



book harvest

EXPANDING HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR DURHAM'S CHILDREN:

REPORT ON AN EXPLORATORY CONVERSATION ABOUT CHILDREN'S SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Durham, North Carolina

June 2023

This report was written by consultant Leila Fiester and summarizes themes, observations, and recommendations from the general discussion about CSAs, which took place on April 26 and 27, 2023 in Durham, North Carolina. The exploratory conversation was convened by Book Harvest.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children's savings accounts (CSAs) have emerged as a tool for advancing economic and racial equity. Research finds that having a savings account from an early age improves a child's educational outcomes and social-emotional development and makes the person more likely to attend and graduate from college, which helps to put low-wealth individuals and families on a path to economic security. Prompted by this trend, in April 2023 Book Harvest convened 30 local stakeholders to explore this question: "**Is now the time to expand availability of CSAs to children and families in Durham, and possibly beyond?**"

The day-long discussion, preceded by dinner the night before, involved parents, directors and staff of family-facing programs, leaders of nonprofit and academic institutions and organizations, representatives of government agencies and systems, elected officials, public and private funders, and members of community coalitions and networks. It was co-facilitated by Book Harvest staff and CSA participants, and informed by pre-meeting interviews. After an introduction to the concept of CSAs, participants considered what is happening with CSAs nationally, in North Carolina, and in Durham. They considered the desirability and feasibility of developing a strategy to offer CSAs to more children and families across Durham, including what it would take and who might be involved. They brainstormed about opportunities and challenges, and they talked about what, if anything, should happen next.

Two themes emerged:

- **CSAs are a means to an end, not the end itself.** The purpose of having a CSA should be not just to help a child save for college but to create a pathway or launchpad to equitable opportunities for young people and their families to achieve financial stability and success, address the systemic racism that keeps many people of color in poverty, and help low-wealth families build assets as a step toward building generational wealth.
- **To maximize impact and efficiency, CSAs should be integrated with other tools and programs for getting low-wealth children and families on the path to economic security and success.** In combination, these efforts are more likely to dismantle the root causes of income inequality and poverty and respond to their effects; leverage systems and policies to create more economic mobility for low-wealth families and change systems and policies to eliminate structural racism and promote equity; and increase the scale and sustainability of savings programs and of the important wraparound resources and supports needed to meet families' immediate needs.

Although the group as a whole did not commit to launching a CSA expansion campaign, many people were interested in a more coordinated, integrated, and aligned approach to ending poverty and producing equitable outcomes for all children and families in Durham—or at least in continuing conversations to learn more about what that might look like. Meanwhile, they offered these opinions about using CSAs as an anti-poverty, pro-equity tool:

1. It is time to create an ecosystem in Durham in which all children and families flourish, both through systemic changes and by connecting low-wealth families with tools for economic mobility such as CSAs.
2. A large-scale CSA program should build families' long-term financial stability while also meeting their immediate economic needs.
3. Any planning effort must incorporate the input and opinions of low-wealth families whose children will be eligible for the accounts.
4. An expanded CSA effort should increase the funding and opportunities available to family-facing organizations in low-wealth communities.
5. An expanded CSA program would have to overcome distrust among eligible families.

THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

This report by consultant Leila Fiester summarizes themes, observations, and recommendations from the general discussion about CSAs, plus feedback on the idea of expanding CSAs' availability in Durham. Appendices include lists of meeting participants, interviewees, participants' suggestions for who else should be involved, and opportunities for momentum around CSAs in Durham.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Consultant Carl Rist provided context for the discussion by sharing research findings that show having a savings account from an early age improves a child's [educational outcomes and social-emotional development](#) and leads to [positive parent-child interactions and practices](#). Children with savings earmarked for college report higher expectations for college and [identify as college bound](#). A child with school savings is [three times](#) more likely to enroll in college and more than [twice as likely](#) to graduate, compared with a child who has no savings. Although CSAs have only been around about 20 years, and therefore long-term data on how they affect lifetime earnings, asset accumulation, and wealth are not yet available, these early findings strongly suggest that CSAs help to put low-wealth individuals and families on a path to economic security.

