Dear Friends,

In 2023, UpTogether continued to build community and make meaningful investments in individuals and families across the nation. Through $18 million in unrestricted cash distributed to over 26,000 members, we witnessed countless stories of resilience and transformation.

People like Taniquewa used her investment to become a notary public and a leasing agent, and Theresa, a climate activist from Detroit, used her investment from UpTogether to put gas in her car to travel to bring food to seniors in her community.

These stories underscore the profound and proven impact of directly investing in people and the unique power that community and choice hold in our fight to end poverty. Despite systemic inequities, our communities exhibit innovation and resilience, challenging conventional narratives about people experiencing financial hardship and further showcasing why we call for expanded investments in direct cash initiatives.

This Impact Report showcases the transformative power of direct investments in individuals—both in changing lives and shaping policies—and it spotlights the extraordinary journeys of our members, who exemplify the spirit of community care and resilience.

As we reflect on 2023’s achievements, we are propelled by the determination and strength of our members, and we are committed to driving further systemic change. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who support our mission, and together, we will continue investing in people’s strengths.

With Gratitude,

Jesus Gerena
CEO, UpTogether
UpTogether is a national nonprofit organization that, for over two decades, has partnered with governments, philanthropy, and community organizations to distribute cash directly to families while learning how they work together in community to reach their personal goals and achieve financial security.

We are disrupting the status quo approach to ending poverty by:

- **Investing** in families and individuals experiencing financial hardship by providing them with cash they can use however they wish, with no strings attached.
- **Amplifying** stories to change the narrative and tell the true lived experiences of people facing financial hardship and financially under-resourced communities.
- **Mobilizing** around state and local policies to change systems from investing in costly programs to directly investing in people.

UpTogether believes that everyone deserves to be seen and invested in for their strengths—but deficit-based programs remain the norm even while more than 37 million* people in the United States experience poverty.

*This is what we did in 2023 to change that.*

Direct Investments, No Strings Attached

Investing directly in people is at the heart of our strategy to change systems.

In 2023, UpTogether invested $18 million in more than 26,000 individuals and families across the country.

It's simple. We focus on people's strengths, not their deficits.

This focus on people's strengths guides our unique approach to advancing socioeconomic mobility: *The UpTogether Approach: Community. Capital. Choice.*

People benefit from the power of **community** and naturally and routinely exchange social capital and help one another. We collaborate to create more opportunities for people to connect and build community.

People must have access to sufficient **capital** to invest in their own lives, so we offer financial support to individuals and families through direct cash transfers.

People are experts in their own lives and must have full **choice** and control over their time and resources, so we trust our members and offer direct cash support with no restrictions.
The UpTogether Approach in Action

Let’s make it plain: Poverty deepens inequity and worsens life outcomes—making it harder for people to stay healthy, do well professionally and academically, and live a long life.

Study after study and pilot after pilot shows us just how effective unrestricted cash investments are in advancing economic stability and mobility for families across the country.

Fund Highlight: MOMentum

Since 2020, UpTogether has been partnering with the Marin Community Foundation on the MOMentum Fund to invest in 125 moms of color living in Marin County, CA.

- Moms enrolled reported an increase in stable housing from **45% before MOMentum** to **60% after MOMentum**.
- Moms experiencing homelessness **decreased from 9% to only 1%**.

43% of members who responded to our survey **led, organized, or facilitated activities, programs, or initiatives to strengthen their communities.**

100% of members who responded to our survey report using their investment from UpTogether for **basic needs such as housing, food, utilities, and childcare.**
Member Story: Taniquewa

Located in Austin, TX

Taniquewa, a mother of five, was among 135 participants in the City of Austin’s guaranteed income pilot, one of the first in the country to use general operating funds.

She used her $1,000 a month investment to become a notary public and a leasing agent and enroll her five children for activities like sports and art at the local recreation center. She also had more time to volunteer for community groups.

Taniquewa shared her experience with numerous media outlets, calling the experience life-changing.

"The guaranteed income allowed me more time to work towards furthering my dreams," Brewster told KVUE.

Taniquewa even testified before the Austin City Council about her experience as an UpTogether member.

“Not only is it helping the community to ensure that families are stable, but it just helps us to feel secure in a city that’s prices are rising," she told the representatives.

As a result of the advocacy of Taniquewa and others, the City Council authorized Family Stabilization Grants, which will include $1,000 a month for 12 months to at least 85 families starting in 2024.

Read more real stories from members like Taniquewa on the UpTogether Pulse—a collection of stories about our members that highlight their strengths, resilience, lived experiences, and challenges.
At UpTogether, we amplify real stories to prove that what you’ve heard—and may believe—about "poor" people is wrong. Telling these stories can help spark systemic change, breaking down barriers that prevent hardworking people from getting ahead.

**Moving Up, Together Podcast**

As part of our storytelling efforts, we launched the Moving Up, Together podcast in November 2022. The podcast, now in its second season, features members discussing their lives and sharing advice on everything from accomplishing your goals to navigating change and advocating for your community.

The Moving Up, Together podcast boasts a flawless 5-star rating on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

**Growing our Digital Reach**

- YouTube: 14.4K total views—a 95% increase from 2022
- Instagram: Engagement increased by 100% in 2023
- The Moving Up, Together podcast reached 6,000 listens

101 press mentions in 2023 reaching over 1 billion people

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*Refers to total engagement (likes, reactions, save, comments, shares, and replies)
From Pilot to Permanence

UpTogether’s strategy to change systems is centered on showing government and philanthropy why they should invest directly in people, not just deficit-based programs.

As direct cash investments continue to serve as an innovative and effective way to address poverty, UpTogether is focused on collaborating with our partners to expand the impact of our direct cash initiatives for years to come.

*Here are two examples of how we collaborate with our partners to scale initiatives—taking them from pilot to permanence.*

**City of Austin**

📍 Austin, TX

Since 2018, UpTogether’s expansion into Austin has marked a pivotal chapter, now impacting over 10,000 members. The City of Austin’s Guaranteed Income pilot stemmed from UpTogether’s successful one-year pilot in Spring 2021, where philanthropic funding supported 173 households in Central Texas.

In May 2022, UpTogether mobilized members to share their stories with Council members—resulting in a $1.1M allocation to provide cash grants of $1,000/month to 85 families.

In 2023, UpTogether continued advocacy efforts, leveraging member testimonials and early learnings from the pilot. As a result, the City Council passed a budget amendment for Family Stabilization Grants, securing $1.3M for cash grants to 85 families for one year. The amendment also signals a broader intent for a potential long-term Family Stabilization grant program.

**12-month results from the City of Austin pilot were released in 2023 and show that direct cash is an effective method to increase housing stability and reduce food insecurity:**

- **More than half of the funds distributed to participants were used for housing.** 62% of them could keep up with their mortgage or rent, which is a **14% increase from the beginning of the pilot.**

- **Participants faced less difficulty in getting enough food.** Initially, 82% of them had experienced not having enough food for the last 30 days, but this **decreased to 70%** over the 12 months.

- **Community gets stronger because of cash payments.** Participants mentioned that the cash payments allowed them to **spend more time with community organizations, receiving help and helping others.** They also leveraged and improved their social networks to achieve their goals.
Camp Harbor View
Boston, MA

Camp Harbor View made the strategic decision to invest directly in families. Starting with a one-time cash transfer in 2020, they soon launched a direct cash pilot benefiting 50 families monthly for 24 months.

Witnessing the profound impact, Camp Harbor View expanded its vision, embarking on a guaranteed income pilot in partnership with UpTogether. Buoyed by the pilot’s success, Camp Harbor View resolved to invest in families permanently and is advocating for government entities to adopt direct cash initiatives. Looking ahead to 2024, Camp Harbor View and UpTogether are planning a second phase of the Pilot, focusing on families within their leadership academy.

The results of Camp Harbor View’s pilot exemplify how direct cash investments lead to increased mental health and economic outcomes for families:

**Direct cash investments support mental health outcomes.**
Families receiving direct cash payments had a **43% decrease in psychological distress** compared to a 17% increase among families not receiving payments.

**Participants were able to increase emergency savings.**
Among families receiving direct cash, **45% were able to save for an emergency**, compared to 14% of those not receiving payments.

**Families experienced increased asset building.**
Families receiving direct cash saw a **23% increase in asset building** (purchase of a house or car), while other families saw an 11% decline.

“Camp Harbor View has a long-standing partnership with UpTogether that is key to the impact that we are able to have in partnership with families. UpTogether shares our belief in the power of agency for families, and we recognize the transformative effect that it can have on communities.”

-Josh Waxman, COO Camp Harbor View
The questions UpTogether posed during the design process helped us to look at our systems in relation to our expressed values and that helped us immensely in understanding how to align with policy and adjust our practices to support our objective of launching our guaranteed income pilot.

*Karla Bruce*, Chief Equity Officer, Fairfax County
UpTogether is an ideal partner for communities at the intersection of divestment and violence. Through our partnership, we are able to provide much-needed cash assistance to families whose lives have been turned upside down by violence—families who may have been forced to relocate or who may be dealing with the burden of regular hospital visits.

Alia Harvey-Quinn, Founder and Executive Director, FORCE Detroit
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Member Story: Theresa

Detroit, MI

Theresa is a lifelong Detroiter who has lived on the same street her entire life. Her community is predominantly Black and is one of the most polluted zip codes in the state of Michigan.

