



Expanding opportunities in American cities by centering racial equity to advance social and economic mobility for families and communities.

We define social and economic mobility as the movement of families between social strata and their ability to improve their wealth and economic status. This includes a person's autonomy, power and ability to influence their environment and personal outcomes.

The Human Services Program's work is grounded in power sharing, partnership, co-learning and co-creating with organizations from multiple sectors, families and communities. Centering racial equity, we work with our partners to advance social and economic mobility for children and families through person-centered systems change driven by innovation at multiple levels.

A person-centered approach is strengths-based, grounded in the belief that people are resilient, capable and operate with self-agency. Core to our strategy is a two-generation approach, which build family well-being by working with children and the adults in their lives together and recognizing the importance of both mothers and fathers.

To support families striving for their American dream, we focus our grantmaking on fostering the next generation of public and nonprofit human services organizations and place-based opportunity ecosystems. We build on this work by making cross cutting investments focused on developing supportive and aligned policy and building a robust field to advance social and economic mobility.

Fostering the Next Generation of Human Services

To foster the next generation of human services organizations, we seek to co-create and advance solutions that improve social and economic mobility with an applied racial equity lens. This focus area includes the national Next Generation (NextGen) initiative, as well as two city-based NextGen initiatives in Detroit and Memphis.

Through these initiatives, we identify cohorts of partners focused on person-centered, outcomes-based, data-driven work that focuses on systems change and advances racial equity. Then we bring them together on a two-year learning journey to further improve their leadership development, create a community of practice, and initiate action plans that accelerate social and economic mobility for children and families.



Building Place-Based Opportunity Ecosystems

Local community, place-based opportunity ecosystems—made up of public and nonprofit organizations working across systems such as education, health and workforce development – hold enormous promise in advancing social and economic mobility.

Through our Place-Based Opportunity Ecosystems strategy we focus on advancing racial equity and supporting cross-sector efforts anchored by public and nonprofit human services organizations to improve the way systems work and create the circumstances for families to thrive.

Cross-Cutting Investments

We also support cross-cutting investments. We believe several factors influence a person’s ability to access opportunity and that one sector alone can’t address all social problems. We seek to pinpoint what policies, regulations and practices impede moving people out of poverty. We want to help groundbreaking ideas enter the mainstream and encourage collaboration across multiple sectors including the public sector, private sector, philanthropy and nonprofit organizations. These investments include:

- Developing supportive, aligned public policy: We invest in efforts that advance public policies that help people achieve well-being and social and economic mobility.
- Building a more robust human services field: We support a range of activities to address and change the narrative about the “working poor” and advance evidence-based, practitioner-informed best practices and policy work.

We invest in efforts that:

- Focus on advancing and accelerating social and economic mobility.
- Offer innovative and effective approaches that can provide lessons for the field.
- Have a clear strategic vision and can articulate what works and why.
- Have shared and adaptive leadership.
- Recognize racial equity as an orienting principle and seek to operationalize racial equity.
- Are intensely person-centered in their approach and utilize best practices (e.g. brain science informed, two-generation, whole-family approaches, etc.)
- Are outcomes focused and data driven.
- Measure organizational and programmatic efforts against the Human Service Value Curve.
- Are committed to person-centered systems change that addresses structural barriers through policy solutions; are positioned to inform and influence communities of practice; and builds the public will for supportive policies.

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