

THE FAMILY STABILITY COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

FALL 2021 REPORT

The Promise
THE PHILADELPHIA POVERTY ACTION FUND

POWERED BY



United Way
of Greater Philadelphia
and Southern New Jersey

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



City of
Philadelphia

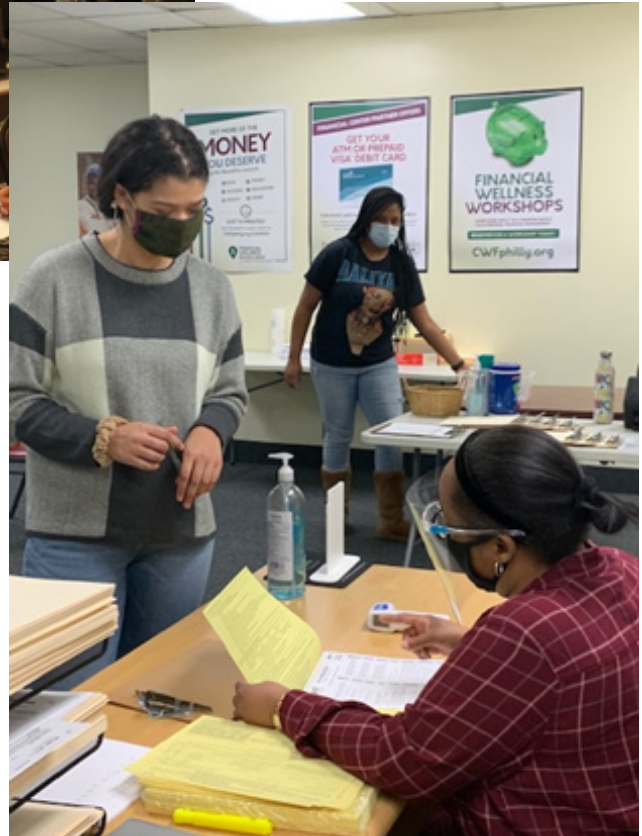


Diversified Community Services

MISSION

The Promise anchors a citywide goal of lifting 100,000 people out of poverty by 2025.

In 2020, the City of Philadelphia and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey forged an unprecedented partnership to launch The Promise, a public-private partnership among government, business, private philanthropy, and community organizations to reduce poverty in Philadelphia and promote an equitable economic recovery from the pandemic.



Campaign for Working Families

100K

THE PROBLEM

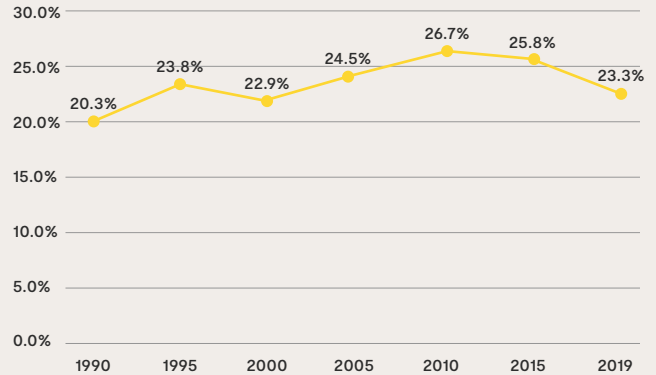
POVERTY RATES IN PHILADELPHIA HAVE NOT DECREASED IN 25+ YEARS.

Even before the pandemic upended the economic and public health of our city, 23% of Philadelphians lived in poverty.¹ This crisis is generational and disproportionately impacts communities of color.

The pandemic exacerbated structural inequities that have held back Philadelphia for decades. The need for bigger, bolder approaches was never clearer. Thanks to planning and relationship building underway across City government, United Way, and business leadership, Philadelphia was poised to launch The Promise at this pivotal moment.

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia 2021: The State of the City, 2021, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/04/philadelphia-2021-state-of-the-city.pdf>

POVERTY RATE IN PHILADELPHIA



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, One-Year Estimates, 2005-2019; Decennial Census, 1990, 2000; Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 1995, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci>

APPROACH

The Promise is focused on removing barriers to secure, stabilize, and grow income.

