



City of Austin Early Childhood Council Budget Input Presentation

January 2025





UpTogether is working to
change systems that
perpetuate poverty.

Together, with our members, partners,
and community organizations, we:

- Invest in families and individuals experiencing financial hardship; and
- Amplify stories and data to show the impact of investing in people and provide evidence that it works



Capital

People must have access to sufficient capital to invest in their own lives.



Community

People benefit from the power of community and naturally and routinely exchange social capital to support one another.



Choice

People are experts in their own lives and must have full choice and control over their time and resources.

Work to Date in Austin

Austin Site Launch

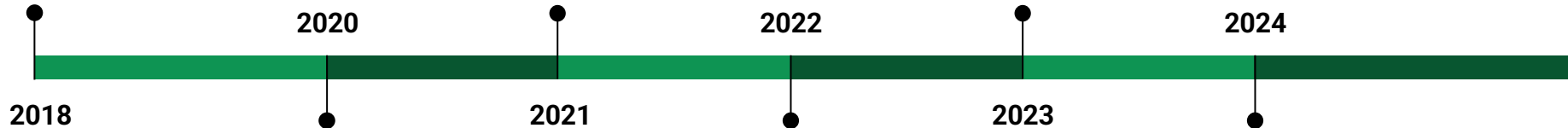
With support from St. David's Foundation, Google, and MSDF, we launched our site in Austin to invest in 380 inaugural members.

Central TX 12-Month Pilot

We launched the Central Texas 12 Month Pilot, investing in 173 households (163 in Austin and 10 in Georgetown) with \$1,000 per month for 12 months. St. David's Foundation and other local philanthropic partners funded the pilot, while the City of Austin signed on as a learning partner .

Family Stabilization Grants

In August 2023, the City of Austin allocated \$1.3M towards the Family Stabilization Grants to provide more families with \$1,000/month for 12 months.



2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

COVID-19 Relief Efforts

Together with local philanthropy, the City of Austin Equity Office, City of Austin Innovation Office, and Austin Public Health, UpTogether invested \$14.4M directly in 7,490 Central Texas households most impacted by COVID 19 (\$500 to \$2,000/household).

City of Austin Pilot

In May 2022, the City of Austin approved a \$1.18 million guaranteed income pilot with UpTogether using general funds. In partnership with the Equity Office and St. David's Foundation, we are investing in 135 households with \$1,000/month for 12 months.

Family Stabilization Grants - Continued

In August 2024, the City of Austin again allocated \$1.3M towards continuing Family Stabilization Grants in the 2024 - 25 year.



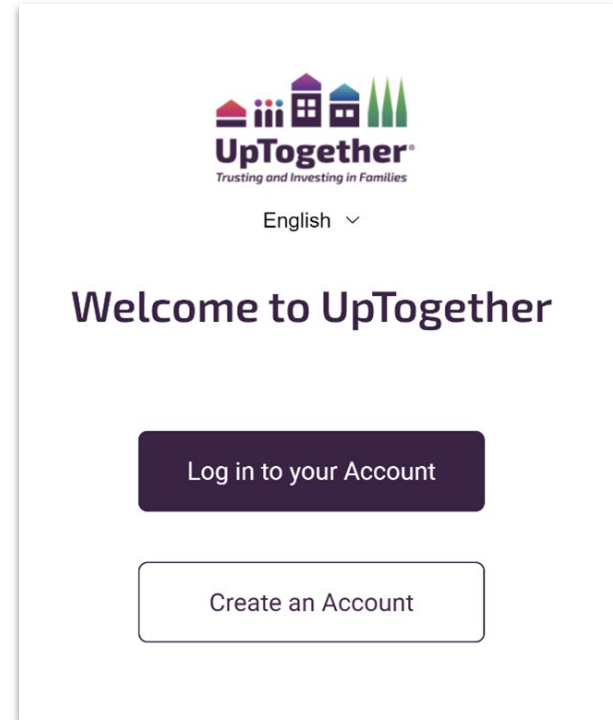
UpTogether® Connect



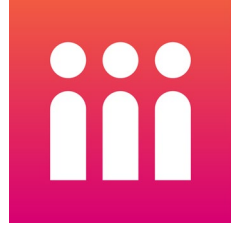
Our signature online platform where members gain access to opportunities for **unrestricted cash transfers, surveys, social groups** and more.

