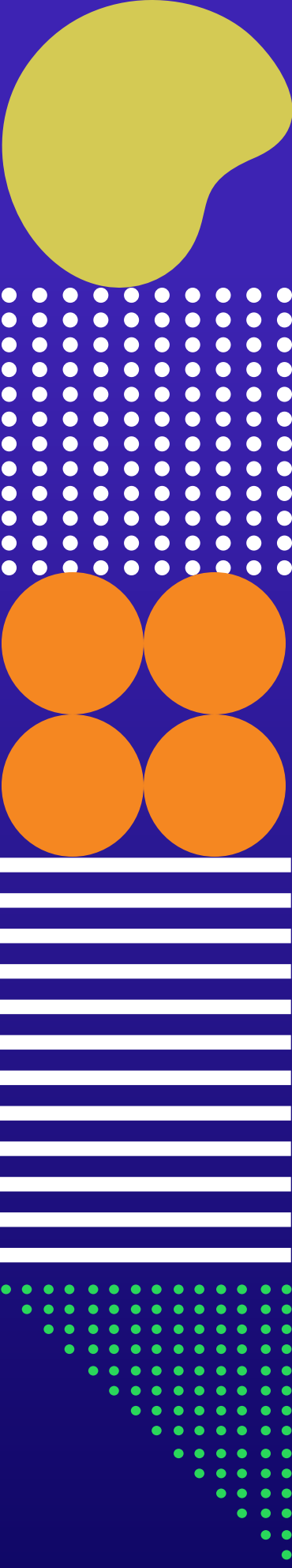


Together
for Children

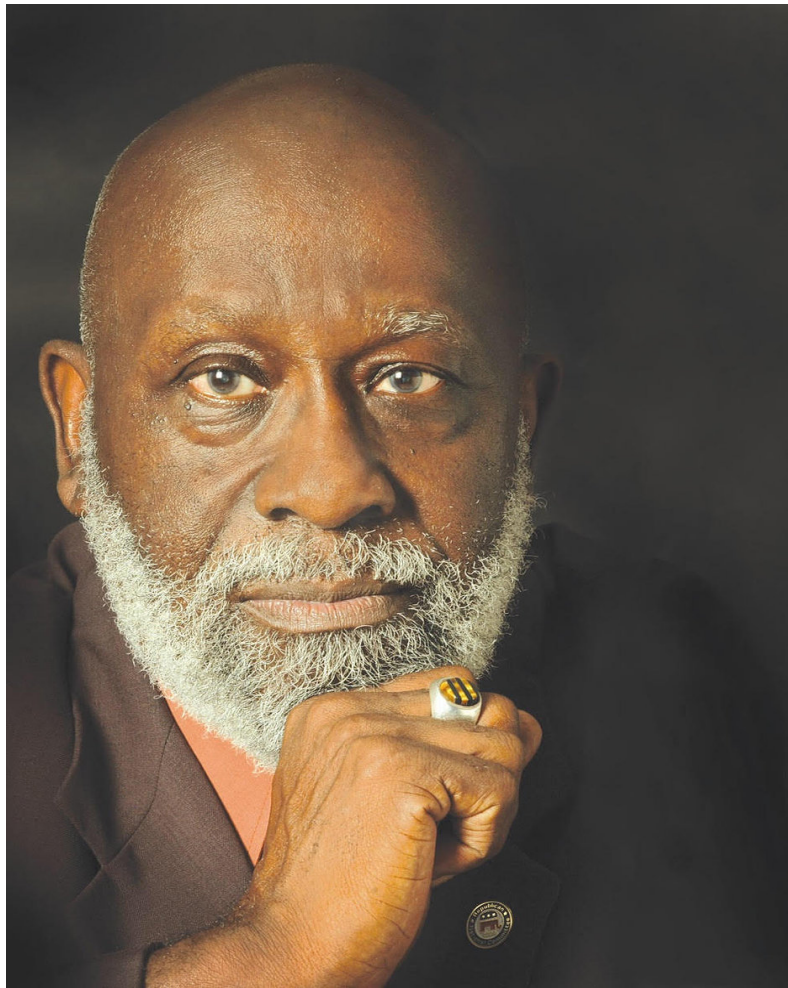
ANNUAL REPORT
2021

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A Message from our Board Chairs