Increasing access to public benefits and tax credits puts families on more stable footing and lays a foundation for moving - and staying - out of poverty. And the more barriers to quality employment are removed, the more everyone will thrive, with a stronger workforce, safer communities, and fewer people in crisis.



COMMUNITY-LED

These efforts serve the immediate and long-term needs of Philadelphians. It allows community organizations to experiment, execute, and grow.



EQUITABLE & INCLUSIVE

Decision-makers reflect the diversity of this city, and grantees are required to plan and execute projects centered in equity.



PROVEN & SCALABLE

Tactics have been researched across the U.S. and proven to work and scale up over time. The Promise uses data to prove and improve impact.



SUSTAINABLE & IMPACTFUL

Initiatives are judged on long-term benefits, ability to scale to serve more people, and capacity to measure impact.

\$4.8 million — and growing — was invested in Family Stability Challenge community partners.

\$4.8M

Each year Philadelphians miss out on an estimated \$450 million in federal and state benefits.² The Promise launched the Family Stability Community Challenge to fund creative strategies to connect individuals and families to important economic security programs and public benefits that can create stability and a path out of poverty.

As of August 2021, following a phased roll-out of services from March through July 2021, Family Stability coalitions have been hard at work, serving more community members more effectively, all while operating under significant challenges posed by COVID.

² City Council of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Poverty Action Plan, 2020, https://phlcouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PhilaPovertyActionPlan_March2020_2.pdf

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Promise is growing new partnerships, strengthening existing partnerships, and breaking down silos by creating and smoothing referral pathways across organizations. The goal was to disrupt the status quo, where organizations who are working towards a common goal are often pitted against each other, and instead, focus on strengthening communities with large, sustained, community-driven investments.

\$1.3M

COLLABORATIVE TO ADVANCE STABILITY

Connecting community-based groups in North Philadelphia and across the city. Led by **Campaign for Working Families** in partnership with **Beech Community Services**, **Benefits Data Trust**, **Clarifi**, and **Community Legal Services**.

\$1M

LATINO EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT COLLECTIVE

Harnessing the collaborative effort of six Latino serving and led groups. Led by **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** in partnership with **Ceiba**, **Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha**, **Congreso, Esperanza**, **HACE**, and **Norris Square Community Alliance**.

\$1M

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND COALITION

Reaching underserved immigrant and low-income populations across Philadelphia. Led by **African Cultural Alliance of North America** in partnership with **Southwest Community Development Corporation** and **Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation**.

\$1.5M

SOUTH BROAD PARTNERSHIP

Connecting South Philadelphia residents to an array of benefits. Led by **Diversified Community Services** in partnership with **United Communities Southeast Philadelphia**, **Benefits Data Trust**, **Community Legal Services**, **Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity**, **SEAMAAC**, and **Unity in the Community**.

“[We estimate] the number of our services are up 30% just this year since we started the grant [and the]... number of people receiving services is up 40%.”

Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Below is a brief preview of the Family Stability Community Challenge work as of August 2021, following a phased roll-out of services from March through July 2021.

\$6.8M+

Over \$6.8M in tax credits accessed (\$5.1M+) and tax filing fees saved (\$1.6M+)

59%

59% of people served identified as Black, African American, or African

23K+

Over 23K Philadelphians received Family Stability services

51%

51% of people served had an annual household income <\$20K

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Family Stability coalitions are doing the hands-on work of supporting incomes through services available to the community free of charge.

- ▶ Tax Preparation
- ▶ Applying for and receiving tax credits like Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit
- ▶ Public Benefits Screening and Application Assistance
- ▶ Health Insurance Enrollment
- ▶ Rental Assistance
- ▶ Housing Counseling
- ▶ Legal Counseling

ENSURING ACCESS TO EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

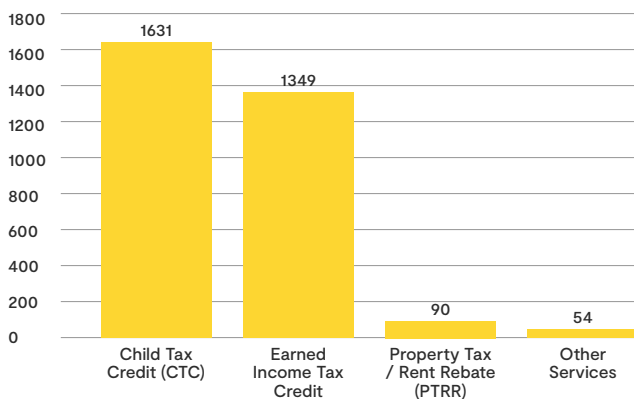
Expanding access to the social safety net and economic security programs helps people increase income, reduce expenses, and more quickly reach stability.

