

# Evaluating Tennessee's TANF Opportunity Act: Building a State Learning Laboratory



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Pilot	Lead (Backbone) Organization
<b>A Father’s Involvement Really Matters</b>	Families Matter
<b>Connecting Forward</b>	Family and Children’s Services
<b>East Tennessee Collaborative</b>	United Way of Greater Knoxville
<b>Empower Upper Cumberland</b>	Human Resources Agency of Upper Cumberland
<b>Growing Relational and Occupational Wealth in West Tennessee Households</b>	University of Memphis
<b>Our ChanceTN</b>	Martha O’Bryan Center
<b>STRONG Families Northeast Tennessee</b>	First Tennessee Development District Foundation

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—The Authors

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# I. Study Overview

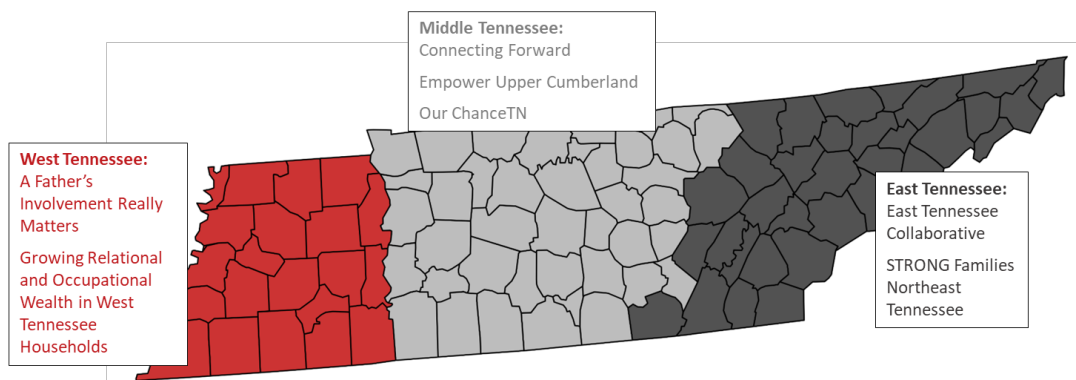
## Background

In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act passed, replacing the Aid to Families with Dependent Children cash assistance program with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The TANF block grant provides funding to states to administer cash assistance and a broad array of other programs such as education and training, child care, and refundable tax credits (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2002). The TANF grant also allows states to indefinitely retain unspent funds. Because of limited spending of its TANF funding over the years, Tennessee had accumulated over \$700 million in federal funds by 2019 (Wilson & Mumpower, 2019; 2020).

The [TANF Opportunity Act](#), signed into law in May 2021, established several purposes for Tennessee’s TANF reserve funds: invest in community initiatives to improve the economic circumstances of Tennessee families through grant programs like the Tennessee Opportunity Pilot Initiative (TOPI) described below; increase the TANF monthly cash assistance allotment; create a TANF Advisory Board; and launch a demonstration to help families navigate the benefits cliffs that happen as families increase their income and become ineligible for public benefits.

Through TOPI, the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) awarded a competitive \$25 million grant to each of seven collective impact pilots across the state. The TOPI programs, referred to in this report as “pilots,” will test innovative ways to support Tennessee families with low incomes to increase economic mobility and well-being. The pilots aim to provide families with comprehensive supports to address the broad range of challenges they face and help families navigate the complex array of resources already available in their communities from multiple providers. Exhibit 1 lists the pilots by region.

### Exhibit 1. Pilots by Region<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Tennessee is divided by state law into three geographically and economically distinct regions, or “grand divisions” known as East, Middle, and West Tennessee.

## Pilot Services

The pilots provide families with direct services and connections to existing services within their communities. The service mix and structure of the pilots vary, but they include similar components such as:

- **Care coordination and coaching:** resource navigation and referrals to existing community resources, communication across various partner agencies, and access to coaching or case management
- **Employment supports:** individualized career planning, connections to training or post-secondary education, and job search assistance
- **Financial supports:** transitional benefits to offset loss of benefits as income increases, payments for achieving program or employment milestones, support service payments for short-term needs (e.g., rent assistance) or costs related to maintaining employment (e.g., transportation), and financial counseling
- **Family and other supports:** parenting classes, mental health and counseling services, and social capital building

## Eligibility

In order to enroll in any pilot, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be a parent or legal guardian with child(ren) under the age of 18.<sup>2</sup>
- Meet Tennessee’s criteria for a “low-income family”<sup>2</sup>:
  - live at or below the Federal Poverty Level;
  - be eligible for Medicaid;
  - receive or be eligible for public benefits such as Families First (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
  - be unemployed or verified as having no income;
  - live in Section 8 housing or low rent public housing; or
  - be eligible for the National School Lunch Program.
- Be a resident of Tennessee.
- Be a U.S. citizen or meet one of several legal immigration criteria.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these criteria, there are eligibility criteria specific to each pilot (e.g., residency within the pilot’s service area).

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<sup>2</sup> Three pilots are approved to serve non-custodial parents, who may not be legal guardians.

<sup>3</sup> As of March 2024, TDHS approved the inclusion of participants of certain legal immigration statuses: refugees and asylees within 5 years of entrance or asylum; permanent residents who are lawfully admitted and meet work requirements; veterans and active-duty aliens with an honorable discharge or on active duty, or the spouse or dependent child of an eligible veteran or active-duty alien.

## Study Purpose

In addition to funding the pilots, the TANF Opportunity Act included funding for a rigorous evaluation to build evidence to inform future policy and programmatic efforts. TDHS contracted with MEF Associates and its partners, the Urban Institute and Vanderbilt University, to conduct research on various TANF Opportunity Act components and evaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and cost of the pilots.

The evaluation of the pilots aims to create a state-level learning laboratory to produce evidence on program effectiveness and generate valuable insights on program implementation, enabling the State of Tennessee to enhance the delivery of human services to its residents. Upon completion of this study, the state aims to build a deeper understanding of approaches to providing comprehensive, coordinated services to families with low incomes; new evidence on efforts to lessen the effects of benefit cliffs on earnings and income; and insights on delivering services to families residing in rural settings.

Furthermore, the pilots are testing models and components that are of widespread interest to practitioners, policymakers, and researchers nationwide. For example, one pilot is testing the impacts of high-intensity coaching, building on recent research examining the potential of coaching interventions to strengthen self-regulation skills and improve the labor market outcomes of individuals with low incomes (Cattell et al., 2021; Joyce & McConnell, 2019). The same pilot is also testing the impacts of transitional benefits, adding to the growing research on interventions that help individuals with low incomes plan for the phaseout of benefits that often accompanies career advancement (Altig et al., 2020). Another pilot is testing the impacts of parenting and co-parenting education, adding to the research base on the effects of healthy marriage and relationship education on labor market outcomes and economic well-being (Goesling et al., 2022). Finally, one pilot is testing the impacts of offering payments to participants who achieve certain program or employment milestones, building evidence on how these payments incentivize specific activities or goals (Stein & Rotz, 2022).

This report outlines the overall research design, presents each pilot's impact evaluation design, summarizes the planned data sources and data collection methods, and describes the study participants' characteristics as of March 2024.

## Summary of Research

The evaluation of the TANF Opportunity Act includes several key components: a baseline scan describing the context in which the pilots operate; a targeted literature review of outcome measures; rigorous evaluations of each of the seven pilots' implementation and impacts; a data dashboard; and other analyses related to changes in the state stemming from the TANF Opportunity Act. These varied research activities all inform the mixed-method evaluation of the pilots' implementation, impacts, and costs. Generally, the impact evaluation relies on an experimental design, where eligible families are randomized to one or more groups as a means

for creating an evaluable contrast that lends itself to a causal interpretation, as this section later elaborates.