Driven by findings like these, CSA programs are spreading across the United States. There are now [128 active CSA programs](#) in at least [38 states and the District of Columbia](#), reaching more than [4.9 million](#) children and youth by the end of 2022, including more than [3.6 million children](#) from low- to moderate-wealth families—a [300 percent](#) jump in participants over the previous year. Several CSA programs have existed in Durham during the past decade, including [Saving for the Future Program; Durham Kids Save](#); a youth savings account for [Student U](#) participants; [StepUp Kidz](#); and, most recently, [Book Babies Bright Futures](#), which launched in October 2021. Proposed state legislation would create additional programs, including the Higher Ed Savings Grant Pilot Program (House Bill 217), sponsored by Representatives James Roberson, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, and David Willis, which would provide a savings account with \$100 for every baby born between July 2022 and June 2023 in five North Carolina counties; and the Baby Bond Trust Fund (Senate Bill 674), sponsored by Senators Natalie Murdock and DeAndrea Salvador, which would establish an account with \$2,000 for each baby born in the state after January 2024. These findings and developments indicate that CSAs have become a mainstream strategy rather than a radical idea.

A major rationale for offering CSA programs is that wealth is distributed unequally in the United States along racial lines: The median white U.S. household has [10 times](#) as much wealth as the median Black household and [eight times](#) as much wealth as the median Hispanic household. This racial/wealth imbalance both reflects and reinforces similar disparities in education and other opportunities. Providing low-wealth families with the financial tools and knowledge needed to build wealth and achieve financial security often is a strategy for addressing the inequities related to race as well as those based on income. Other [long-term goals](#) of CSA programs include increasing the number of young people who complete college or career training and improving child development and/or health outcomes.

Durham parents whose children have CSAs see them as a very positive opportunity. Based on responses to a survey and interviews conducted in March-April 2023, most parents (76%) who enrolled a child in Book Harvest's Bright Futures CSA program did so to save for their children's future, according to Taquoia Street, a member of Book Harvest Durham's Leadership Council and Book Babies alumna parent. One

described it as “a tiny seed in the ground”; a second said, “It means one more step towards [my son’s] future, to think about his education.” Another motivation is the opportunity for the parent and child to learn strategies for growing a small amount of money into a larger asset.

Surveyed parents who did not enroll typically cited difficulty with the enrollment process and/or competing demands on their time, attention, and financial resources. “It’s very hard to focus on your future when you’re focused on survival,” one said.

KEY THEMES OF THE DISCUSSION

Participants’ thoughts about whether CSAs should be expanded in Durham were grounded in the following beliefs about the larger purpose and value of CSAs, which emerged during the group discussion.

1. CSAs are a means to an end, not the end itself.

The purpose of having a CSA is not just to help a child save for college; it is to create a pathway or launchpad to equitable opportunities for young people and their families to achieve financial stability and success. This broad view of CSAs’ purpose positions the accounts as a way to achieve several interrelated goals:

- **Create a community-wide culture of expectations and supports for postsecondary achievement** – not just among CSA account holders but within the systems that touch them. Knowing that every child has a CSA could put positive pressure on public systems, especially those for education and health, to better prepare students to successfully negotiate postsecondary opportunities such as studying and training for a career, launching a business, buying a home, and starting a family. “When [systems] know kids have a future, they look at them differently. We have to get everybody to that point,” a higher education expert said.
- **Address the systemic racism that keeps many people of color in poverty.** Most people who are struggling with poverty are not poor because of their own choices but because of long-standing racism enshrined in public policies, institutional practices, and political decisions (such as the decision to place Highway 147 through Black neighborhoods of Durham in the 1960s). The role of racism in perpetuating poverty is significant; as one participant noted, it contributes to the fact that Black college graduates have a [lower rate of home ownership](#) than white high school dropouts. (The [average household income](#) of a Black college graduate is more than that of a white household without a high school diploma, but less than that of white college graduates.) CSAs that are intentionally designed to level the playing field and redress the damage caused by

DIVERGENT PERSPECTIVES ON “WEALTH”

The discussion about CSAs as a tool for building assets and wealth sparked debate about the differences between money, income, assets, and wealth.

Some participants resisted using the word “wealth,” saying that it feels unattainable to many people and merely underscores the difference between those who have money they can leverage and those who are struggling each day to survive.

Others welcomed conversations about wealth as a way to begin talking about the wealth accumulation systems that wealthy people use and non-wealthy people should know about.

“I agree that ‘wealth’ is an uncomfortable term but we can’t run away from it,” a financial expert said. “It isn’t just about savings. It’s about government policies and tax incentives for investing in the stock market and owning homes made it possible for white families to build wealth and blocked Black families from doing so.”

In the end, a community program director urged colleagues not to fixate on terminology: “It’s about what we’re trying to get out of it at the end: investing in children’s futures.”

structural racism acknowledge this problem, and policy changes that make such CSAs widely available are a step toward dismantling systemic racism.

- **Get low-wealth families into the financial mainstream**, so they are not as vulnerable to predatory practices and have a chance to learn how different financial products and institutions can help them move from daily survival to savings, and from savings to wealth accumulation.
- **Help low-wealth families build assets as a step toward building generational wealth.** Although a savings account may not produce vast wealth on its own, CSAs represent a start toward building financial assets such as home ownership, business assets, and investments as well as cash.