Theresa works with organizations to reduce pollution and fight against climate change. She also did extensive volunteer work during the pandemic, working with neighbors to ensure people had enough food and other necessities.

Through her volunteering network, Theresa learned about UpTogether.

“[The money I received through the UpTogether Equity Fund] helped me put gas in my car and buy me a little breakfast because most days I didn’t eat trying to get food out to these seniors,” she said.

Theresa has met many people who couldn’t access funds through traditional government programs.

“If they just had a little support, it could help get them over that hump. Keep their water bill paid.”

Listen to more real stories from members like Theresa on the Moving Up, Together podcast.

Listen wherever you get your podcasts.
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1. Asian Pacific Islander Advancement
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2. Austin Emergency Relief 2023 Fund
   Austin, Texas

3. Austin Homeownership Fund
   Austin, Texas

4. Building Peace
   Detroit, Michigan

5. Cambridge RISE
   Cambridge, Massachusetts

6. Camp Harbor View Guaranteed Income Pilot
   Boston, Massachusetts

7. CEO UpTogether Fund
   Detroit, Michigan

8. Cincinnati UpTogether Fund
   Cincinnati, Ohio

9. Cincinnati UpTogether Fund 2.0
   Cincinnati, Ohio

10. City of Austin Guaranteed Income Pilot
    Austin, Texas

11. City of San Antonio 2-Year Fund
    San Antonio, Texas

12. City of Santa Fe Eviction Prevention Fund 2023-24
    Santa Fe, New Mexico

13. City of Santa Fe Earn, Earn, Achieve Program (SEAP)
    Santa Fe, New Mexico

14. Community Works West Restorative Reentry Fund
    Oakland, California

15. CONNECT One-Time Economic Relief Fund 2023-24
    Santa Fe, New Mexico

16. CONNECT Short-Term Economic Payments Fund 2023-24
    Santa Fe, New Mexico

17. CONNECT Short-Term Economic Payments Fund 2023-24
    Lincoln and Jefferson County, Oregon

18. Connections 2021
    Austin, Texas

19. Cross Purpose Fund
    Denver, Colorado

20. Dallas TEEP Fund
    Dallas, Texas

    Detroit, Michigan

22. Direct Investment in People Sacramento (DIPS)
    Sacramento County, California

23. ELEVATE Concord
    Concord, California

24. Harrison School District 2 Family Support Fund
    Colorado Springs, Colorado

25. Montgomery County (MOCC) BOOST
    Montgomery County, Maryland

26. MOMhortum
    Marlin County, California

27. MOMhortum Extension
    Detroit, Michigan

28. Moving Up Together Kent County Community Fund
    Kent County, Michigan

29. Multnomah Mothers’ Trust Phase 2
    Multnomah County, Oregon

30. Multnomah Mothers’ Trust Phase 2
    Multnomah County, Oregon

31. New Mexico Guaranteed Basic Income Pilot Project & Study for Immigrant Families
    New Mexico

32. NKY Fund
    Cincinnati, Ohio

33. NYC Trust Youth Initiative
    New York, New York

34. Oakland Resilient Families Phase 1
    Oakland, California

35. Oakland Resilient Families Phase 2
    Oakland, California

36. Oregon Ongoing Fund
    Lincoln and Jefferson County, Oregon

37. Oregon UpTogether Fund
    Lincoln and Jefferson County, Oregon

38. Richmond Resilience Initiative
    Richmond, Virginia

39. Rising UpTogether San Antonio
    San Antonio, Texas

40. San Francisco Trust Youth Housing Stabilization Fund
    San Francisco, California

41. See No Stranger
    Multnomah County, Oregon

42. Southern Oregon Success
    Jackson and Josephine County, Oregon

43. The Bridge Fund
    Austin, Texas

44. The Bridge Network
    Denver, Colorado

45. Thriving Families
    Washtenaw County, Michigan

46. Thriving Families
    Milwaukee, Wisconsin

47. Trust and Invest Collaborative
    Boston, Massachusetts

48. Twin Cities Prosper
    Twin Cities, Minnesota

49. United We Thrive
    Detroit, Michigan

50. UpTogether Atlanta
    Atlanta, Georgia

51. UpTogether Morningside 2023
    Fort Worth, Texas

52. UpTogether San Diego
    San Diego, California

53. UpTogether Southern Nevada Fund
    Las Vegas, Nevada

54. Wisconsin Thriving Families
    Milwaukee, Wisconsin

55. 2023 UpTogether Builders Fund

56. BLM Global Network Foundation Student Success Fund

57. BUILD Fund
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