## Baseline Scan

The research team conducted a [baseline scan](#), using publicly-available data, to describe the demographic and economic context in which the seven pilots were operating at the beginning of the implementation period in early 2023.<sup>4</sup> The baseline scan presents data at the state and county levels on local demographics, income and poverty, employment and education, safety net program caseloads<sup>5</sup>, and health.

## Outcome Measures Review

In support of the pilot evaluations, the research team conducted a [literature review to identify outcome measures](#) that could capture the pilots' efforts to build individual and family capacity, beyond traditional measures of income and benefit receipt. This task involved:

- **Developing a conceptual framework of capacity for self-sufficiency:** The framework highlights the internal and external factors, and the dynamic relationships between and among those factors, that make up “capacity for self-sufficiency.”
- **Exploring methods to measure outcomes related to capacity and use of safety net programs:** The team conducted a systematic search, drawing on surveys and administrative data, for measures to capture the various factors of the conceptual framework.
- **Making recommendations on how to construct outcomes related to individual and family capacity for self-sufficiency and use of safety net programs:** The primary purpose of these recommendations is to inform the pilot evaluations, and findings may be applied more broadly in future work to support families with low incomes.

## Pilot Evaluations

The goal of the evaluation of the pilots is to build rigorous evidence on strategies to support families with low incomes in Tennessee as they work toward economic stability and individual and family well-being. The research team worked with each pilot to design an experimental evaluation—commonly referred to as a randomized controlled trial (RCT)—specific to its program logic model and theory of change (see Evaluation Design section for specific information on each pilot's evaluation). The evaluation of each pilot will include:

- **An implementation study:** The research team will document how the program operated, explore cross-site variation in program delivery, identify facilitators or barriers

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<sup>4</sup> The baseline scan includes the most recent publicly-available data at the time of program implementation. In some cases, the team chose to use less-recent data due to data-quality issues stemming from challenges collecting survey data during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>5</sup> Safety net programs included are: SNAP; TANF; Unemployment Insurance; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Child Care and Development Fund; Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program; Public Housing and Voucher Programs; Supplemental Security Income; Social Security Disability Insurance; and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.



to delivery, summarize lessons learned, and complement and contextualize impact study results.

- **An impact study:** The research team will leverage the random assignment of families enrolled to estimate pilot-specific impacts on a range of well-being outcomes.
- **A cost analysis:** The research team will estimate a cost per participant for each pilot, explore variation in costs across pilots, and assess cost-effectiveness where possible.

We will also examine pilot program interactions, identify opportunities for pilot improvement, and examine how pilot participants experience the “cliff effect” or “slope effect” related to transitioning off public assistance.

### Data Dashboard

Building on the baseline scan, we will leverage both publicly available data (e.g., data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey) and state administrative data to develop a dashboard showing key aggregate economic, education, and poverty variables in Tennessee. The interactive dashboard will allow users to view and filter various categories of data, such as age and employment status, at the state and county levels. The team will update the dashboard each quarter to allow users to track changes across the state. To accompany the dashboard, we will complete annual reports to describe key findings and capture changes over time.

### Other Analyses

The project includes two other analyses related to changes included in the TANF Opportunity Act:

- A descriptive analysis of grant and time limit changes that stemmed from the TANF Opportunity Act.
- Analysis of public benefit use for study participants, using a holistic approach to understand hardships faced by study participants that builds on evidence-based approaches to measuring multidimensional poverty.

## II. Pilot Program Characteristics

The seven pilots have similar goals and tailor their approaches to service delivery to meet the needs of their unique service areas, target populations, and partners. All pilots aim to address the varied, complex, and overlapping challenges that Tennessee families face. A primary focus is to improve economic mobility and family well-being by building care coordination channels across multiple organizations. Box 1 includes a working definition of “care coordination.”

Broadly, each pilot’s theory of change is that a combination of addressing immediate barriers and building participants’ capacity for self-sufficiency will help families to become stable and move beyond the need for safety net benefits in the long-term. As noted in the research team’s *Capturing Capacity for Self-Sufficiency: A Multidimensional Framework and Measurement Tools* report, capacity for self-sufficiency is a complex and multidimensional concept influenced at individual, family, community, and structural levels (Stapleton et al., 2024). Exhibit 2 outlines pilot program characteristics and describes pilot services, which are targeted at varied levels and across multiple outcome domains. We organize program services into several categories: Care Coordination & Coaching; Employment Supports; Financial Supports; Family Supports; and Other Supports.

### **Box 1. Defining “Care Coordination”**

In this report, we define “care coordination” as the organization of services for participants across multiple partner organizations. This includes assessment of participant strengths and barriers, communication between pilot staff and partners around care planning, and implementation of systems to connect families with service providers to meet their individual needs.

## Exhibit 2. Pilot Program Characteristics

Pilot Name, Backbone Organization, and Location	Target Group	Primary Services
<p><b>A Father’s Involvement Really Matters (AFIRM)</b> Families Matter  City of Memphis and Shelby County, in West TN</p>	<p>Fathers with low incomes who have a newly established or pending child support case</p>	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job search assistance , including building direct connections with employers</li> <li>• Job retention support</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial training, such as tax preparation, credit report resolutions, and financial education</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$400 (e.g., for a job placement) to \$1,000 (e.g., for completion of parenting workshop)</li> <li>• Supportive service payments (e.g., utility or rental assistance)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Family Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-week parenting and fatherhood workshop (2-hour sessions, weekly), via The Enhancing Parenting Skills Through Effective Co-Parenting Relationship Skills curriculum</li> <li>• Co-parenting workshops and facilitation of co-parenting agreements</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Other Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrals to child support for order modifications and negotiating payment plans</li> <li>• Referrals to legal support services for expungements, driver’s license reinstatement, and traffic tickets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connecting Forward</b> Family and Children’s Services  28 counties in Middle TN, including Nashville and Clarksville Metro Areas</p>	<p>Families with low incomes, including non-custodial caregivers</p>	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care coordination utilizing a shared data system across partner agencies, to allow care coordinators across service providers to access and add to a single shared case file for each client family, containing client goals, services, and other information</li> <li>• Goal setting and supporting clients to overcome barriers</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul>

Pilot Name, Backbone Organization, and Location	Target Group	Primary Services
Connecting Forward (continued)		<p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Direct provision of training and education</li> <li>• Employment placement supports for internships, apprenticeships, and direct employment</li> <li>• Resources to supplement training, job search, and job-related expenses not covered by other funding sources or benefits</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation assistance</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Family Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting supports, via Nurturing Parenting Program, Common Sense Parenting, or Strengthening Families curricula</li> <li>• Health education and family planning resources</li> <li>• Youth mentoring</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Other Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling for individuals and families, provided by co-located clinical therapist/case managers at Family and Children’s Services and partner organizations. When appropriate, staff will use evidence-based interventions such as Attachment, Regulation, and Self-Competency or Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</li> <li>• Housing support</li> </ul>
<p><b>East Tennessee Collaborative</b> United Way of Greater Knoxville</p> <p>10 counties in East TN, including Knoxville Metro Area</p>	Families with low incomes	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care coordination and coaching via the Economic Mobility Pathways Mobility Mentoring model, focused on five key areas of family stability, well-being, education and training, financial management, and employment and career management</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> <li>• Shared data system across partner agencies to track participant information and make referrals</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job search assistance</li> </ul>