2. To maximize impact and efficiency, CSAs should be integrated with other tools and programs for getting low-wealth children and families on the path to economic security and success.

CSAs are just one of several key ingredients that contribute to economic stability and success. The list also includes other forms of saving for college or career savings, such as 529 plans and baby bonds; emergency savings; knowledge about managing personal finances; sufficient income (e.g., via livable wages, universal basic income, public assistance); safe, affordable housing and food; employment; child care and early development; education; and health care.

Discussion participants emphasized that CSAs should be offered in combination with these other key ingredients, not in isolation, in order to accomplish multi-pronged priorities:

- Dismantle the root causes of income inequality and poverty *and* respond to their effects;
- Leverage systems and policies to create more economic mobility for low-wealth families *and* change systems and policies to eliminate structural racism and promote equity;
- Strengthen connections and understanding between people who lack money and those who have it—i.e., “to move white privilege and money to where it can do the most good”;
- Increase access to financial resources *and* knowledge about how to manage and grow them; and
- Increase the scale and sustainability of CSA programs *and* the scale and sustainability of the wraparound resources and supports that are important for meeting families’ immediate needs.

Each of these priorities requires a both/and approach, not either/or—something that is easy to prescribe, but much harder to implement. The best way to meet this “both/and” requirement, stakeholders agreed, would be to integrate a CSA program with other programs and services operating across Durham so that, collectively, they provide wraparound support and opportunities, rather than creating a parallel but disconnected strategy. “Any single program is just chipping away at an iceberg,” a funder observed.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Meeting participants shared a concern and sense of urgency about the need to address poverty in Durham. While most consider CSAs to be part of such a strategy, not everyone was ready to name a Durham-wide CSA campaign as their top priority. Therefore, they offered the following advice about expanding availability without committing to acting on it collectively.

1. It is time to create an ecosystem in Durham in which all children and families flourish, both through systemic changes and by connecting low-wealth families with tools for economic mobility such as CSAs.

Stakeholders seem eager to take up the challenge of family poverty in Durham in a more concerted way—as one person asked, “If not now, when? If not us, who?”—but are not clear about whether or how to do it as a more coordinated or aligned set of actors. Participants did agree that various organizations, programs, coalitions, and networks in Durham are already working to disrupt poverty, but they take different approaches, involve different sectors and constituencies, and not all of them are well-connected to each other or to the numerous other family-facing organizations in Durham that should be involved. A more interconnected effort would help to spread the message beyond community settings, mobilize a larger response, and potentially have greater impact.

2. A large-scale CSA program should build families’ long-term financial stability while also meeting their immediate economic needs.

Long-term education and asset-building strategies, such as CSAs, and short-term remedies, such as support for families’ immediate income, food, housing, and health needs, are both necessary to interrupt the cycle of generational poverty. It is essential to make sure these two types of support work together rather than diverting funding from each other—especially as the influx of technology firms into Durham increases pressure on affordable housing and other community infrastructure for residents with the greatest needs. As the leader of a nonprofit organization noted, “For people on the lower end of wealth, putting money into CSAs is a sacrifice, because it takes away money they need right now. So, what are we putting into the balance to offset that sacrifice?”

A CSA program designed to meet both long-term and short-term needs also should:

- Apply an equity lens to all aspects of program design and operations;
- Pair savings accounts with cash supports to families, such as universal basic income;
- Create opportunities for entire families, not just children (e.g., checking accounts for parents, direct deposit of wages, access to non-predatory loans, financial education);

FINANCIAL EDUCATION: YES OR NO?

“Financial education” encompasses information and guidance on how to budget for everyday expenses and emergencies, create savings and assets, manage credit, and make and grow investments. Opinions diverge on whether financial education should be part of a CSA program and, if it is included, whether it should be mandatory or optional.

One point of view expressed during the meeting is that financial literacy is pushed on low-wealth individuals as a way to do a better job of managing their money, when quite likely they are already budgeting very carefully and creatively just to get by. “If someone is going to manage money, what they really need is money—and if they don’t have it, the money spent on financial literacy training would be better used for short-term needs,” a program director said.

Another perspective is that families with CSAs need financial education so that parents learn how they and their child can grow the account. “It’s about knowing what to do and how to do it so our kids don’t get farther behind,” said a proponent of this view. “It’s all about learning and acting on what you learn.”

A third perspective is that all families, rich or poor, need financial education. “I make a semi-decent salary, but I could still benefit from financial literacy,” said the director of a community initiative. “I would argue you need financial literacy classes for people whatever they earn. We need financial literacy for the community.”

