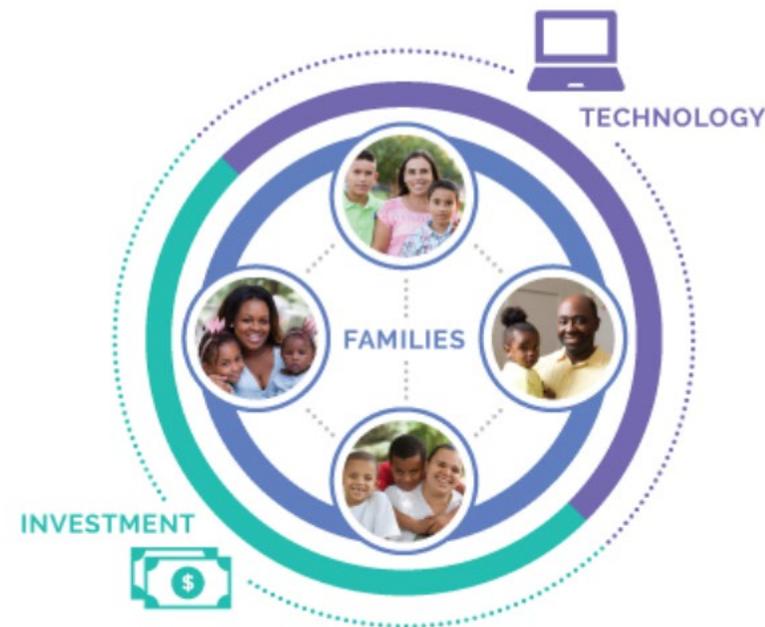
# How UpTogether Works

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

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**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

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## 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

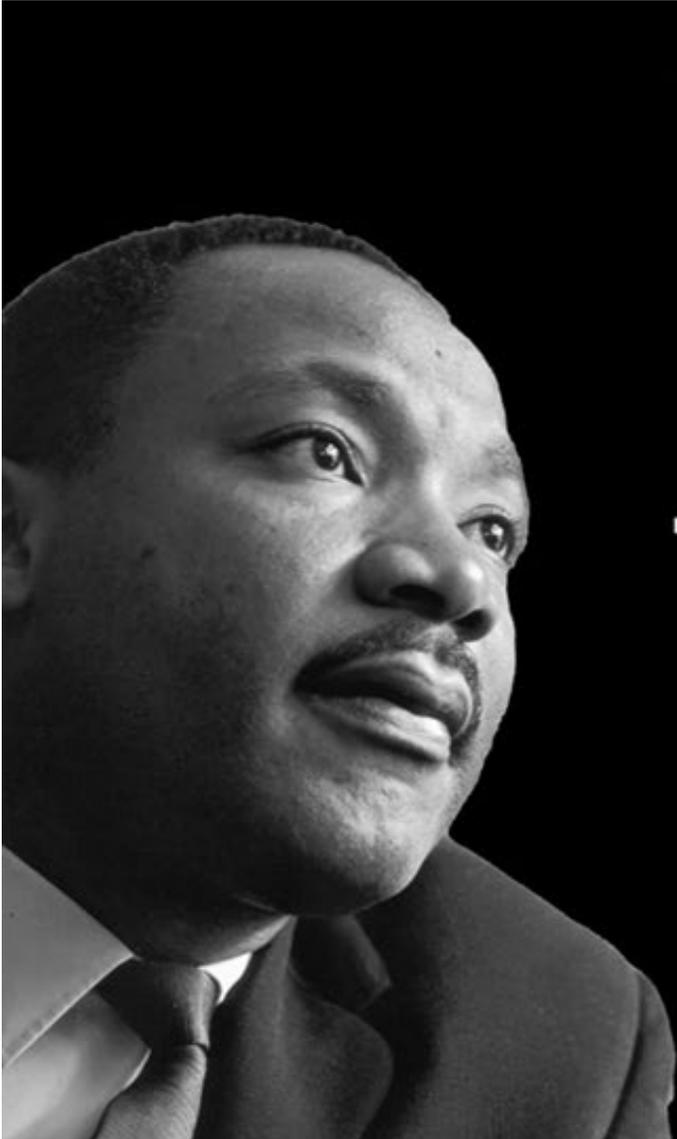
Education & Skills • Health & Housing

Resourceful & Leading • Networking & Helping

# Anticipated Funding Strategy

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- 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 ?**