Pilot Name, Backbone Organization, and Location	Target Group	Primary Services
East Tennessee Collaborative (continued)		<p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal Action Payments, small payments ranging from \$20-100 for making steps towards achieving economic self-sufficiency tied to the key focus areas listed above</li> <li>• Supportive service payments made directly to service providers, for costs such as trauma therapy, employment services, or financial literacy classes</li> <li>• Transitional benefits to cover loss of income from a benefit cliff for up to 4 months, paid directly to housing, mental health, child care, or utility providers</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$250 (e.g., for opening a savings account and saving 1 month’s expenses) to \$1,000 (e.g., for savings of 3 months’ expenses or more)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Empower Upper Cumberland (Empower UC)</b></p> <p>Upper Cumberland Human Resources Agency</p> <p>14 counties in rural Middle TN</p>	Families with low incomes	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship-based care coordination model, including meetings with Empower Navigators, goal setting, budgeting and financial planning, and career planning</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning via Prosperity Pathway Plan</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job readiness and on-the-job training</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to Atlanta Federal Reserve CLIFF planner to plan for transition off public benefits</li> <li>• Supportive service payments for costs such as transportation, child care, employment and training-related costs, or emergency needs</li> <li>• Connections to additional financial supports from partner charitable foundation</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$100 (e.g., for obtaining new employment or salary increase for four weeks) to \$600 (e.g., for completion of Circles USA curriculum)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Family Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-week parenting training via Ready to Learn curriculum (90-minute weekly sessions, in person)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Other Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-week relational coaching curriculum via Circles USA with continued support for 12-18 months</li> </ul>

Pilot Name, Backbone Organization, and Location	Target Group	Primary Services
<p><b>Growing Relational and Occupational Wealth in West Tennessee Households (GROWWTH)</b> University of Memphis</p> <p>21 counties in West TN, including Memphis Metro Area</p>	<p>Families with low incomes</p>	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and care coordination</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career pathway assessment</li> <li>• 3-week job readiness training (approximately 15 hours of learning, offered in-person and virtually)</li> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Funding and support to enroll in short- or long-term training leading to credential</li> <li>• Job search assistance, including building direct connections with employers</li> <li>• 6-week microbusiness development training</li> <li>• 12-week child care training and business support</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation assistance</li> <li>• Child care assistance</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$150 (e.g., for obtaining new employment or salary increase) to \$800 (e.g., for the successful completion of the third phase of a GROWWTH approved Industry Credential Training Program or Accelerated Training Program)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Other Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections to counseling and mental health services from partner</li> </ul>
<p><b>Our ChanceTN</b> Tennessee Alliance for Economic Mobility, led by the Martha O’Bryan Center</p> <p>16 counties in Middle TN, including Nashville and Clarksville Metro Areas</p>	<p>Families with low incomes, including non-custodial caregivers</p>	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching via the Family-Centered Coaching model</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> <li>• Care coordination between coaches, resource navigators, and education/employment staff</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job search assistance, including building direct connections with employers</li> </ul>

Pilot Name, Backbone Organization, and Location	Target Group	Primary Services
Our ChanceTN (continued)		<p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitional benefits to cover loss of income from a benefit cliff, in the form of food assistance and/or direct payments to housing, healthcare, or child care providers</li> <li>• Access to transitional benefit calculator to understand how the benefit cliff affects family</li> <li>• Financial counseling</li> <li>• Flexible client assistance funding to cover supportive service needs such as child care, housing, utilities, or needs related to education and employment (\$1000 per participant)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Other Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social capital events to build social networks among participants</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRONG Families Northeast Tennessee (NETN)</b></p> <p>First Tennessee Development District Foundation</p> <p>10 mostly rural counties in Northeast TN</p>	Families with low incomes	<p><i>Care Coordination &amp; Coaching</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching from Family Partners (staff with lived experience with poverty and/or previous experience working with individuals with low incomes), including goal setting, planning, and motivational interviewing</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Employment Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career assessment and planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training, high school equivalency, or post-secondary education</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Financial Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support service payments for short-term needs and recurring expenses needed for employment or training</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$50 (e.g., for completing scholarship and financial aid applications) to \$2,000 (e.g., for maintaining full-time employment for 9 months)</li> <li>• Financial counseling</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Family Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting education classes via Nurturing Parenting curriculum (offered weekly, in-person or virtual, in one-on-one or group sessions)</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><i>Other Supports</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family power building and social capital building</li> <li>• Mental and behavioral health counseling</li> <li>• Addiction treatment and recovery services</li> </ul>

### III. Design of the Pilot Evaluations

The research team, in collaboration with pilot leadership, developed a research design unique to the pilot's context, program services, and goals. This section describes the overarching goals of the implementation study and the impact study design for each pilot. We will also conduct a cost analysis for each pilot, the design of which will be finalized by summer 2024. Pilot profiles that describe program characteristics and study designs by pilot are included in Appendix A.

#### Implementation Studies

Pilot-specific implementation studies will evaluate the program design and service delivery of the pilot interventions. All implementation studies have three overarching research goals:

1. **Document and describe the local context, design, and operational structure of pilot programs:** examine each pilot's program design, goals, and logic model; document the operational, administrative, and collaborative elements of each program component; examine the community, partner, and organizational contexts in which the program operates; and document the availability and accessibility of other comparable services that exist in the local community.
2. **Assess the implementation of pilot programs:** document how program components were implemented, if or how activities diverged from what was intended (i.e., fidelity of services), and how any program activities changed over time; examine barriers and facilitators to implementation; capture staff and participant experiences with the program; and document program reach and adoption and describe the variation in the experimental groups' use of program services (i.e., the service contrast).
3. **Identify lessons learned and generate recommendations for future programs and policies:** identify lessons learned from each pilot to provide recommendations to policymakers and practitioners on program design and implementation; and assess the extent to which pilots achieved care coordination (i.e., building and maintaining collaboratives or bi-directional referral networks).

#### Impact Studies

The overarching research question that guides the pilot impact evaluations is: ***To what extent do the TOPI programs affect participant's economic security and well-being?***

For each pilot, we developed unique research questions to align with program-specific outcomes. The impact study uses random assignment to estimate pilot-specific impacts. Program staff use the study's computer system to randomly assign a family to receive a mix of services, as described below. After the primary participant (that is, the adult family member who first enrolls in pilot services) consents to participate in the study, we collect data about their individual and family circumstances.



The study leverages two types of RCT designs: differential designs and delayed intervention designs. A “differential” design compares distinct service mixes where one group is offered one or more added service components. A “delayed intervention” design offers one intervention model but rolls out access to it over time. The advantage of these designs is that all participants are offered access to services from the pilots, unlike RCTs that include a control group that is not offered program services.

- The AFIRM, Connecting Forward, East Tennessee Collaborative, and Our ChanceTN pilots are using differential designs, where eligible individuals are randomized to gain access to distinct service mixes. Differential designs allow the research team to focus on understanding the impact of the “add-on” service components.<sup>6</sup>
- The Empower UC, GROWWTH, and STRONG Families NETN pilots are using delayed intervention designs where eligible individuals are randomized to either receive full program services immediately or after a 12-month waiting period. Delayed intervention designs allow the research team to understand the impact of the overall service package from one cohort to the next.<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of the design, the difference in mean outcomes for one group versus the other is the program’s “impact.” Because there is no systematic difference between the groups apart from the intervention, we have high confidence that the impact can be interpreted as causal, providing useful evidence regarding what works in this policy arena.