In interviews, all stakeholders agreed that if financial education is offered it should be delivered by people who share the participants’ lived experience, and it should be provided in culturally affirming ways so that it bridges, rather than widens, cultural divisions around wealth and wealth building.

- Focus on saving for a variety of purposes (e.g., business startup, career training, home purchase), not just college tuition;
- Connect with families through major community anchors that have a well-established infrastructure and touch many families;
- Partner with financial institutions that value the role CSAs play in building wealth and ushering new families into the financial mainstream, not just making a profit, and will invest the funds they hold for families in ways that benefit local communities; and
- Track data on family circumstances, geographic mobility, and educational and economic outcomes, including by race. However, this must be done in ways that protect confidentiality and do not allow predictive analytics to reinforce biases and inequality.

Opinions varied on whether an expanded CSA program should target a universal or specific population and whether it should be offered at the state, county, city, or school level. Most participants agreed that savings accounts should be provided as early in a child's life as possible so that families begin thinking about future opportunities early, but should also allow older children to join at any age.

3. Any planning effort must incorporate the input and opinions of low-wealth families whose children will be eligible for the accounts.

Parent input and leadership are essential to ensure that families' actual experiences and conditions inform the CSA program's design and implementation. As meeting participants discussed CSA programs' scale and sustainability, for instance, a nonprofit director observed that stakeholders who are economically and racially privileged tend to focus on data and policy, making the question of scale sound like something that can be solved simply by getting the right components in place—whereas for people living in poverty, figuring out how to enroll in and sustain a CSA is anything but simple:

We can bring fabulous programs to people, but the truth is that with day-to-day stresses, finding time to do what you need to do is hard. It is such a difficult and vulnerable space for people. That's why, when we go into communities with things like CSAs, it's such a divisive thing. Even though [the investment] is absolutely needed, there are bridges to build.

4. An expanded CSA effort should increase the funding and opportunities available to family-facing organizations in low-wealth communities.

Implementing an expanded CSA program would require assistance from community-based nonprofit organizations, especially those led by and serving people of color, which often have deep and trusting relationships with eligible families. These organizations tend to be under-funded in comparison to nonprofits that serve more affluent and/or white populations. A broader CSA program in Durham would be an important opportunity to increase financial support for community-based organizations and to draw on their knowledge and leadership. A nonprofit leader in the meeting put it this way:

I'm exhausted by the worker bees having to figure out scale and sustainability, when nonprofit organizations are not all getting the same opportunity for funding in Durham. I keep hearing people talk about collaboration and coordination, but if we really want to do that you have to bring under the umbrella all these smaller, cash-poor programs and organizations, large and small, that are trying to achieve the same objective in communities. And you need to integrate CSAs and what they mean in terms of opportunity into everything else that's happening.

5. An expanded CSA program would have to overcome distrust among eligible families.

To achieve scale, a CSA program would need to be successful at enrolling families—something that CSA programs in Durham already find challenging. As many pre-meeting interviewees explained, many parents and caregivers, especially those that are recent immigrants or undocumented, distrust unfamiliar programs—especially those that ask for sensitive information such as identification cards and Social Security numbers, which the parent may not have or know. Many are leery of offers that seem too good to be true by promising “free money”; they worry that it is a scam, or they might have to pay the money back, or it will be taken away if they do something wrong, or the money will count as income and jeopardize their eligibility for food stamps or subsidized housing. These parents often are extra suspicious of public agencies (whose participation will be essential for an expanded CSA strategy).

Parents who do not speak English, or have immigrated from a country with volatile politics, or are uncomfortable with online technology face additional obstacles, as do those who have transportation problems if the enrollment site is far away or if enrollment is not possible online. One interviewee speculated that Black parents may be less likely to open an account at a financial institution closely associated with the Latino community, thinking that the opportunity is only for Latino families. Interviewees also raised concerns about challenges for families that are unhoused and lack a permanent address and those dealing with an abusive family member who they fear may try to steal the money.

Still other families simply may not believe that having a CSA will significantly benefit their child. “Is this really going to challenge or change the system that favors white high school dropouts over Black college graduates? How do we know it will play such a large role in wealth building?” a higher education expert asked. “Are we saying it will allow families to accumulate wealth without any proof of concept?” asked a nonprofit leader.

Finally, unfavorable experiences with a previous CSA program in Durham may have led some families to doubt the process in general. One CSA program that started in 2016 had a promising start but failed to gain traction and stopped enrolling students before expending all of its budget. Two meeting participants who are knowledgeable about the situation attributed the problems to several factors, including leadership turnover, competing demands on both entities, an accounting process that was meant to simplify administration but ended up complicating tracking efforts, and resistance within the institutions to making necessary “cultural changes.”

