

CONTEXT AND EQUITY IN FAMILY-CENTERED COMMUNITY CHANGE: BUFFALO, NEW YORK

THE STUDIES AND METHODS: Researchers from the Urban Institute published two reports looking at the roles of external factors and racial equity in the **Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family-Centered Community Change™ (FCCC) initiative**. For the past seven years, Casey has served as a strategic co-investor for three **comprehensive community initiatives** — in Buffalo, New York; Columbus, Ohio; and San Antonio, Texas — supporting local organizations that strengthen families by serving parents and children together, a strategy known as a two-generation approach. In its analysis of these initiatives and the ways they were influenced by the broader context and issues of racial and ethnic equity, the Urban Institute used data from public sources and evaluation partners, along with focus groups, observations and interviews in all three FCCC locations.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE? Comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) are community collaborations that bring resources and programming to areas that haven't received them in the past. CCIs focus on engaging residents to change policies and systems.



KEY STATISTICS

COMMUNITIES SERVED Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013–17 American Community Survey.



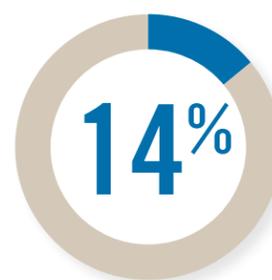
AFRICAN AMERICAN



LATINO



ASIAN



WHITE (NOT HISPANIC)



OTHER/UNKNOWN



To afford a modest, two-bedroom rental home in their community, families must **EARN AT LEAST \$15 PER HOUR** and work no less than 40 hours per week for the entire year. The **NEW YORK STATE MINIMUM WAGE WAS \$10.40** during FCCC activities.



Buffalo residents spend an average of **54 MONTHS** on the wait list for public housing assistance.



65% of the total population of working-age adults (25–64 years old) are employed.



KEY FINDINGS

- 1** External factors can have a major influence on the success of a CCI. In Buffalo, some of these factors — such as strong existing partnerships with local elementary schools — were positive. But others, like the local effects of the national housing crisis, acted as roadblocks.
- 2** Local public officials and organizations can navigate external obstacles through adaptation. In response to the growing affordable housing crisis, Buffalo ramped up eviction prevention services and affordable housing initiatives.
- 3** In every FCCC community, Casey encouraged partners to use the Foundation's racial and ethnic equity and inclusion (REEI) concepts as tools to track community challenges and increase family participation. FCCC staff and partners noted that the trainings happened at the "right time" for their communities.
- 4** When working with communities of color — as in Buffalo, where the FCCC population served was predominantly African American — it is essential to have a plan for confronting local racial and ethnic disparities.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Prepare for societal influences beyond your CCI's control — from inadequate local transportation to affordable housing shortages — and plan around them to craft an effective two-generation approach.



Invest in learning and training opportunities to strengthen racial equity, and make them a priority for all relevant stakeholders.



Build local coalitions that foster policy advancement at the community level to maintain and promote progress in the face of an unpredictable national policy landscape.



Create and define clear, shared language about equity to enable productive dialogue.



LEARN MORE

Read more about the findings at www.aecf.org.



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION