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Whole Family Approaches to Economic Mobility: A Funder’s Guide to Supporting Multigenerational Policy and Practice

Women’s Funding Network and Ascend at the Aspen Institute release funder’s toolkit for investing with a whole family focus, supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

SAN FRANCISCO — Women’s Funding Network (WFN) today announced the release of [Whole Family Approaches to Economic Mobility: A Funder’s Guide to Supporting Multigenerational Policy and Practice](#), made possible through a partnership between WFN and Ascend at the Aspen Institute with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This toolkit provides a guide, based on the experiences and research of women’s funds and philanthropy from across the country that are investing in families and communities with a whole-family focus. It offers tools and resources to address community needs through multigenerational family programming and policies.

Since 2010, Ascend at the Aspen Institute has been a national driver of whole-family funding methods, also known as two-generation (2Gen) approaches, which build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously providing opportunities for and meeting the needs of children and the adults in their lives. From its inception, a gender and racial equity lens has been central to Ascend’s work. Over the last five years, these whole-family approaches have been embraced and advanced by women’s foundations and funds leading systemic change through policy solutions in partnership with state policymakers.

“Women’s foundations and funds recognize that for the next generation to thrive, their mothers must thrive — or, as Melanie Bridgeforth, president and CEO of the Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham put it, ‘when women move forward, their children thrive and the community moves with them,’” said Elizabeth Barajas-Román, president and CEO of Women’s Funding Network. “We offer this funder’s guide to encourage philanthropy across the country to invest in families and communities with a 2Gen, whole-family approach and with a racial and gender equity lens.”

Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and all women of color have historically and persistently been marginalized by structural inequities. Whole-family approaches respect the lived experiences of those communities, which often include multigenerational homes and traditions.

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"Whole-family approaches offer the opportunity to multiply success because they account for the wide range of influences that define and support prosperity for families in today's complex world, including the unique roles of women in the family," said Anne Mosle, executive director of Ascend at the Aspen Institute. "Investing in this approach to policy and practice is a win for families, who benefit from improved support, services and programs. Funders also win because investments have a greater impact."

Funders can play a critical role in supporting families through adopting some or all the elements of a 2Gen approach in their investment strategy. Importantly, the new guide helps funders, including those who want to improve gender and racial equity, identify how their foundation can directly engage grantees, parents, and policy makers resulting in more responsive and relevant grantmaking. To learn more, visit wholefamilyguide.org.

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With more than 100 women's funds and foundations spanning six continents, Women's Funding Network is the largest global philanthropic alliance dedicated to providing strategies, research, and resources that support the critical agency and influence of women's foundations and gender justice funders in the movement for equality, justice, and power for all. For more information on the work of Women's Funding Network and its members, please visit www.womensfundingnetwork.org or connect on Twitter (@womensfunding) and Facebook (facebook.com/womensfundingnetwork).

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