Some state- or city-wide CSA initiatives deal with these challenges by enrolling children automatically at a major milestone, such as birth or school entry, and allowing families to opt out if they don’t want to participate rather than requiring them to opt in. If CSA programs in Durham continue to be opt-in, meeting participants recommended taking these steps to gain families’ trust and buy-in:

- **Avoid over-promising.** Because CSAs have only existed for 20 years, the data cannot prove generational impacts. Proponents of CSAs should highlight findings on their ability to launch postsecondary achievement and to produce the knowledge, behaviors, and conditions are a starting point but should not yet claim to produce generational wealth, several participants said.
- **Make the enrollment process easy, predictable, and nonthreatening.** Groups that work directly with families and have earned their trust should play a prominent role in helping families sign up. Enrollment materials should be simple, easy to understand, and translated into all relevant languages. Descriptions of how CSAs work should include testimonials by parents whose children already have CSAs; examples of how much money an account can earn over time with different

levels of deposits; and examples of what those dollar amounts can buy (e.g., transportation for three college visits, textbooks for one semester, half of a trade certification course). The information should include findings from research and experiences in other communities on the benefits of having CSAs, both in the present and the future. The materials should include written documents, infographics, and videos, and they should be easily accessible online.

TAKEAWAYS

Shared recognition that CSAs are part of the solution to a larger problem but not the whole solution suggests that the question around which participants convened, "Is now the time to expand the availability of CSAs to children and families in Durham, and possibly beyond?" is part of a larger question: "Should Durham make a more concerted effort to end poverty and produce equitable outcomes for all children and families?"

Many participants seemed interested in harnessing the power of "we" in a more coordinated, integrated, and aligned approach to disrupting poverty—or at least in continuing conversations so that stakeholders learn more about what each other is doing and can consider ways to align more intentionally and bridge any divisions. "If we're really all looking to try to move the needle on [wealth inequality in Durham], and so many are working on it, having the chance to be together and hear from opposite ends of the spectrum seems powerful," a stakeholder observed.

Although the group as a whole did not commit to launching a CSA expansion campaign, a sizable subset did express strong interest in CSAs as an important tool in the anti-poverty, pro-equity toolbox. And all participants left the meeting with a greater understanding of CSAs and their value. "Lifting this up for us is something worthwhile and a moment of learning," a community member noted. "A seed was planted."