Through **UpTogether Connect** , we:

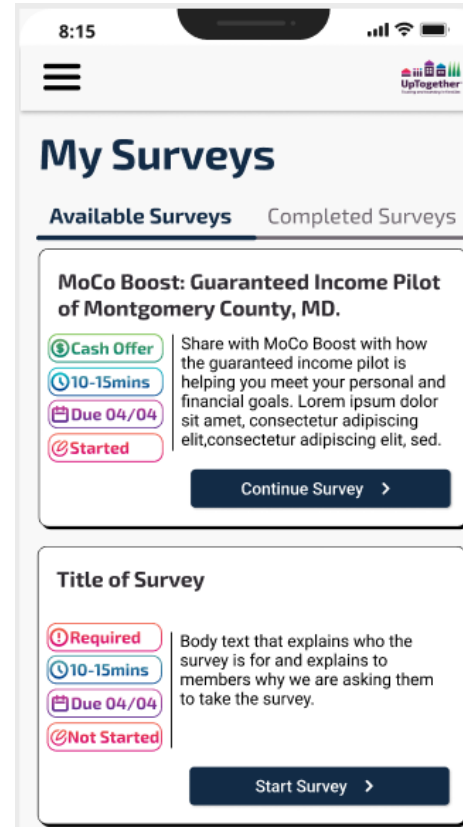
- Learn with members,
- Invest in them, and
- Support them in making connections with others.



UpTogether® Impact Measurement



- Housing stability
- Food security
- Mental health
- Financial well -being
- Education
- Employment
- Business
- Financials: income, savings and debt
- Family and childcare
- Social capital exchanges
- Community involvement



Impact of Direct Cash on Children

1

Demonstration Phase

- 88% of families reported their students to have excellent, good, or improved grades
- 94% reported their students to have excellent, good, or improved attendance

2

San Antonio & Cincinnati

- 71% of children able to make progress towards educational achievements with online learning when their families received \$2,000 during COVID-19 pandemic.
- 57% maintained or improved academic outcomes at end of study compared to start of remote learning.

3

Guaranteed Income Pilot Program for Immigrant Families in New Mexico

Percentage of members reporting their child was on track to complete their grade level and graduate increased by 9%.

4

Colorado Springs

“My children were able to have school supplies and I was able to buy them new shoes and take them out to do things that we normally wouldn’t have been able to do without the money.”



Austin Family Stabilization Grant Fund

- 168 households experiencing housing hardship
- Receiving \$1,000/ month x 12 months
- Partnership with the City of Austin, St. David's Foundation, other local funders, and community organizations like GAVA, to implement a one-year direct cash initiative for Austin families.
- Focused on families in Travis County at or below 80% MFI, facing economic hardship such as housing insecurity, inability to afford quality childcare, un/ under employment, or lacking access to affordable, quality healthcare.



Austin Family Stabilization Grant Fund

Learning

- UpTogether will deploy optional baseline, mid -point, and final surveys to all participants to learn about how families use investments to progress towards their goals.
- With feedback from the City of Austin, we will learn about the role of cash and community in alignment with the Economic Development Department's indicators of:
 - Workforce development
 - Access to City/County programs and resources
 - Food security
 - Housing
 - Early childhood services



Up Together®

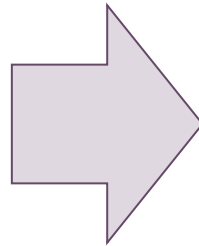
Past Learnings: Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot



Overview of Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot

September 2022 - August 2023

- **Community:** Recognize and learn about how families support one another and use their social networks to achieve their goals
- **Capital:** Investing \$12,000 in 135 families over 12 months (\$1,000/month), understanding and uplifting the impact families create through this investment
- **Choice:** Learn about families' goals and choices around housing and how they utilize unrestricted investment to achieve these goals



Adoption of Strength -Based Approach:

- Utilize learnings about the impact families create through community, including social networks and mutual assistance, and with unrestricted capital investment, with a focus on the impact on housing stabilization

Eligibility Criteria

- Live within the City of Austin and Travis County limits;
- Have a household income that is at or below 60% of the Area Median Family Income;
- Did not receive funding through UpTogether's previous 12 -month pilot from March 2021 -March 2022; and
- Meet at least one of the following:
 - Moving from homelessness toward permanent housing;
 - Have a filed eviction;
 - Household has been behind on rent for 2 or more months over the past year; and/or
 - Household has received a verbal or written notice of intent to evict OR a threat to vacate by landlord or property manager at any time within the past 3 months due to nonpayment of rent.