Exhibit 3 summarizes each pilot’s impact evaluation design and lists the key outcome measures and data sources.<sup>8</sup> The outcomes are grouped into three categories: confirmatory outcomes are those that are central to the intervention’s goals and demonstrate effectiveness of the intervention; secondary outcomes are those that provide additional information about the intervention’s effectiveness; and exploratory outcomes are used to explore potential effects of the intervention and identify directions for future research. Appendix B includes more detail on outcome measures by pilot.

Pilots envision moving families to self-sufficiency in the long term, that is, beyond their grant period of three years. Because the evaluation has a follow-up period of 12 to 18 months, we are limited to examining short-term and medium-term outcomes. Because public benefits use can only be measured in the short and medium term, it is only listed as a secondary or exploratory outcome for the pilots. As families engage in care coordination, individuals may become employed and have higher earnings but may still qualify for and use public benefits like SNAP or Medicaid.

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<sup>6</sup> For differential designs, because there are no groups randomized out of services, we do not use the term “control” group, which implies being excluded from access to services entirely. Instead, we use the term “comparison” group for the benchmark group.

<sup>7</sup> For delayed intervention designs, we use the term “control” group to refer to the group that is randomized out of access to services for the duration of the waitlist.

<sup>8</sup> The research team will pre-register each pilot evaluation’s design and analysis plans with the Open Science Framework registry.

**Exhibit 3. Overview of Pilot Impact Evaluation Designs, Outcomes, and Data Sources**

Pilot	Component tested	Pilot services provided to treatment group	Pilot services provided to comparison group	Outcomes (C = confirmatory, S = secondary, E = exploratory)	Data sources	Study enrollment period	Study enrollment target
<i>Differential Designs</i>							
AFIRM	Structured parenting curriculum	Care coordination and structured parenting services	Care coordination only	C: Parenting knowledge and skills S: Co-parenting knowledge and skills E: Training program enrollment, employment, earnings, child support order modifications	6-month follow-up survey, administrative data	2023 Mar - 2024 Sep	700
Connecting Forward	Approach to care coordination	Care coordination with the use of a shared data system	Care coordination	C: Program retention, goal completion, customer satisfaction, time between referral and client contact, enrollment in referred services E: Employment, earnings, utilization of public benefits, education program enrollment, education credential attainment	4-month follow-up survey, administrative data, MIS data	2023 Mar - 2024 Sep	1,500
East Tennessee Collaborative	Milestone payments	Care coordination and milestone payments	Care coordination only	C: Program retention, Bridge scores S: Employment, earnings, utilization of public benefits, education program enrollment E: Education credential attainment, financial well-being	Administrative data, MIS data	2023 Feb - 2024 Dec	600
Our ChanceTN	Coaching intensity	High intensity coaching	Low intensity coaching	C: Employment, earnings, financial well-being	18-month follow-up survey, administrative data	2023 Jan - 2024 Jun	730
	Transitional benefits	Transitional benefits	No transitional benefits	S: SNAP utilization, housing subsidies utilization, Medicaid utilization, housing stability, food security, access to child care E: Education program enrollment, education credential attainment, social capital, access to transportation			

Pilot	Component tested	Pilot services provided to treatment group	Pilot services provided to comparison group	Outcomes (C = confirmatory, S = secondary, E = exploratory)	Data sources	Study enrollment period	Study enrollment target
<i>Delayed Intervention Designs</i>							
Empower UC	Overall service package	Care coordination with milestone payments	Milestone payments only	C: Employment, earnings, education program enrollment, training program enrollment, S: Financial well-being, financial literacy, social capital, mental health, utilization of public benefits E: Savings, education credential attainment, training credential attainment, children’s literacy and school achievement	18-month follow-up survey, administrative data	2023 Jan - 2024 Jun	720
GROWWTH	Overall service package	Care coordination with milestone payments	Milestone payments only	C: Employment, earnings S: Utilization of public benefits, training program enrollment, training credential attainment	Administrative data	2023 Feb - 2024 Jun	700
STRONG Families NETN	Overall service package	Care coordination	None	C: Employment, earnings, financial well-being S: Financial literacy, mental health, training program enrollment E: Utilization of public benefits, social capital, savings behaviors	12-month follow-up survey, administrative data	2023 Jun - 2024 Dec	792

## IV. Data Sources & Uses

The study has been approved by an Institutional Review Board, ensuring that our research involving human subjects is conducted ethically. During program enrollment, applicants consent to participating in the study and allowing us to collect their data. The research team is collecting data from a variety of sources for the evaluation and will continue data collection through 2026. The sources, types, and uses of data are outlined below.

### Implementation Data

We will work with pilots and the state to collect implementation data on service delivery and participant engagement from the pilots’ management information system (MIS) data systems and their quarterly reports to the state. In addition, we will conduct site visits in the summer of 2024 to field qualitative interviews and focus groups with staff and participants. Exhibit 4 describes the implementation data sources by topic.

**Exhibit 4. Data Sources for Implementation Evaluation by Study Topic**

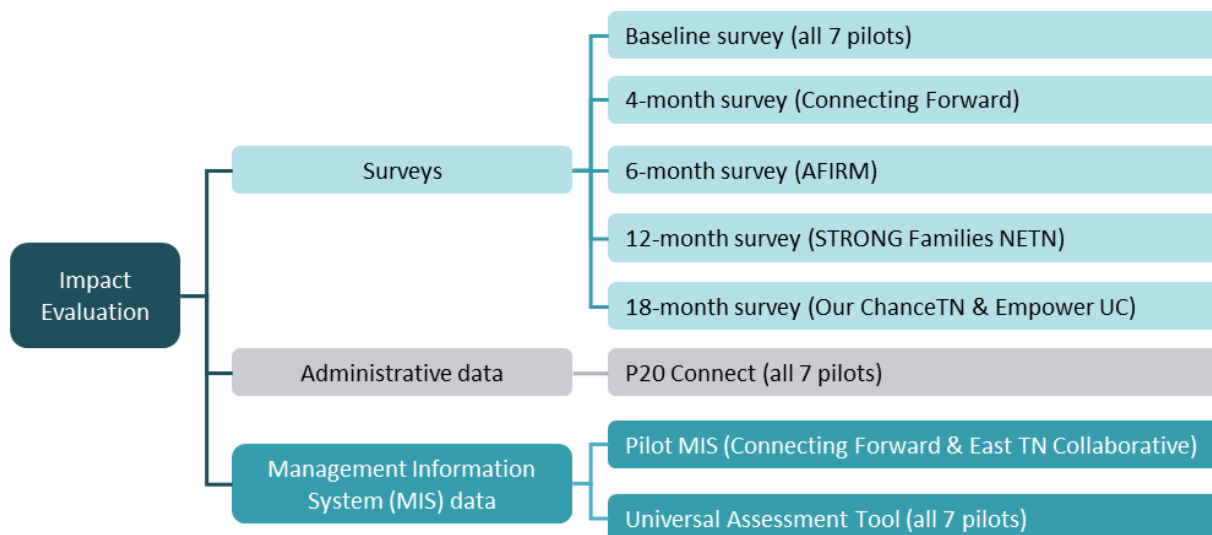
Topic	Data Source				
	Pilot Documents & MIS data	Staff Interviews	Participant Focus Groups	Program Observations	Reports to State
Program context	✓	✓	✓		
Program goals and design	✓	✓			
Variation in receipt of services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implementation of program services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barriers and facilitators of implementation		✓	✓	✓	
Fidelity to program model	✓	✓		✓	✓
Participant experiences / impact			✓		
Lessons learned		✓	✓		

We will use these data to conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis to assess program design and service delivery of the pilot interventions.