APPENDIX A: PRE-MEETING INTERVIEWEES

Tabitha Blackwell

Executive Director
Book Harvest Durham

J.B. Buxton

President
Durham Technical Community College

Javiera Caballero

Council Member
Durham City Council

Randy Chambers

President
Self Help Credit Union

Victoria Chavis

Program Director, Duke College Advising Corps
Duke University

Keith Daniel

Co-Founder and Managing Director
Resilient Ventures, LLC

Roxann Dixon

Manager of Early Childhood Education
Initiatives
Village of Wisdom

David Dodson

Senior Fellow and Past President
MDC

Cate Elander

Early Childhood Coordinator
Durham County Cooperative Extension

Maria Garcia

Book Babies Coordinator
Bright Futures parent, Book Harvest

Eric Guckian

President and CEO
United Way of the Greater Triangle

Jovonia Lewis

Founder and Executive Director
Empowered Parents in Community (EPIC) NC

Mila Meekins

Realtor, Mila Meekins Real Estate
Bright Futures parent, Book Harvest

Senator Graig Meyer

Member, North Carolina Senate
D-Orange, Caswell, Person counties

Melanie Mitchell

Trustee
Angelina Merenda O'Bar Trust

Carl Rist

Consultant
Former VP and Senior Fellow, Prosperity Now

Brianna Kennedy

Director of Programs
Durham Public Schools Foundation

Rep. James Roberson

Member, North Carolina House of
Representatives
D-Wake County

Andrea Rodriguez

Family Engagement Coordinator
Student U

Camryn Smith

Co-Founder and Executive Director
Communities in Partnership

Sterling Speirn

Interim CEO
CF Leads

Joy Spencer

Executive Director, Equity Before Birth
Book Babies parent, Book Harvest

Taquoia Street

Participant Services Manager, Fidelity Investments

Book Babies Parent, Book Harvest
Founder, The Dream Initiative

Gabe Treves-Kagan

Vice President of Development
Latino Community Credit Union

Amber Wells

Community Engagement Analyst
City of Durham

Julie Wells

Consulting Specialist
Strategic Conversations

Mel Williams

Co-Founder, End Poverty Durham
Pastor

Tim Wollin

Operations Director
StepUp Durham

APPENDIX B: MEETING ATTENDEES

Tabitha Blackwell

Executive Director
Book Harvest

Zarria Bratts

Development Coordinator
Book Harvest

JB Buxton

President
Durham Technical Community College

Randy Chambers

President
Self Help Credit Union

Bria Davenport

Events and Development Manager
Book Harvest

Roxann Dixon

Manager of Early Childhood Education
Initiatives
Village of Wisdom

Cate Elander

Early Childhood Coordinator
Durham County Cooperative Extension

Josephe Featherstone

Vice President of Programs
Durham Children's Initiative

Leila Fiester

Owner, InDepthInk LLC
Consultant to Book Harvest

Maria Garcia

Book Babies Coordinator/Book Babies Parent
Book Harvest

Isabel Geffner

Director of Advancement
Book Harvest

Eric Guckian

President and CEO
United Way of the Greater Triangle

Regina Hall

Executive Director
Boston Thurmond United

Lisbeth Hickey

Education Department Manager
El Centro Hispano

Brianna Kennedy

Director of Programs
DPS Foundation

Jovonia Lewis

Executive Director
Empowered Parents in Community

Mary Mathew

Director of Advocacy
Book Harvest

Mila Meekins

Book Babies Parent

Senator Graig Meyer

Member, North Carolina Senate
D-Orange, Caswell, Person counties

Alisa Miller

Family Engagement Manager/Book Babies
Parent
Book Harvest

Melanie Mitchell

Trustee
Angelina Merenda O'Bar Trust

Kate Panuska

Director of Finance and Operations
Book Harvest

Anna Reilly
Board Chair
Boston Thurmond Community Network

Ginger Young
Founder and CEO
Book Harvest

Carl Rist
Mott Foundation Consultant
Former VP and Senior Fellow, Prosperity Now

Perry Robinson
Executive Assistant to the CEO
Book Harvest

Andrea Rodriguez
Family Engagement Coordinator
Student U

Joy Spencer
Executive Director, Equity Before Birth
Book Babies parent, Book Harvest

Taquoia Street
Participant Services Manager, Fidelity
Investments
Book Babies Parent, Book Harvest
Founder, The Dream Initiative

Gabe Treves-Kagan
Vice President, Development
Latino Community Credit Union

Amber Wells
Community Engagement Analyst
City of Durham

Julie Wells
Consulting Specialist
Strategic Conversations

Mel Williams
Co-Founder, End Poverty Durham
Pastor

Tim Wollin
Operations Director
StepUp Durham

APPENDIX C: SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL COLLABORATORS

Individuals

- Nida Allam (Durham County Commissioner)
- LaToya Alston (consultant)
- James Blake (pastor)
- Tameka Brown (H.E.A.R.T.S.)
- Rhonda Taylor Bullock (we are)
- Nimasheena Burns (Durham County Commissioner)
- Heidi Carter (Durham County Commissioner)
- William (Sandy) Darity, Jr. (Duke University)
- Herb Davis (pastor)
- Geoff Durham (Durham Chamber of Commerce)
- Elected officials (all)
- A'lice Frazier (City of Durham Office on Youth)
- Charysse Frederick-Omari (community schools coordinator)
- DeDreana Freeman (Durham City Council)
- Lwiza Escobar Garcia (ISLA NC)
- Bernadette Green (Breastfeed Durham)
- Kala Hinnent (former teacher, Book Babies parent)
- Fiorella Horna (Durham Technical Community College, El Centro Hispano)
- Brenda Howerton (Durham County Commissioner)
- Wendy Jacobs (Durham County Commissioner)
- Carl Kenney (pastor)
- Laura Khalil (City of Durham Office on Youth)
- Dan Kimberg (NC InCK)
- Bishop Clarence Laney (Monument of Faith Church)
- Mark-Anthony Middleton (Mayor Pro Tempore of Durham, pastor)
- Letha Muhammad (Education Justice Alliance)
- Elaine O'Neal (current Mayor of Durham)
- Steve Schewel (former Mayor of Durham)
- Jeymi Dubon Reyes (Pupusas for Education)
- Breana van Velzen (Durham Congregations in Action)
- Youth who have participated in savings initiatives, or may benefit from them in the future

Organizations, Agencies, Institutions, and Coalitions

- Academic Success Alliance
- Avila Center for Community Leadership
- Black Child Development Institute-Charlotte
- Book Harvest
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- CandL (Care and Learning) Coalition
- Communities in Partnership
- Community Empowerment Fund
- Durham Congregations, Associations, and Neighborhoods (CAN)
- Duke University Office of Durham and Community Affairs
- Durham Children's Initiative
- Durham Congregations in Action
- Durham Council of PTAs
- Durham County Cooperative Extension
- Durham Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance
- Durham PreK
- Durham Public Schools
- Durham Public Schools Foundation
- Durham's Partnership for Children
- Durham Technical Community College
- Echo (merger of Audacity Labs and Helius)
- Education Justice Alliance
- El Centro Hispano
- El Futuro
- Emily K Center
- Empowered Parents in Community NC (EPiC)
- End Poverty Durham