**T. Willard Fair,
Chair Emeritus**

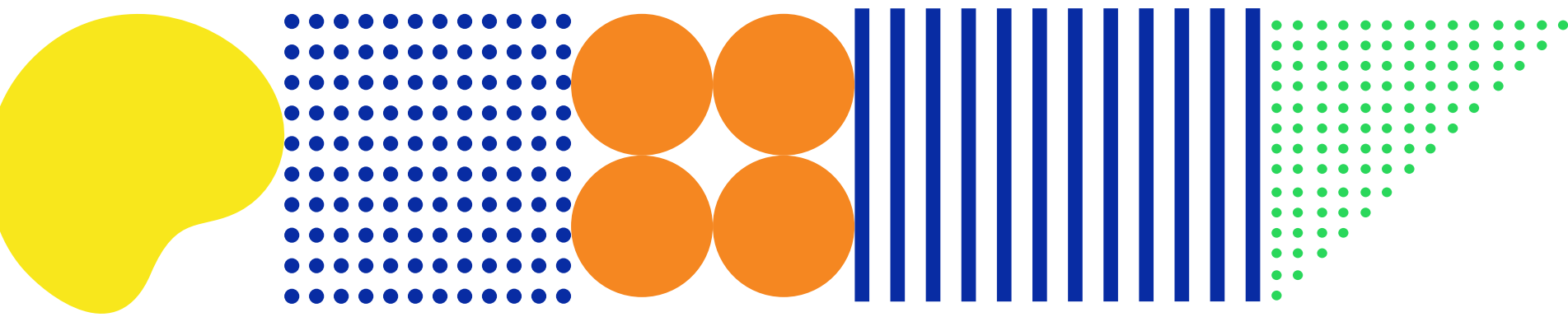


Tina Brown, Chair

Too many children continue to have their lives cut short or gravely impacted at the hand of a weapon. As leaders, we remain committed to Together for Children and our solutions-orientated work through a preventative and holistic lens, focusing our efforts on a long-term approach that measures impact over time to ensure sustainable, strong results. This collective impact model works to eliminate silos across organizations and establish a true network of support for our children and their families, and amongst each other- something that we have continued to do as we expand our reach, continual growth of our members, and dedication to our communities.

Our neighborhoods continue to lead and support this work. After our inaugural two years, the Together for Children Board of Trustees' leadership torch is being passed from T. Willard Fair, who will now serve as Vice Chair, to Tina Brown, who will now serve as Board Chair. It is together with the rest of TFC's leadership that we remain committed to the work of the County's most critical collective impact initiatives: Together for Children. It is this torch; ignited by T. Willard Fair's leadership, passion and long-standing commitment to children and families, that will continue to remain ignited as we all work to ensure that children across Miami-Dade County can reach their full potential and that gun violence will not be their fate.

Collectively, as Together for Children coalition leaders along with TFC members, ambassadors, caregivers, and youth, we will work fervently to foster best practice approaches, support systems of care, prevention and intervention models, and advocacy campaigns designed to combat adverse situations in high-risk environments that lead to high rates of gun violence. It is our goal to shine a light on all of our children: young, vibrant, talented, and brilliant children from all backgrounds who will grow up to be our community's next wave of leaders and will continue to pass a torch of resilience and brotherly and sisterly love towards one another.



Who We Are



Together for Children's mission is to strengthen families, empower and protect our community's youth.

In September 2016, county leaders, community groups, residents, parents and youth came together to address the root causes of youth violence, leading to the creation of Together for Children (TFC). After engaging more than 3,000 community stakeholders, six community coalitions representing areas across Miami-Dade County reached a consensus on the approach to address the root causes of youth violence and developed detailed action plans for how it can be achieved, which continue to serve as the foundational guide to collaborate and best serve our community's youth and families.