### Impact Data

The impact study will include data from: a baseline survey; short- and longer-term follow-up surveys; administrative data, collected by state agencies; and program data, collected by the pilots for assessment and service delivery. All of the pilots target families, and so, technically, the family is the evaluation’s unit of analysis. That said, for any given data source, there is a primary participant whose experience (and data) will represent the family’s conditions. We refer to that person as the “primary participant.” Exhibit 5 summarizes the sources of data on the families in the study and the primary participant from whom we will collect data.

## Exhibit 5. Data Sources for the Impact Evaluation



### Baseline Survey

The research team is collecting data about primary participants at program entry using a baseline survey. Following eligibility determination, program staff secure applicants' consent to participate in the study and have their data collected. After securing consent, staff administer the baseline survey before random assignment through the Universal Assessment Tool.<sup>9</sup> The baseline survey gathers information on demographic characteristics and personal and family background information for all primary participants. We will use data from the baseline survey to ensure that the characteristics of the experimental groups are similar. We will also use the baseline survey as the main source of the control variables that we will include in regression models to improve the statistical precision of impact estimates. Finally, we will use detailed contact information collected at baseline to help locate primary participants for the follow-up surveys. We will also explore using the baseline data to define subgroups for subgroup analysis.

### Follow-up Surveys

The research team is collecting data through follow-up surveys of primary participants at five pilots: AFIRM, Connecting Forward, Empower UC, Our ChanceTN, and STRONG Families NETN. The follow-up surveys will gather information on outcomes that are not readily available from administrative data sources and will be used to assess the impacts of pilots on these outcomes.

**Short-term surveys.** We designed a 4-month follow-up survey of Connecting Forward primary participants to measure customer satisfaction and a 6-month follow-up survey of AFIRM primary participants to measure parenting and co-parenting knowledge and skills; we began fielding both surveys using text message and email outreach in the fall and winter of 2023.

<sup>9</sup> The Universal Assessment Tool is an electronic system designed by the project's technical assistance provider, Public Consulting Group, to capture participant information.

**Medium-term surveys.** We are developing a 12-month follow-up survey for STRONG Families NETN and an 18-month follow-up survey for Empower UC and Our ChanceTN. These surveys will measure well-being, including financial well-being; financial literacy; social capital; savings behaviors; housing stability; food security; access to child care; access to transportation; and mental health. We have contracted with the Applied Social Research Laboratory at East Tennessee State University to field these surveys beginning in the summer of 2024.

### Administrative Data

The research team will leverage individual-level administrative data from state agencies in Tennessee's *P20 Connect TN* longitudinal data system for all seven pilot evaluations. The *P20 Connect TN* data system connects administrative data from state agencies across sectors and over time, and includes data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, the Tennessee Department of Education, TDHS, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD), the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA). We will use this administrative data to measure pilot outcomes, including SNAP and TANF benefits utilization using data from TDHS; employment, earnings, unemployment insurance benefits utilization, training program enrollment, and training program completion using data from TDLWD; and postsecondary program enrollment and postsecondary credential attainment using data from THEC, TICUA, and NSC.

### MIS Data

The research team will use individual-level MIS data for the evaluations of the Connecting Forward and East Tennessee Collaborative pilots. We will use MIS data from these two pilots to measure proximate outcomes like program retention, goal completion, assessment scores, enrollments in referred services, and time to referrals.

### Cost Data

For the cost analysis, we will collect expenditure data beginning in summer 2024, from pilot invoices<sup>10</sup> and supplementary conversations with program finance and data staff members. Staff surveys may be used to supplement labor resource estimates. We will utilize service delivery data from pilot MIS tools and their quarterly benchmark reports and outcomes data from the impact studies' results (via administrative or survey data), as appropriate.

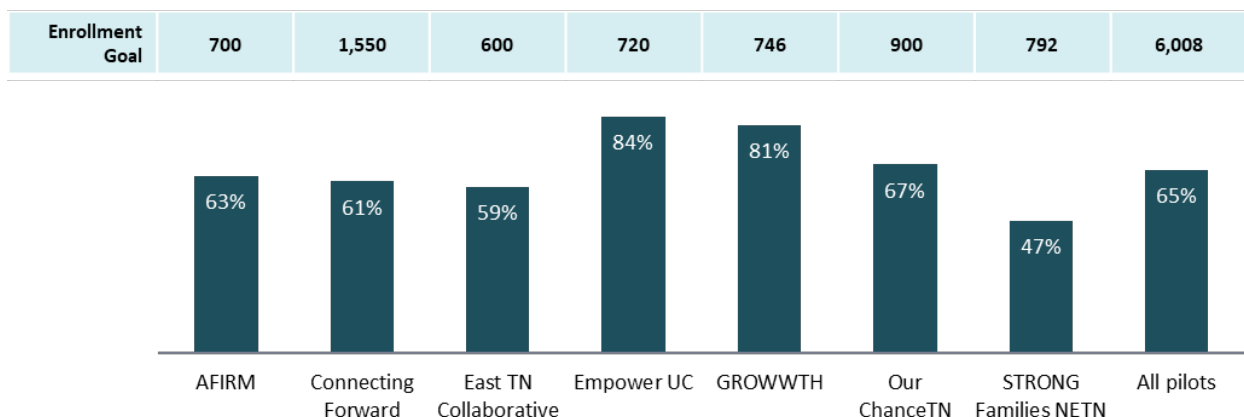
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<sup>10</sup> Pilots follow standardized reimbursement structures. Partner organizations invoice the backbone organization (the primary grant recipient) for services delivered, and the backbone organization invoices the state.

## V. Study Participant Characteristics

As of April 1, 2024, the initiative has enrolled 3,929 families and reached 65 percent of its study enrollment goal. As Exhibit 6 illustrates, enrollment goals and progress towards goals vary across the seven pilots.

**Exhibit 6. Study Enrollment, as of April 1, 2024**



For all enrolled families, the primary participant (i.e., the adult family member who first enrolls in TOPI services) completes a baseline survey at program enrollment. Results from the baseline survey indicate that at the time of program entry, primary participants were, on average, in their mid-30s with two children in their households. Most (83 percent) primary participants were female. More than half (54 percent) of all primary participants identified as Black, and four percent identified as Hispanic. Less than one in five (16 percent) reported being married or living with a partner and nearly three-quarters (74 percent) reported living in a single-parent home.<sup>11</sup> Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) reported living in their own rented or mortgaged residence. Over a tenth (12 percent) reported having a disability.

Over a tenth (14 percent) of primary participants reported having less than a high school diploma or GED, and nearly half (42 percent) reported having only a high school diploma or GED. Half (50 percent) reported being employed at program entry. Among those employed, reported hourly wages averaged a little under \$16.

Most (75 percent) primary participants reported being enrolled in Medicaid at program entry. About a fifth (22 percent) of primary participants reported their health status as fair or poor and another fifth (20 percent) reported serious psychological distress as measured on the Kessler-6 scale.<sup>12</sup> About a quarter (24 percent) reported having been ever incarcerated in the past. Some participants reported housing instability: 15 percent reported being evicted or forced to move by a landlord in the past 12 months. About half of all participants also reported

<sup>11</sup> While 19 percent report living in a two-parent home, three percent report living in a relative caregiver home and four percent report living in an “other” household type.