As of August 2021, following a phased roll-out of services from March through July 2021, Family Stability community partners provided services to over 23,000 people. This includes:

- ▶ 8,634 people accessed tax services, generating \$3.1M+ in Earned Income Tax Credits, \$2M+ in Child Tax Credits, and saving \$1.6M+ in tax filing fees by providing tax filing services pro bono.
- ▶ 10,099 people accessed emergency food services, which supports a reduction of expenses for households and provides a basic need for families experiencing economic insecurity
- ▶ 3,270 people applied for variety of other benefits and services, including income assistance, SNAP, TEFAP, Healthy Insurance and Subsidies, Utility/Home Repair Assistance, and Housing Services and Benefits. It can take up to 60-90 days from benefit application to confirming receipts of benefits.

TAX CREDITS ACCESSED BY TYPE

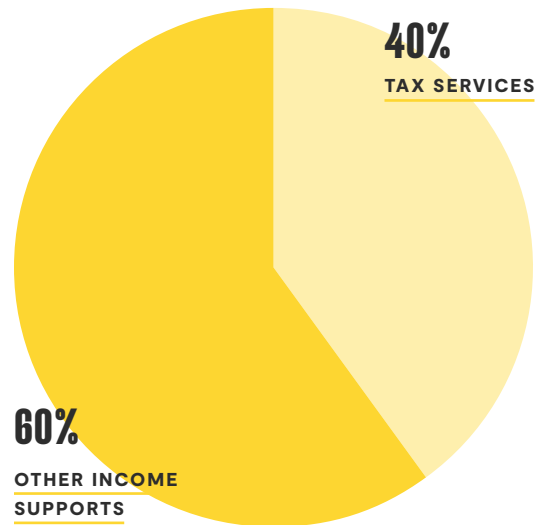
Over 3,100 people accessed tax credits and rebates



Other services include tax credits and rebates such as Philadelphia Wage Tax Rebate, Recovery Rebate (Stimulus), American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), and Senior Property Tax Freeze.

³ City of Philadelphia, "Mayor Kenney & Superintendent Hite: The Child Tax Credit moves families and Philadelphia forward," 2021, <https://www.phila.gov/2021-06-23-mayor-kenney-superintendent-hite-the-child-tax-credit-moves-families-and-philadelphia-forward/>

INCOME SUPPORT SERVICES ACCESSED BY TYPE



OTHER INCOME SUPPORTS
Including income assistance, SNAP, TEFAP, health insurance and subsidies, emergency food services, utility/home repair assistance, and housing services and benefits

90% OF FAMILIES IN PHILADELPHIA COUNTY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE CHILD TAX CREDIT

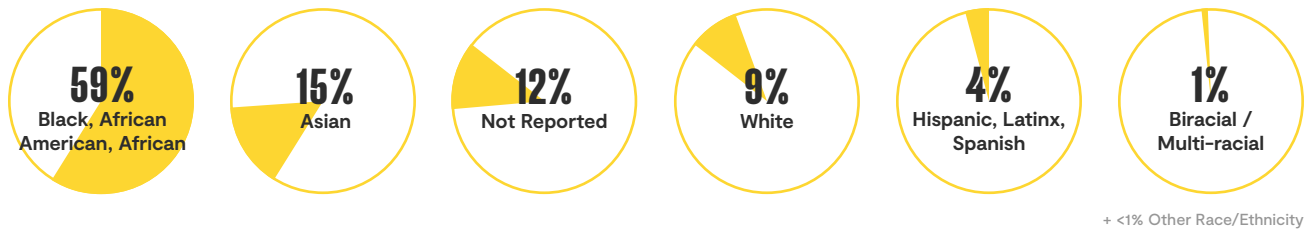
The Advance Child Tax Credit is a massive opportunity for Philadelphia. The CTC provides a maximum credit of \$3,600 per child under 6 years old and \$3,000 per child ages 6 to 17 years old.³ Along with the Earned Income Tax Credit, this means that some families could receive \$10,000 or more, which highlights the value of pairing financial counseling with tax preparation services to “plant the seeds of what they could do with those dollars,” as one community partner describes.