- Episcopalians United against Racism
- Equity Before Birth
- Faith institutions (all)
- Financial institutions (all)
- Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce
- Grown in Durham
- Hayti Reborn Justice Movement
- Helping Each Adolescent Reach Their Spark (H.E.A.R.T.S.)
- ISLA NC
- JumpStart
- Latino Community Credit Union
- Made in Durham
- Mechanics & Farmers Bank
- Mobilizing African American Mothers through Empowerment (MAAME, Inc.)
- NC Integrated Care for Kids (NC InCK)
- North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation
- Papyrus for Education
- Salvation Army
- Self Help Credit Union
- StepUp Durham
- Student Action with Farmworkers
- Triangle Community Foundation
- Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSA)
- United for a Fair Economy
- United Way of the Greater Triangle
- Village of Wisdom
- Wall Street Juniors
- Working to Extend Anti-Racist Education (we are)

Programs and Initiatives

- Duke College Advising Corps
- End Hunger Durham
- Fight for 15
- Healthy Families Durham
- Planning Our Own Future/Planning Our Own Funerals (P.O.O.F.) Entrepreneurship Pathway Program and Teen Center
- REAL Durham
- The Dream Initiative
- Welcome Baby

Possible Examples to Learn From

- Boston Kids Save
- Book Babies Bright Futures
- CivicLex, a nonprofit civic education/media organization that explores policies in Fayette County, KY
- Jane Costello (Duke University)'s natural experiment with a basic income concept that arose during her research on the health of members of the Western Band of the Cherokee
- Durham Kids Save
- Front Porch Forum, a free community-building service in Vermont and parts of New York
- Oakland Promise
- Partners for Youth Opportunity (PYO)'s Saving for the Future Program
- ReThink Health Initiative, a project of The Rippel Foundation that works with national and regional "stewards" to design/execute transformative change
- Richmond, VA's efforts to reduce poverty
- Shreveport/Bossier Community Renewal, an effort to rebuild social bonds within the Shreveport region of Louisiana
- StepUp Kidz
- Student U's youth savings account program
- Nashville, TN's "culture of innovation"

APPENDIX D: OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOMENTUM AROUND CSAS

Before the convening, interviewees identified numerous activities, movements, and circumstances at the state, county, city, and federal levels that could potentially boost an effort to expand CSAs in Durham.

At the state level:

- North Carolina has a budget surplus of \$6.2 billion, and leaders have [proposed](#) using some of it for investments to address education inequities.
- On March 27, 2023 Governor Roy Cooper signed [Medicaid expansion](#) into law, making North Carolina the first state in five years to expand Medicaid through the legislative process rather than a ballot measure. Medicaid expansion is expected to provide health coverage to more than 600,000 people across the state. The fact that the state legislature passed the expansion bill, after years of opposition, has been attributed in part to constituent activism and to [consensus-building efforts](#) by groups in the state that worked with local hospitals, governments, chambers of commerce, businesses, and business groups to frame Medicaid as essential for working people.
- On April 6, 2023, State Sen. Natalie Murdock and Sen. DeAndrea Slavador introduced a bill to create a [baby bond trust fund](#). The fund would establish a savings account for every newborn in the state with a one-time state contribution of \$2,000, which the children and their families can augment and grow until the child turns 18, when the money could be used for postsecondary education expenses, purchasing a primary residence, starting a business, or investing in financial assets that provide long-term wages and wealth.
- On February 28, 2023, State Representatives James Roberson, Ashton Wheeler Clemmons, and David Willis introduced a bill to establish a [higher education savings account pilot program](#) in Duplin, Guilford, Madison, Union, and Wake counties. A similar bill by the same legislators drew bipartisan support in 2022 but did not advance out of session.
- Beginning in 2016, the state-funded [NC Promise Tuition Plan](#) has reduced student tuition cost to \$500 per semester at two four UNC institutions: Elizabeth City State University and Fayetteville State University, which are HBCUs; University of North Carolina at Pembroke, which is a historically American Indian university; and Western Carolina University.
- [MyFutureNC](#) is a collective impact effort to close the educational attainment gap in North Carolina by ensuring that by 2030, two million North Carolinians have a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree. A nonprofit backbone organization supports state and local collaboratives involving leaders in education, business, and government. The effort is broadly supported politically, but perhaps less well-known at the ground level.