<sup>12</sup> The Kessler-6 scale is a brief self-report measure consisting of six items and widely accepted as a screening tool used to assess psychological distress.

experiencing financial hardships such as being unable to pay rent in the past 12 months (48 percent) and being unable to pay for food in the past 12 months (45 percent).

The characteristics of primary participants vary across the pilots, as shown in Appendix C. This variation is expected given the variation in location, as well as in who the programs intend to serve, and their program goals and services.

## VI. Conclusion

### Challenges and Limitations

At the time of this report, study enrollment and program implementation is ongoing. Below we note several challenges and limitations from the early implementation period.

***The research team and pilots had a condensed timeline to plan for and launch evaluations and program services, due to statutory deadlines.*** The planning period for the study and pilot program services was short, and study enrollment began at the same time as program enrollment. The timeline led to challenges building buy-in from partners and staff on the evaluation and difficulties hiring and training a full staff before enrollment began.

***The pilots experienced slower than anticipated enrollment at the beginning of the grant period.*** Pilots faced initial challenges in building outreach and recruitment channels and awareness in their communities. In response to the slow ramp-up in enrollment during the initial months, TDHS extended the study timeline by one year to allow more time for sample build-up and follow-up data collection. If pilots are unable to meet their sample goals, we will be less likely to reliably detect program impacts.

***Issues with the rollout of the cross-pilot intake data system delayed early enrollment and caused ongoing challenges with data collection.*** All pilots are required to use a shared data system, the Universal Assessment Tool, for program intake and assessments. The system was custom-developed for the pilot initiative.<sup>13</sup> We coordinated with the developer to integrate study enrollment processes—including study consent, baseline data collection, and random assignment—into the Universal Assessment Tool system. Pilots were expected to begin study enrollment in November 2022 but the launch was pushed back due to delays in system development. The system went live in February 2023 when pilots launched and began to enroll study participants. However, staff experienced significant technical challenges early on and pilots had to invest staff time to navigate these challenges. Although the system launched with baseline data collection and random assignment functionality in February, functionality for non-study purposes including an intake assessment, to identify family needs and support goal setting and care coordination, did not go live until late April 2023. Some pilots intentionally slowed recruitment and outreach efforts until the problems were resolved, which delayed ramp-up. System challenges persisted beyond the initial enrollment period and are ongoing, which has caused some data quality concerns. The impact study relies on the Universal

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<sup>13</sup> The Universal Assessment Tool was developed by Public Consulting Group under a separate TANF Opportunity Act contract.



Assessment Tool for baseline data collection<sup>14</sup>, so we continue to closely monitor data quality and discuss challenges with the developer and the pilots. We will collect information systematically about these challenges in the forthcoming implementation study.

***Delays in service implementation, unused services, and overlapping staff across treatment groups caused service contrast shortcomings in the early implementation period.*** The research team identified several challenges to service contrast, that is, services available to each of the treatment groups were not sufficiently distinct. First, because of the short planning period described above, program services were launched on a rolling basis and thus participants may not have had access to all services early on. In addition, some pilots experienced low take-up of available services. Finally, in some pilots the same staff worked with participants in different treatment groups, which caused service contrast challenges. The research team is working closely with pilots to strengthen service contrast.

***The research team had to decide how to use limited survey resources.*** We initially planned to field a pooled survey across all seven pilots. However, as we learned more about the variation in pilot program services and decided on a distinct evaluation design for each pilot, a pooled survey was no longer feasible. Ultimately, we adjusted the survey data collection plans and prioritized longer-term follow-up surveys for a few select pilots whose outcomes of interest could not be measured through other data sources.

## Next Steps

The State of Tennessee has taken up the challenge of finding new and innovative ways to support families with low incomes. The state's goal is to foster deep community partnerships between public and nonprofit agencies while building a solid evidence base on these novel approaches. In the first year and a half of the study, the research team has set the foundation for a successful evaluation of the TANF Opportunity Act, including a baseline scan to understand the context in which the pilots began implementation; a literature review of measures to capture capacity for self-sufficiency that went beyond traditional measures of income and benefit receipt; and designing and implementing seven distinct experimental research designs. By testing various program models and enhancements, we seek to create a robust learning laboratory that can generate evidence to inform future policy and programmatic decisions. Our multifaceted approach seeks to shape policies and programs in ways that empower families and strengthen communities.

Through the rest of 2024, we will continue to work with the pilots and TDHS to continue enrolling participants in the study. During this time, we will also collect data for the implementation, impact, and cost analyses, along with the data dashboard. A second interim report will be published in 2025, followed by our full impact, implementation, and cost analyses in the final report in late 2026.

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<sup>14</sup> Follow-up data will be collected directly by the study team using survey, administrative, and pilot MIS data sources.

## VII. Works Cited

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## Appendix A: Pilot Profiles

### A Father’s Involvement Really Matters (AFIRM)

Backbone Organization: Families Matter  
City of Memphis and Shelby County, in West TN




#### Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports	Family Supports	Other Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job search assistance, including building direct connections with employers</li> <li>• Job retention support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial training, such as tax preparation, credit report resolutions, and financial education</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$400 (e.g., for a job placement) to \$1,000 (e.g., for completion of parenting workshop)</li> <li>• Supportive service payments (e.g., utility or rental assistance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-week parenting and fatherhood workshop (2-hour sessions, weekly), via The Enhancing Parenting Skills Through Effective Co-Parenting Relationship Skills curriculum</li> <li>• Co-parenting workshops and facilitation of co-parenting agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrals to child support for order modifications and negotiating payment plans</li> <li>• Referrals to legal support services for expungements, driver’s license reinstatement, and traffic tickets</li> </ul>

#### Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Fathers with low income who have a newly established or pending child support case.
<b>Component Tested</b>	Structured parenting curriculum
<b>Data Sources</b>	6-month follow-up survey, administrative data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Mar - 2024 Sep
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	700
<b>RCT Type</b>	Differential
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	Care coordination and structured parenting services
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	Care coordination only

#### Outcomes for Impact Study

 <p><b>Confirmatory</b> Parenting knowledge and skills</p>	 <p><b>Secondary</b> Co-parenting knowledge and skills</p>	 <p><b>Exploratory</b> Training program enrollment, employment, earnings, child support order modifications</p>
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## Connecting Forward

### Family and Children's Services

28 counties in Middle TN, including Nashville and Clarksville Metro Areas

## Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports	Family Supports	Other Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care coordination utilizing a shared data system across partner agencies, to allow care coordinators across service providers to access and add to a single shared case file for each client family, containing client goals, services, and other information</li> <li>• Goal setting and supporting clients to overcome barriers</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Direct provision of training and education</li> <li>• Employment placement supports for internships, apprenticeships, and direct employment</li> <li>• Resources to supplement training, job search, and job-related expenses not covered by other funding sources or benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting supports, via Nurturing Parenting Program, Common Sense Parenting, or Strengthening Families curricula</li> <li>• Health education and family planning resources</li> <li>• Youth mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling for individuals and families, provided by co-located clinical therapist/case managers at Family and Children's Services and partner organizations. When appropriate, staff will use evidence-based interventions such as Attachment, Regulation, and Self-Competency or Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</li> <li>• Housing support</li> </ul>

## Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Families with low incomes, including non-custodial caregivers
<b>Component Tested</b>	Approach to care coordination
<b>Data Sources</b>	4-month follow-up survey, administrative data, MIS data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Mar - 2024 Sep
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	1500
<b>RCT Type</b>	Differential
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	Care coordination with the use of a shared data system
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	Care coordination

## Outcomes for Impact Study



### Confirmatory

Program retention, goal completion, customer satisfaction, time between referral and client contact, enrollment in referred services



### Exploratory

Employment, earnings, utilization of public benefits, education program enrollment, education credential attainment

## East Tennessee Collaborative

United Way of Greater Knoxville

10 counties in East TN, including Knoxville Metro Area




### Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care coordination and coaching via the Economic Mobility Pathways Mobility Mentoring model, focused on five key areas of family stability, well-being, education and training, financial management, and employment and career management</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> <li>• Shared data system across partner agencies to track participant information and make referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job search assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal Action Payments, small payments ranging from \$20-100 for making step jls towards achieving economic self-sufficiency tied to the key focus areas listed above</li> <li>• Supportive service payments made directly to service providers, for costs such as trauma therapy, employment services, or financial literacy classes</li> <li>• Transitional benefits to cover loss of income from a benefit cliff for up to 4 months, paid directly to housing, mental health, child care, or utility providers</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$250 (e.g., for opening a savings account and saving 1 month's expenses) to \$1,000 (e.g., for savings of 3 months' expenses or more)</li> </ul>

### Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Families with low incomes
<b>Component Tested</b>	Milestone payments
<b>Data Sources</b>	Administrative data, MIS data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Feb - 2024 Dec
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	600
<b>RCT Type</b>	Differential
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	Care coordination and milestone payments
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	Care coordination only

### Outcomes for Impact Study

 <p><b>Confirmatory</b> Program retention, Bridge scores</p>	 <p><b>Secondary</b> Employment, earnings, utilization of public benefits, education program enrollment</p>	 <p><b>Exploratory</b> Education credential attainment, financial well-being</p>
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## Empower Upper Cumberland (Empower UC)

Upper Cumberland Human Resources Agency  
14 counties in rural Middle TN

### Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports	Family Supports	Other Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship-based care coordination model, including meetings with Empower Navigators, goal setting, budgeting and financial planning, and career planning</li> <li>Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualized career planning via Prosperity Pathway Plan</li> <li>Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>Job readiness and on-the-job training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to Atlanta Federal Reserve CLIFF planner to plan for transition off public benefits</li> <li>Supportive service payments for costs such as transportation, child care, employment and training-related costs, or emergency needs</li> <li>Connections to additional financial supports from partner charitable foundation</li> <li>Milestone payments, ranging from \$100 (e.g., for obtaining new employment or salary increase for four weeks) to \$600 (e.g., for completion of Circles USA curriculum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4-week parenting training via Ready to Learn curriculum (90-minute weekly sessions, in person)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8-week relational coaching curriculum via Circles USA with continued support for 12-18 months</li> </ul>

### Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Families with low incomes
<b>Component Tested</b>	Overall service package
<b>Data Sources</b>	18-month follow-up survey, administrative data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Jan - 2024 Jun
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	720
<b>RCT Type</b>	Delayed intervention
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	Care coordination and milestone payments
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	Milestone payments only

### Outcomes for Impact Study

 <p><b>Confirmatory</b> Employment, earnings, education program enrollment, training program enrollment,</p>	 <p><b>Secondary</b> Financial well-being, financial literacy, social capital, mental health, utilization of public benefits</p>	 <p><b>Exploratory</b> Savings, education credential attainment, training credential attainment, children's literacy and school achievement</p>
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# Growing Relational and Occupational Wealth in West Tennessee Households (GROWWTH)

University of Memphis

21 counties in West TN, including Memphis Metro Area

## Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports	Other Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case management and care coordination</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career pathway assessment</li> <li>• 3-week job readiness training (approximately 15 hours of learning, offered in-person and virtually)</li> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Funding and support to enroll in short- or long-term training leading to credential</li> <li>• Job search assistance, including building direct connections with employers</li> <li>• 6-week microbusiness development training</li> <li>• 12-week child care training and business support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation assistance</li> <li>• Child care assistance</li> <li>• Milestone payments, ranging from \$150 (e.g., for obtaining new employment or salary increase) to \$800 (e.g., for the successful completion of the third phase of a GROWWTH approved Industry Credential Training Program or Accelerated Training Program)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections to counseling and mental health services from partner</li> </ul>

## Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Families with low incomes
<b>Component Tested</b>	Overall service package
<b>Data Sources</b>	Administrative data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Feb - 2024 Jun
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	700
<b>RCT Type</b>	Delayed intervention
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	Care coordination and milestone payments
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	Milestone payments only

## Outcomes for Impact Study



### Confirmatory

Employment, earnings



### Secondary

Utilization of public benefits, training program enrollment, training credential attainment

## Our ChanceTN

Tennessee Alliance for Economic Mobility, led by the Martha O'Bryan Center  
16 counties in Middle TN, including Nashville and Clarksville Metro Areas




### Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports	Other Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching via the Family-Centered Coaching model</li> <li>• Resource navigation and referrals</li> <li>• Care coordination between coaches, resource navigators, and education/ employment staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized career planning</li> <li>• Support to identify and enroll in training or post-secondary education</li> <li>• Job search assistance, including building direct connections with employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitional benefits to cover loss of income from a benefit cliff, in the form of food assistance and/or direct payments to housing, healthcare, or child care providers</li> <li>• Access to transitional benefit calculator to understand how the benefit cliff affects family</li> <li>• Financial counseling</li> <li>• Flexible client assistance funding to cover supportive service needs such as child care, housing, utilities, or needs related to education and employment (\$1000 per participant)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social capital events to build social networks among participants</li> </ul>

### Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Families with low incomes, including non-custodial caregivers
<b>Component Tested</b>	Coaching intensity; transitional benefits
<b>Data Sources</b>	18-month follow-up survey, administrative data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Jan - 2024 Jun
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	730
<b>RCT Type</b>	Differential
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	High intensity coaching; transitional benefits
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	Low intensity coaching; no transitional benefits

### Outcomes for Impact Study

 <p><b>Confirmatory</b> Employment, earnings, financial well-being</p>	 <p><b>Secondary</b> SNAP utilization, housing subsidies utilization, Medicaid utilization, housing stability, food security, access to child care</p>	 <p><b>Exploratory</b> Education program enrollment, education credential attainment, social capital, access to transportation</p>
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## STRONG Families Northeast Tennessee (NETN)

First Tennessee Development District Foundation  
10 mostly rural counties in Northeast TN




### Primary Services

Care Coordination & Coaching	Employment Supports	Financial Supports	Family Supports	Other Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaching from Family Partners (staff with lived experience with poverty and/or previous experience working with individuals with low incomes), including goal setting, planning, and motivational interviewing</li> <li>Resource navigation and referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individualized career assessment and planning</li> <li>Support to identify and enroll in training, high school equivalency, or post-secondary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support service payments for short-term needs and recurring expenses needed for employment or training</li> <li>Milestone payments, ranging from \$50 (e.g., for completing scholarship and financial aid applications) to \$2,000 (e.g., for maintaining full-time employment for 9 months)</li> <li>Financial counseling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parenting education classes via Nurturing Parenting curriculum (offered weekly, in-person or virtual, in one-on-one or group sessions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family power building and social capital building</li> <li>Mental and behavioral health counseling</li> <li>Addiction treatment and recovery services</li> </ul>