REACHING KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Promise is investing in the ground game to promote diverse and equitable access to services.

This initiative is about ensuring that services reach people who are experiencing high levels of poverty, which in Philadelphia are communities of color, due to systemic barriers to accessing these services and historical disinvestment in these communities. Of the 23,000 people served, 59% identified as Black, African American, or African, and 51% have an annual household income of less than \$20,000. Coalitions are reaching out to community members who often struggle to access services due to mistrust, language barriers, transportation, and prior bad experiences accessing services.

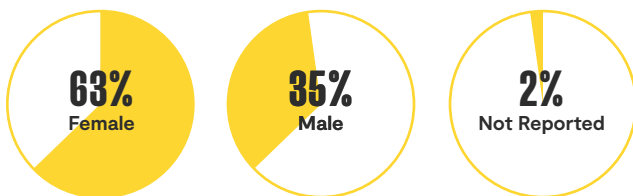
RACE



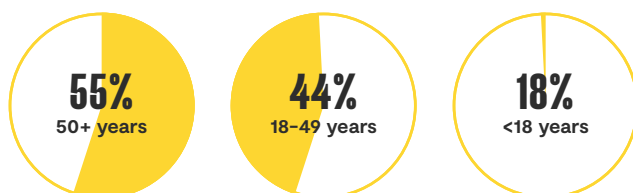
ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME



GENDER



AGE

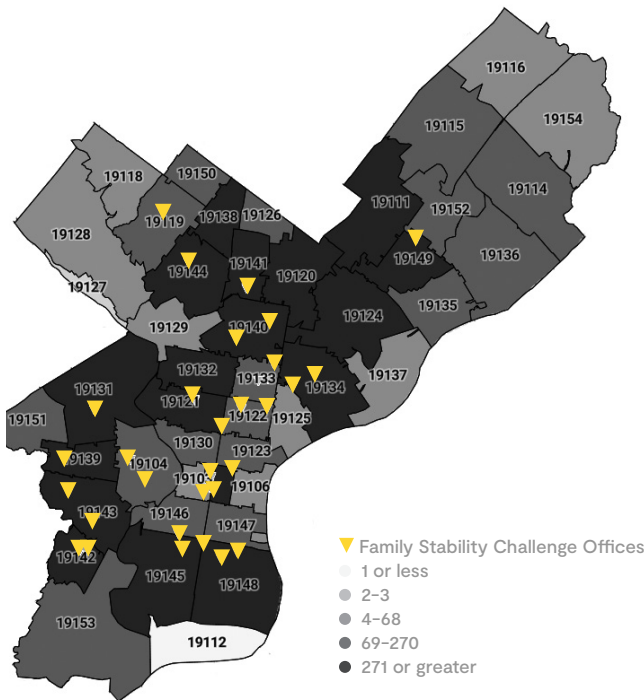


Communities across all 48 zip codes of Philadelphia County are accessing services.

The Promise is focused on expanding the depth and breadth of services in communities. Family Stability coalitions are reaching communities that are experiencing higher rates of poverty in Philadelphia. By investing in placed-based services, community partners already have the cultural knowledge, language expertise, relationships, and trust to expand their reach in their communities.

