

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH DESIGN BRIEF

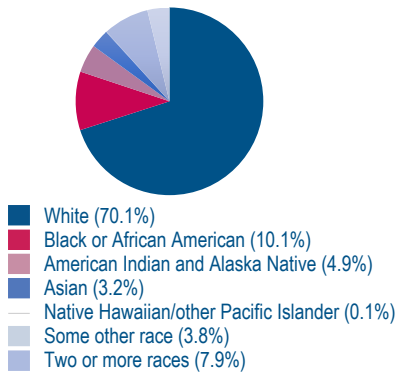
Community Action Project of Tulsa County, Inc.

ABOUT THE AGENCY

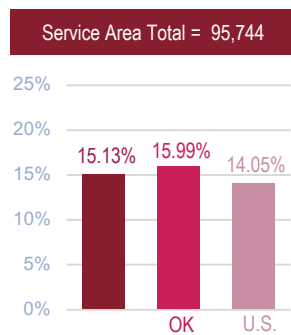
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|--------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| MISSION | To help young children in lower-income families grow up and achieve economic success. | SERVICE AREA | Tulsa County, an urban county of 570 square miles and a population of over 650,000 |
| VISION | All children served by CAP Tulsa reach their full developmental potential by the end of third grade. | ANNUAL BUDGET | \$58 million |
| AGENCY TYPE | Non-profit | STAFF | 600 |
| CLIENTS SERVED ANNUALLY | 1,900 young children and their families (max capacity at one time) | PROGRAMS | Head Start Early Head Start Child Care Partner Training and Technical Assistance Parents as Teachers Parenting Skills Classes English as a Second Language CareerAdvance Emergency Assistance |

AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

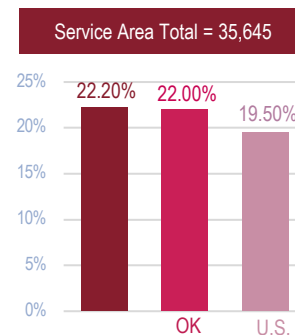
DISTRIBUTION OF RACE



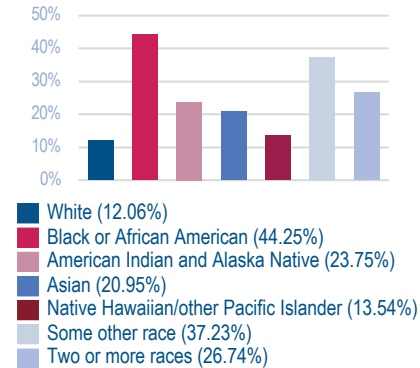
PEOPLE LIVING BELOW 100% FPL



ALL CHILDREN IN POVERTY (Ages 0-17)



CHILDREN IN POVERTY BY RACE (Ages 0-17)



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-18

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH PROGRAM PROFILE

THEORY OF CHANGE

Combine high-quality early education for young children with supports that promote nurturing parenting and family financial stability to ensure that children reach their full developmental potential by the end of third grade.

TARGET POPULATION

1,900 children under age five from families earning \leq 185% of the federal poverty guideline. Targeted families are those with a parent working or in school who will also participate in a family advancement program while their child receives early learning and care services.

KEY COMPONENTS

Parents

- Job training in healthcare career pathways providing stackable credentials
- English as a Second Language instruction contextualized to the needs of parents with young children
- Family Support Specialists to assess needs, make community referrals, and provide case management as needed
- Parenting skills courses to help parents promote their children's healthy development

Children

- High-quality early learning and care services designed to promote children's social-emotional, language, cognitive, and motor skills development
- Screenings and referrals to identify and support children's special health care needs

Families

- Home visits by trained educators to work on family well-being and child development
- Behavioral health support staff to address families' mental health needs
- Financial assistance to address material hardship

CAP TULSA'S INNOVATION STORY

CAP Tulsa has fully committed to a whole family approach centered exclusively around children under age five. All our programs are designed for the families of children enrolled in the agency's Early Childhood Program (i.e., Head Start, Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers, and state-funded child care).



SUCCESSES

- The CareerAdvance program was highlighted in 2018 by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities as a promising, evidence-based approach to expanding opportunity for parents with young children. Participants were far more likely to attain a career certificate and become employed in the sector for which they had trained, and exhibited higher levels of self-efficacy, optimism, and psychological well-being.
- Researchers at Northwestern (et al.) also reported in 2018 that CareerAdvance participation was not only associated with significant reductions in children’s chronic absenteeism from Head Start but also particularly effective for families with the highest risks/lowest income.
- Promising initial evidence from an ongoing study indicates that parent participants in CAP Tulsa’s English as a Second Language program exhibit higher levels of class attendance, course completion, and advancement than national averages.

Elizabeth, mother of four, moved to Tulsa after leaving an abusive relationship. She struggled to find employment that would provide for her family and work with her children’s school schedule. Through CAP Tulsa, where she had enrolled her youngest in Head Start, she began to earn her medical assistant certification. After graduation she was hired immediately at the clinic where she completed her clinicals. Now Elizabeth is confident and able to support her family.

“CAP Tulsa’s program really felt like a family. The people there were genuine and cared not only about my son’s success, but my own. I never knew that kind of support existed.”



CHALLENGES

- Recruiting parents seeking only child care to also participate in additional program opportunities for adults and entire families
- Phasing out legacy programs that, while important, do not complement a whole family approach (WFA)—and managing relationships with funders of those programs
- Getting community partners to adjust their services to better align with a WFA, like providing more parent-friendly schedules and accommodating child care
- Forging internal staff buy-in and alignment; for example, asking teachers to re-envision their interactions with parents to better promote a WFA, or staff to accommodate the entire family unit

CAP Tulsa’s Building Block Focus:

ENGAGING FAMILY VOICES



During this organizational evolution, human-centered design increasingly became a primary way of learning from the families being served. We sought to understand why we are better at working with some populations than others, and how we can improve performance across a range of family types.

We continue to try to learn, along with families, which interventions are worthwhile—for whom and at what cost—to remove barriers, and to support each child and family’s journey toward success.

WISDOM

- Play to the strengths of your community partners; determine where your expertise diminishes and your partners excel—and build programs accordingly. Avoid the temptation to try to do it all by yourself.
- Human-centered design (i.e., input from parents) is as critical a piece of program development and refinement as the academic evidence base.
- Working with external researchers to build and measure programs can be challenging, but the independent perspective, expertise, and validation they provide can bolster the legitimacy necessary to sustain and advance emerging whole family approaches.
- The more robust a new service offering becomes, the harder it will be to sustain and scale up once proven to work. Experiment with all sorts of service components but be as attentive to what can be removed without significant loss as to what can be added.

TIMELINE

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <i>Received federal grants to focus on job training for parents of young children</i> | <i>Dissolution/transfer of legacy programs that did not support a WFA</i> | <i>Repositioned financial services department to focus on families with young children</i> | <i>Issued 10-year strategic framework embracing a WFA theory of change</i> | <i>Multiple independent researchers validate promising results of CAP Tulsa’s WFA</i> |
| 2010 | 2012–14 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 |

CONTACT INFORMATION



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