### Evaluation Design

<b>Study Population</b>	Families with low incomes
<b>Component Tested</b>	Overall service package
<b>Data Sources</b>	12-month follow-up survey, administrative data
<b>Study Enrollment Period</b>	2023 Jun - 2024 Dec
<b>Study Enrollment Goal</b>	792
<b>RCT Type</b>	Delayed intervention
<b>Pilot services provided to treatment group</b>	Care coordination
<b>Pilot services provided to comparison group</b>	None

### Outcomes for Impact Study

 <p><b>Confirmatory</b> Employment, earnings, financial well-being</p>	 <p><b>Secondary</b> Financial literacy, mental health, training program enrollment</p>	 <p><b>Exploratory</b> Utilization of public benefits, social capital, savings behaviors</p>
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## Appendix B: Outcomes Across Pilots

Exhibit 7 summarizes outcomes across pilots. Common outcomes that will be measured across all pilots including labor market outcomes such as employment and earnings; skills acquisition outcomes including enrollment in training, enrollment in an education program, receipt of a training credential and receipt of an educational credential; and public assistance utilization such as the utilization of SNAP, utilization of TANF, utilization of housing subsidies, and utilization of Medicaid. For the three pilots where we plan to use a longer-term follow-up survey (Strong Families NETN, Our ChanceTN, and Empower UC), we will also examine well-being, including financial well-being, financial literacy, social capital, food security, housing stability, and mental health.

**Exhibit 7. Outcomes by Pilot**

Domain	Outcome	Data Source	AFIRM	Connecting Forward	STRONG Families NETN	Our ChanceTN	East TN Collaborative	GROWWTH	Empower UC	Survey measure
Labor market	Employed	Admin data	E	E	C	C	S	C	C	
	Earnings	Admin data	E	E	C	C	S	C	C	
Skill acquisition	Enrolled in education	Admin data		E		E	S		C	
	Earned an educational credential	Admin data		E		E	E		E	
	Enrolled in training	Survey	E		S			S	C	
	Earned a training credential	Survey						S <sup>15</sup>	E	
	Children's literacy & school achievement	Survey							E	National Survey of Children's Health

<sup>15</sup> Measured through administrative data because we are not conducting a follow-up survey for GROWWTH.

Domain	Outcome	Data Source	AFIRM	Connecting Forward	STRONG Families NETN	Our ChanceTN	East TN Collaborative	GROWWTH	Empower UC	Survey measure
Public Assistance	Utilization of public benefits	Admin data		E	E		S	S	S	
	Utilization of SNAP benefits	Admin data				S				
	Utilization of housing subsidies	Survey				S				
	Utilization of Medicaid	Admin data				S				
Well-being	Financial well-being	Survey			C	C			S	CFPB Financial Well-Being Scale
	Financial literacy	Survey			S				S	CFPB Financial Skills scale
	Social capital	Survey			E	E			S	Social Provisions Scale
	Savings	Survey			E				E	Federal Reserve Board SHED
	Housing stability	Survey				S				HUD American Housing Survey
	Food security	Survey				S				USDA Food Security Survey Module
	Access to childcare	Survey				S				
	Access to transportation	Survey				E				Measures recommended by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center.
Mental health	Survey			S				S	Kessler-6 scale	

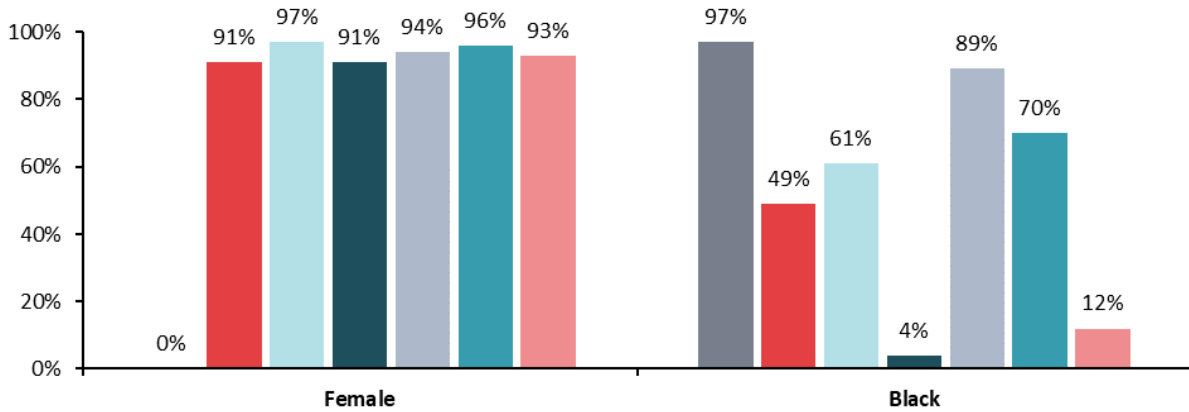
Domain	Outcome	Data Source	AFIRM	Connecting Forward	STRONG Families NETN	Our ChanceTN	East TN Collaborative	GROWWTH	Empower UC	Survey measure
Goal progression	Goal completion	MIS		C						
	Bridge scores	MIS					C			Bridge to Self-Sufficiency
Parenting	Parenting knowledge and skills	Survey	C							NPCL assessment, FRPN Father Engagement Scale
	Co-parenting knowledge and skills	Survey	S							FRPN Coparenting Relationship Scale
	Modification of child support orders	Admin data	E							
Retention	Program retention	MIS		C			C			
Satisfaction	Customer satisfaction	Survey		C						Qualtrics
Coordination	Time between referral and client contact	MIS		C						
	Enrollment in referred services	MIS		C						

Note: C = confirmatory, S= secondary, E= exploratory

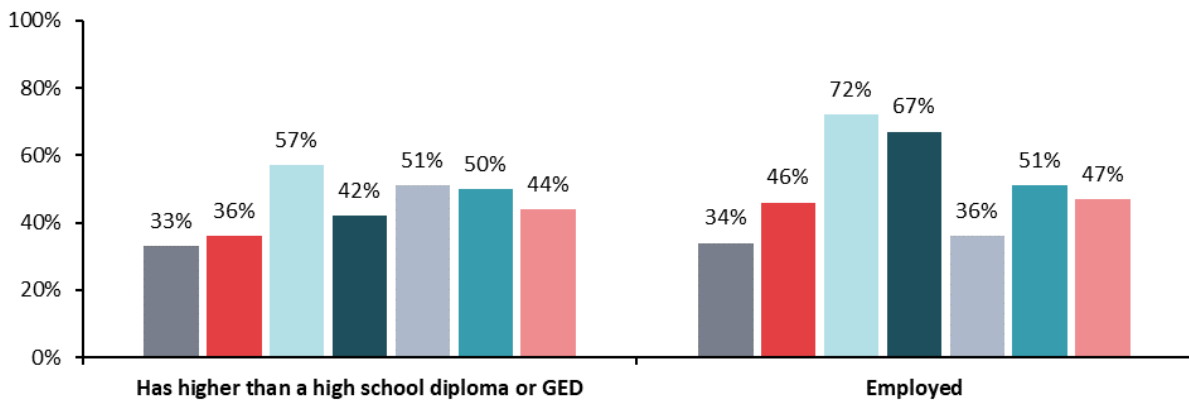
## Appendix C: Variation in Study Participant Characteristics Across Pilots

The charts below describe key study participant characteristics for each pilot.

### Demographics



### Education and Employment



### Basic Needs