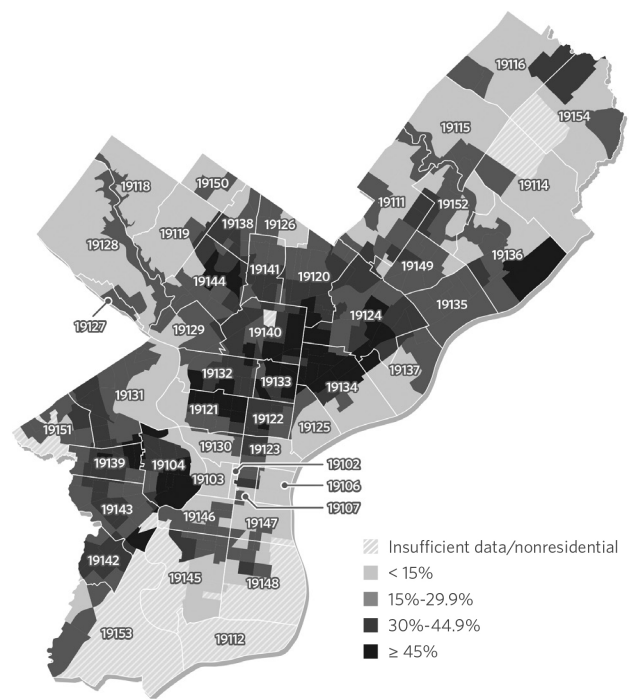
PEOPLE ACCESSING SERVICES

Map excludes data for clients who preferred not to provide zip code or for whom zip codes could not be mapped or zip codes are outside Philadelphia County.



PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia 2021: The State of the City, 2021. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/04/philadelphia-2021-state-of-the-city.pdf>



“There have been many residents applying for and receiving assistance who have never received aid in the past.”

African Cultural Alliance of North America

THE GROUND GAME

Outreach efforts are being tailored to the needs and cultures of neighborhoods and communities.

Research has shown the importance of grassroots outreach and service delivery when policies and eligibility are shifting and changing.⁴ Now is the time to invest in greater outreach.

Coalitions are implementing multi-layered strategies to reach eligible people, including those newly eligible for valuable income supports. Organizations are implementing pre-screening to identify people who have not previously filed taxes who are now eligible for the Advance CTC and other income supports, like SNAP or Medicaid. Flyers, newspaper ads, radio ads, social media, word-of-mouth, door-to-door canvassing, and more are all a part of getting community members connected.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

By investing in organizations that have deep community roots and service expertise, The Promise can remove barriers such as fear and misinformation.

Among coalitions, there is no wrong door to walk through to ensure a community member's needs are met. Community partners are working collaboratively, making the vision of “no wrong door” a reality. Organizations are committed to continuing to simplify and integrate services and remove barriers to access for low-income residents.

Community partners are experimenting and creating even more robust outreach and service strategies to ensure information is being shared widely, and community members are treated with dignity and respect every step of the way.

⁴ Code for America, “Getting the Child Tax Credit to families with low or no incomes means using the right data,” 2021, <https://www.codeforamerica.org/news/getting-the-child-tax-credit-to-families-with-low-or-no-incomes-means-using-the-right-data/>

DEEPENING IMPACT

The Promise is growing new partnerships, strengthening existing partnerships, and breaking down silos by formalizing referral pathways.

Coalitions are working with individuals and families as they navigate antiquated, bureaucratic systems to ensure that they make it through the application phase.

Partners know there is a need for follow-up, as people's financial circumstances can shift over time. Community partners are walking alongside families as they navigate this dynamic and complex process. For some, this means helping them test video conferencing before a housing counseling class or sitting next to people as they call offices to understand why they were rejected for a benefit.

LEARNING TO IMPROVE

The Promise is centering equity in process and outcome to ensure that services reach those most in need.

The Promise and United Way are investing in sustainable, meaningful community data infrastructure to measure impact and guide investments. Through funding and technical assistance, community partners are expanding and strengthening data systems to track progress and fuel learning and improvement over time. The approach is three-fold: What is the impact? Where are the service gaps? How does The Promise support community partners in making more data-informed decisions over time to increase impact?

“We’ve created the beginnings of a comprehensive data sharing platform that will streamline client referrals, support cross-sector collaboration, allow multi-faceted analysis, and ease service access for vulnerable clients.”

YOUR IMPACT MATTERS.

Building a better, safer, more equitable Philadelphia is a collective effort. Every donation helps us work toward the goal of 100,000 fewer Philadelphians experiencing poverty.

LEARN MORE. DONATE. CONNECT.

@thepromisephil / thepromisephil.org

The Promise