Research Methods

- Surveys
 - Enrollment Form
 - Baseline, Six-month, 1 Year, 18 months
- Interviews
 - Participant (20 – Twice for 5 participants)
 - Stakeholders (~10)
 - Policymakers (~15)



Outcomes



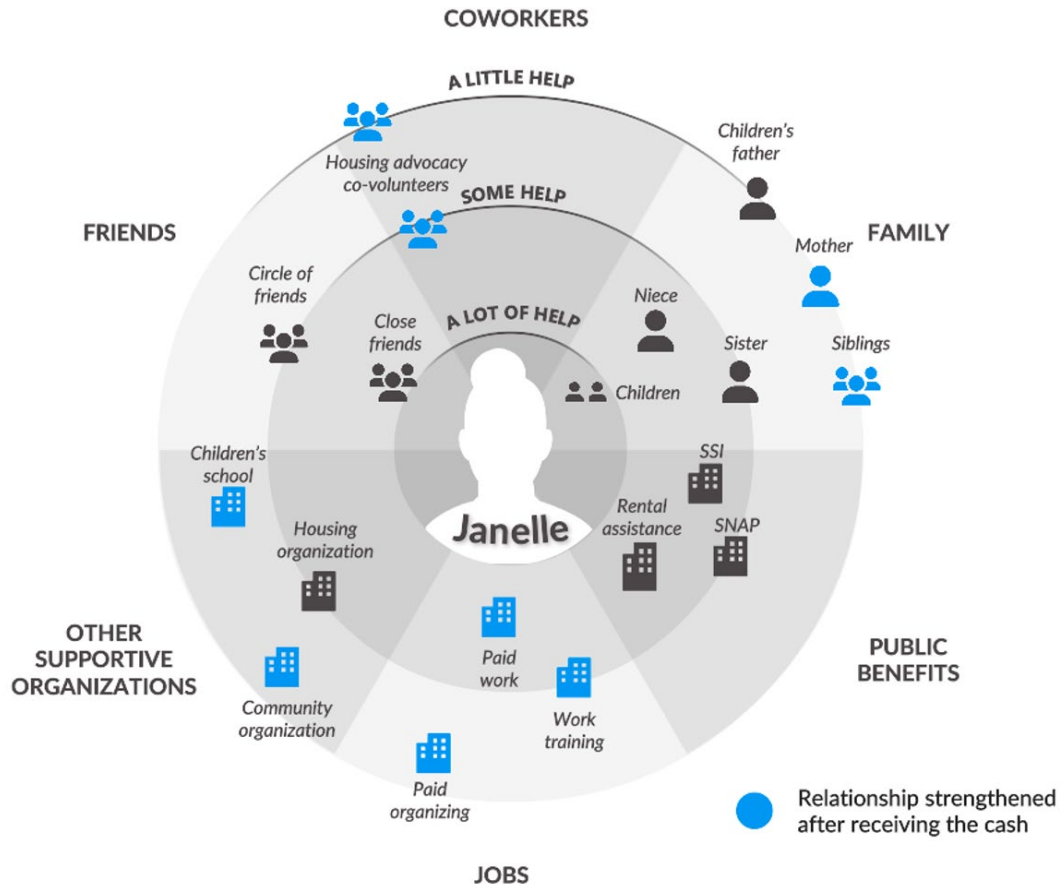
Key Learnings at 18 Months

- Median income increased six months after the pilot
- No significant change in employment status or hours
- Pilot participants made substantial gains in housing stability
- Pilot participants made large gains in food security
- Participants are less depressed overall, though some had increased anxiety

Janelle's Story

- Black mother with 2 children, a preschooler and a second grader with special needs.
- At pilot start, she was doing temp work nearly full time. The work was flexible enough to meet her children's immediate needs, but the income barely covered her basic costs. She described the monthly stipend as a lifeline—a chance to breathe and work toward longer-term goals.
- During pilot, she partially reduced hours to work with her children's teachers, take training to be a leasing agent, and make more job contacts through modest volunteering.
- Today Janelle is a full-time leasing agent (with flexible hours) making \$2000 per month more than when pilot began. Her special needs child is in a better school.

How the Cash Payments Affected Janelle's Connections



‘The cash is very, very helpful for my family. We are struggling with daily life. We don’t have extra for next week, extra for tomorrow. The money cash program [gives more time for me to educate] my children. Then in daily life, I use it to buy enough food and to pay rent. I am not worried so much about being able to pay rent next month.’

—Program participant

Feedback for 2025 -26 Budget

- At least \$1.3 million towards Family Stabilization Grants in the 2025-26 budget.
- Ideally would like this to be permanent allocation to safeguard this initiative in future years.
- Also hope to increase this to \$3 million as we know community need in Austin continues to grow.