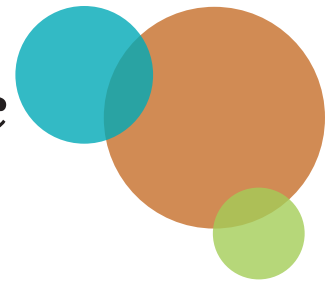


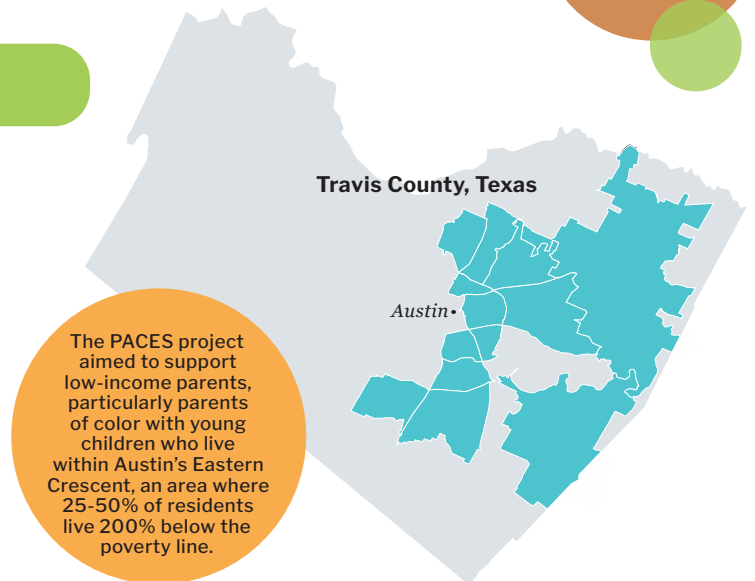
Preventing ACEs through Collaboration and Economic Supports



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 2022–2023 the ACEs and Mitigating Factors Training was provided to:



68

frontline staff

at



14

organizations

EVALUATION OF THE PACES PROJECT

Foundation Communities contracted with the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at UT Austin to evaluate the PACES project, which completed its third and final year in 2023.

Year 3 Evaluation Activities and Data Sources:

Sent Year 3 family survey to **569** families in sample

294 family surveys were completed (52%).

12 family interviews conducted.

ACEs and Mitigating Factors pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys

39 staff completed all three surveys (57%).

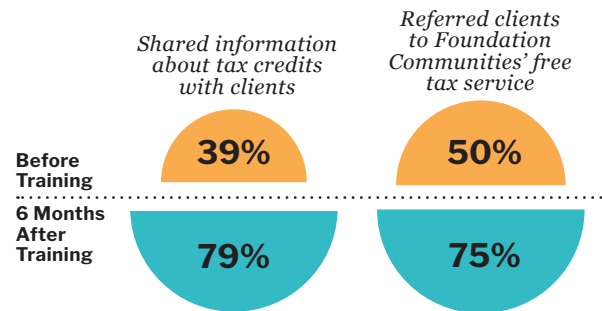


Key Findings from the Evaluation

TRAINING INCREASES KNOWLEDGE & INFORMATION SHARING

Six months after the training, staff were more likely to share information about tax credits and refer families to Foundation Communities' free tax prep services. Their understanding about the relationship between taxes and ACEs and how to promote protective factors increased.

From the Staff Pre & Six-Month Follow-up Surveys:



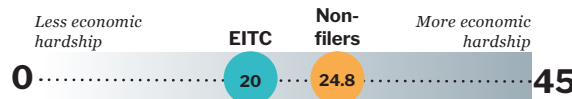
"I am aware, but will be MORE aware of how ACEs are affecting our client's abilities, strengths, AND weaknesses and health problems...I will try to do what I can to refer families to the appropriate resources to prevent ACEs, and educate families about ACEs."

-Staff Survey Respondent

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS

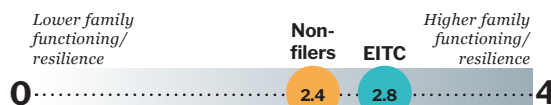
Participants claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) reported lower levels of hardship and higher levels of family functioning and support than non-filers.

Average Economic Hardship Scores:



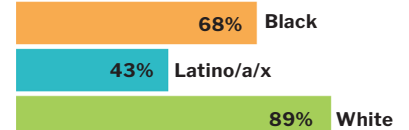
Survey participants identifying as white were more likely to claim federal tax credits than those identifying as Black or Latinx.

Average Family Functioning/Resilience Scores:



% of each ethnicity claiming federal tax credits:

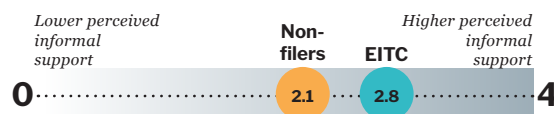
Claimed EITC



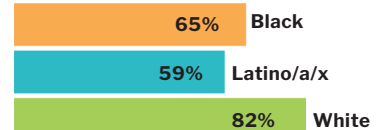
"For Christmas, we were able to buy presents for the children. [...] We could buy things for the children that the children needed. That credit helped us a lot in that way."

-Interviewee

Average Social Emotional Support Scores:



Claimed CTC



Caution should be taken when interpreting these findings, as they only provide information about whether differences exist, not why they exist.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Implement alternative outreach strategies for families to increase the use of free tax preparation services, including advertising in other low-income apartments, grocery stores, schools, and churches.
- 2 Expand outreach strategies and trainings to staff at organizations where families are more involved; align this outreach with location of tax centers to ensure staff reach clients most likely to utilize these services.
- 3 Provide timely recruitment materials for staff to reach clients, including information to share with families about tax filing, federal tax credit eligibility, and Foundation Communities' free tax preparation services.

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



View full report here: [BIT.LY/PACESY3](https://bit.ly/pacesy3)

