

A Power Building Initiative to Support Socioeconomic Movements in CT

The Connecticut Urban Opportunity Collaborative (CUOC), a partnership between Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and UpTogether, are investing in 120 leaders in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport* who are experiencing economic hardship and are working to build community power and better their lives and communities. Residents organizing to build social and economic movements to transform communities continue to lead this work, and we want to expand their capacity and help them meet their basic needs as they work to stabilize their households and pursue socioeconomic mobility.

CUOC worked with UpTogether and a Community Advisory Council of residents to design a power building initiative that invests cash in residents building community power and movements. Relationships are the cornerstone of power, and we believe that the values and actions that build powerful movements are guided by:

1. **Trust:** Residents committed to building trust and authentic relationships with others to build and exercise community power.
2. **Community:** Residents committed to improving their community and building relationships with people in their neighborhood, cities/towns, and across the state.
3. **Building Power:** Residents building public relationships with other residents and working together to take aligned or collective actions to change rules, policies, or practices within groups, organizations, institutions, or systems at the local, city, and state level.
4. **Change:** Residents committed to equity and justice who are working to improve people's access to affordable housing, healthcare, education, food, and/or living-wage employment opportunities among others – to create a Connecticut where everyone can prosper.

When communities come together to work towards a common goal, they can build movements. *They are changemakers.*

Our Changemakers...

- Live in Bridgeport,* Hartford, or New Haven, Connecticut.
- Are 18 years old or older.
- Are active and engaged in their communities to create positive change for themselves, their families, and their neighbors.
- Live in a household making **50% of the CT's Median Income or less.**

* One participant lived in Bridgeport for years and recently moved to Stamford but continues their community work in Bridgeport

Please contact Liany E. Arroyo, CUOC Director, with any questions or comments: larroyo@hfpg.org or 860-272-6575.



The Changeloger Fund



Changemakers receive the following direct cash outlays in each year of the program.

Changemakers (2024-2025)	Changemakers (2025-2026)	Changemakers (2026-2027)
\$6,000 (annual)	\$4,200 (annual)	\$2,400 (annual)
\$250/2x a month	\$175/2x a month	\$100/2x a month

- Cash payments two times (2x) per month; around first of the month & 15th of the month.
- Cash payments may affect eligibility for public benefits. All prospective changemakers participated in public benefit navigation to understand how these dollars may impact their benefits eligibility.
- Cash payments via the UpTogether.org platform. This money has no strings attached.

Over the course of these efforts, we hope to learn more about the impact of cash on individuals, families, and communities:

- We will learn and better understand the impact of cash on the **Social Determinants of Health** outcomes for participants. We will learn more about their ability to build **assets** and **wealth** during their social and economic mobility journey. Specifically focused on:
 - Economic Stability
 - Employment
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Food Security
- We hope to better understand how to support families and individuals who are receiving **public benefits** as they navigate their socioeconomic mobility.
 - Prior to launching the pilot, we worked with the CT 2Gen initiative, Parent Leadership Training Institute, Commissioner for Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, and the Department of Social Services to provide participants with benefit navigation support to understand the impact these dollars could have on the existing public benefits they receive. A report is available [here](#).
- We want to understand how people **build power** by working together to make positive changes in their communities.
 - We are learning about people's involvement in community activities like civic action, community improvement, neighborhood groups, and more.

CUOC, UpTogether, and our partners will share data, narratives of experiences with public benefits and cash assistance, and other learnings over the course of this initiative.

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