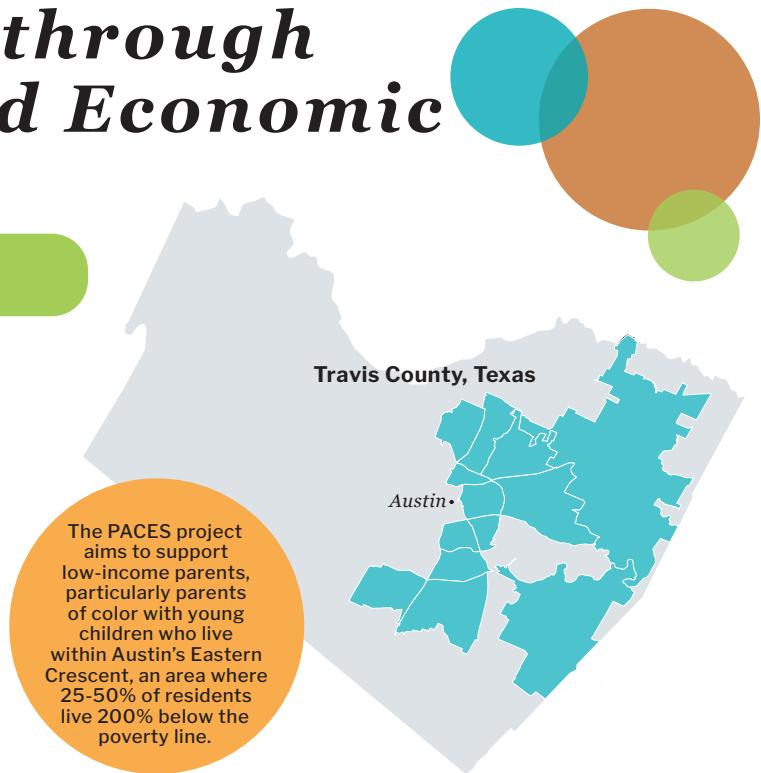


# ***Preventing ACES through Collaboration and Economic Supports***

## **THE PACES PROJECT**

Poverty and economic hardship can compound stressors that put children at risk of experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which can have long-term implications for their health and wellbeing. Federal tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) provide additional income that improves household financial security and may prevent or mitigate the impact of ACEs.

Foundation Communities created the **Preventing ACES Through Collaboration and Economic Supports (PACES) project** to increase the receipt of the EITC and CTC among families in Austin's Eastern Crescent by providing free tax preparation services to families and providing trainings to local staff who work directly with families. Trainings focused on sharing information about tax credits, the role they play in mitigating ACES, and how to support families in accessing free tax preparation services.



**In 2021-2022 the ACES and Mitigating Factors Training was provided to:**



**290**

frontline staff



**34**

organizations

## **EVALUATION OF THE PACES PROJECT**

Foundation Communities contracted with the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing (TXICFW) at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at UT Austin to conduct the Year 2 Evaluation of the PACES project.

### **Year 2 Evaluation Activities and Data Sources:**

Sent Year 2 Family survey to **624** families in sample,

Sent follow up survey to **126** staff,

→ **339** family surveys were completed (54%).

→ **54** staff completed pre & post surveys (43%).

Interviewed **10** staff who attended training.

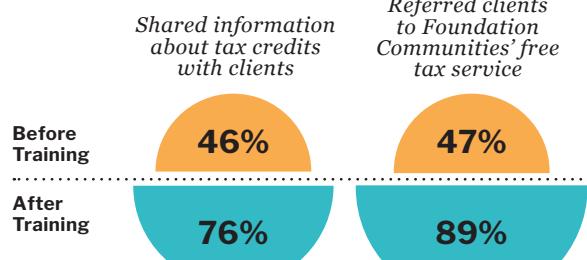


# Key Findings from the Evaluation

## TRAINING INCREASES INFORMATION SHARING

After the training, staff were more likely to share information about tax credits and refer families to Foundation Communities' free tax service and maintained a high level of understanding about the relationship between taxes and ACEs but were less clear on what makes family eligible for tax credits.

### From the Staff Pre & Post Surveys:



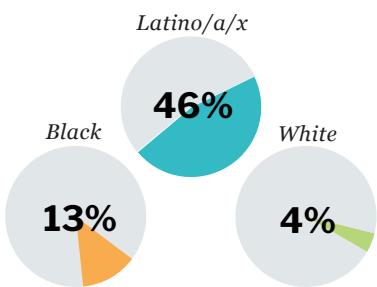
'Well, I have actually done a couple of these ACEs trainings before, but this one was specific to that earned income tax credit... I know that the tax laws are constantly changing, so I just figured it would be good for me to kind of be well versed in that area.'

—Staff Survey Respondent

## RACE/ETHNICITY DIFFERENCES IN FILING & CLAIMS

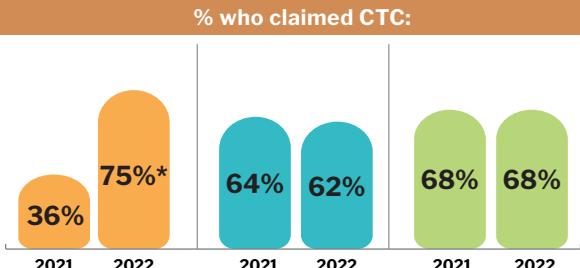
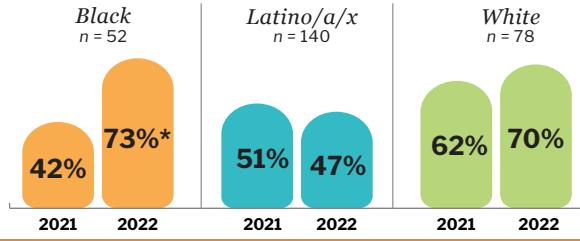
The Year 2 Family Survey found differences in how respondents filed their taxes. Latino/a/x respondents were most likely to use a paid professional.

### % of each ethnicity that used a paid professional to file:



Outreach to black families appeared to be successful. The percentage of Black respondents who claimed the EITC and CTC significantly increased in Year 2. The percentage of Latinx families who claimed the EITC stayed the same, with less than 50% of Latinx families claiming the EITC in Year 2.

### % who claimed EITC:



\*Significantly increased from year 1 to year 2

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1** Continue to offer PACES Training to staff at local organizations in order to improve uptake of both free tax-filing services and the claiming of federal tax credits.

**2** Provide follow-up materials or additional trainings to help staff better understand tax eligibility services and boost their confidence discussing these opportunities.

**3** Bolster outreach to Latino/a/x families to increase their use of free tax preparation services and improve staff training to better support families.

 The University of Texas at Austin  
Texas Institute for  
Child & Family Wellbeing  
Steve Hicks School of Social Work



View full report here:  
[bit.ly/PACES23](https://bit.ly/PACES23)



PREVENTING ACES THROUGH COLLABORATION AND ECONOMIC SUPPORTS (PACES): YEAR 2 EVALUATION REPORT