At the municipal level, Durham's county and city governments are investing in policies, programs, and infrastructure to support children in families. Linking to these efforts could help connect CSAs with other opportunities for all children in the minds of parents and policy makers, as well as provide access points to reach families for CSA enrollment. For example:

- The county invests more than \$5 million annually in [Durham PreK](#), a universal prekindergarten initiative that connects families with free and affordable early childhood education.
- The county received more than \$4 million in federal funds through the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) that have been designated for services and supports to families with young children.
- [Made in Durham](#), a partnership of leaders in education, business, government, and nonprofit organizations with youth and young adults, is aligning resources and initiatives to create an education-to-career system with the goal of having all Durham youth complete a postsecondary credential and begin a rewarding career by age 25. The partnership's flagship program, the B.U.L.L.S.

Initiative, focuses on financial assistance, certifications, and post-graduate support for careers in the area's growing life sciences industry.

- In November 2022, Durham voters passed a [\\$112.7 million bond referendum](#) to fund new training centers in healthcare and life sciences at Durham Tech. The investment is intended to support pathways to careers with family-sustaining wages for local residents and to connect businesses in those industries with capable, diverse local talent.
- Although Durham County government has not yet approved a guaranteed basic income measure, County Commissioners Brenda Howerton and Nida Allam are founding members of [Counties for a Guaranteed Income \(CGI\)](#), a new coalition of county elected officials from across the United States working to ensure that all Americans have an income floor.
- With funding from county government, the [Durham Tech Promise](#) automatically provides recent high school graduates in Durham and Orange counties with up to \$1,000 a year for two years, to cover tuition and expenses. Promise programs are intended to ensure a tuition-free education for qualified students by using private or public support to cover the gap between federal financial aid and actual costs. The Durham Tech version uses a first-dollar approach, which means the local subsidy is applied first and thus is not reduced by the amount covered by federal grants and loans.

These initiatives operate in a rapidly changing regional context. Numerous major technology and life sciences companies are opening or expanding regional headquarters, research centers, advanced manufacturing facilities, and offices in the Research Triangle (e.g., Apple, Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Fujifilm Diosynth, Novo Nordisk, Merck, Eli Lilly). This will bring thousands of high-skills, well-paying jobs, but it also raises the stakes for preparing and connecting Durham's low-income, primarily Black and Latino residents to these jobs—while also meeting their immediate economic needs in a booming real estate market.

In the city of Durham, numerous child- and family-facing organizations have been or currently are involved in initiatives and programs that an expanded CSA strategy could build upon and help to advance, including:

- [Durham Children's Initiative](#) (DCI), which began in 2008 as the community-based nonprofit East Durham Children's Initiative (EDCI) and, in mid-2020, merged with Partners for Youth Opportunity (PYO). Durham Children's Initiative seeks to build pathways to equity by creating a pipeline of high-quality services for young people and their families, so that every local youth overcomes the barriers to their success and graduates from high school ready for college or a career.
- [Grown in Durham: Durham's Early Childhood Action Plan](#), a blueprint for strengthening Durham's early childhood systems. Durham Children's Initiative and Durham County government released the plan in September 2021 following a collaborative development process that involved parents, caregivers, early childhood providers, community leaders, and institutional leaders. Grown in Durham calls for an interagency, cross-system effort to address and dismantle the root causes of persistent disparities in early childhood outcomes, and it recommends actions to ensure that all children and families have their basic needs met, are learning, and are on track and ready to succeed, among other goals.
- Redevelopment of some properties belonging to the [Durham Housing Authority](#). The redevelopment, including transitioning to some mixed-income properties, raises questions about whether an expanded CSA program might be an incentive for families to move back after the rebuilding period, or whether an expanded CSA program could be piloted in a redeveloped property.
- Several city leaders have urged support for [guaranteed income programs](#), including former Mayor Steve Schewel, former Council Member Pierce Freelon, current Council Member Mark-Anthony Middleton, and Duke University Prof. William A. ("Sandy") Darity, Jr., although such an initiative has not yet been funded.
- Durham is home to numerous nonprofit organizations and coalitions that are working to address and eliminate poverty, both within specific neighborhoods and city-wide.

- Fidelity Investments is piloting [Invest in My Education \(ME\)](#) in Raleigh/Durham, Boston, and Dallas/Ft. Worth. Invest in ME provides individual scholarships to Black, Latino, and historically underserved students in underserved communities to help them overcome barriers to success and graduate debt-free from a two-year college, four-year college, or a certificate program. Ongoing supports include mentorship by Fidelity associates, internship/apprenticeship guidance, and financial education programming.