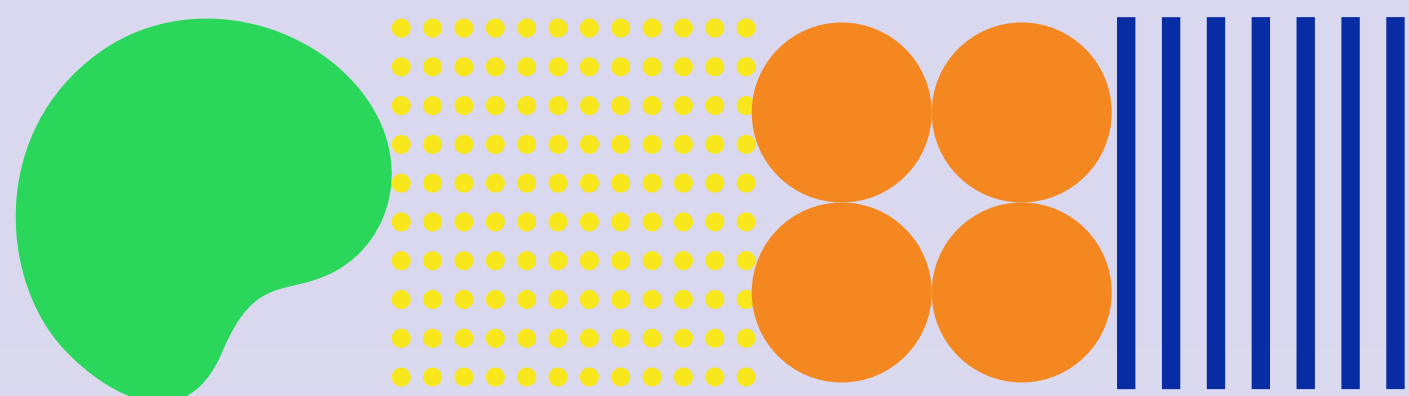
The six neighborhood coalitions have individual governing boards representing areas where youth who are at most risk have been identified and represented on the map.

TFC is a preventative approach to break the cycle of youth violence in Miami-Dade. Together as one, the neighborhood-driven community coalition of governmental, public, private, and not-for profit entities in Miami-Dade work hand-in-hand to:

- Identify youth at highest risk;
- Align services for youth and their families;
- Support neighborhood programs and providers;
- Measure impact and progress;
- Leverage community resources for the benefit of TFC's stakeholders and constituents; and
- Identify and develop relevant best practices.



Executive Summary



Only as one can we break the cycle of youth violence.

The Together for Children Board of Trustees, installed in December 2019, continues to focus on key priorities set out by the board centered around a common agenda, shared measurement systems, aligned action plans, continuous communication and active participation from all members to achieve a common goal.

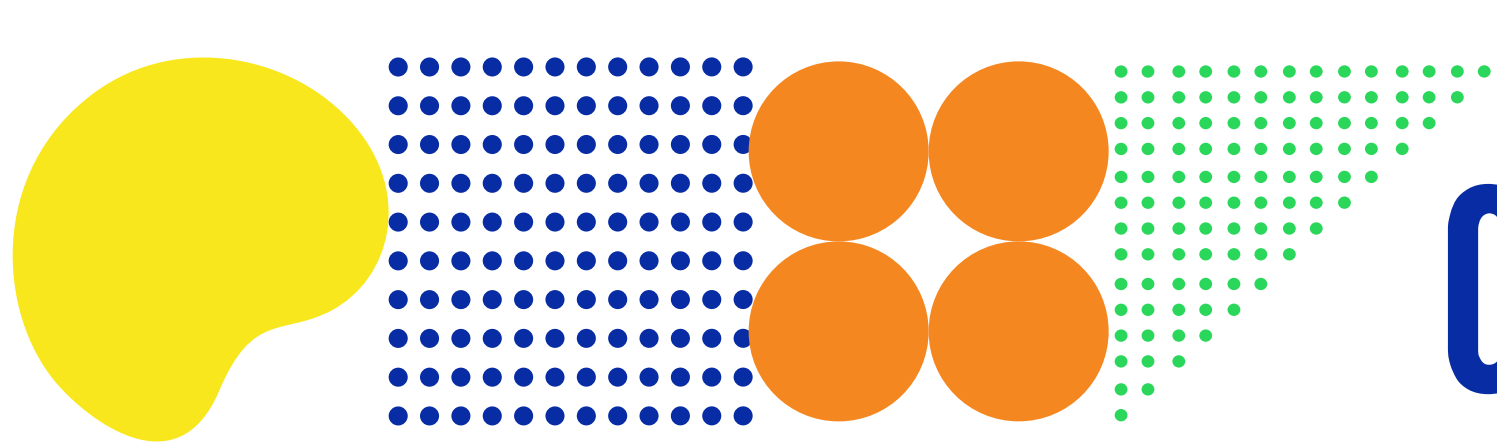
The TFC board oversees impact throughout Miami-Dade and supports the work of the six neighborhood coalitions that conduct the day-to-day efforts to address youth violence through collaboration and using their action plans to address violence prevention and support strong families. There is alignment across all the action plans through three common pillars - **strengthening families; empowering youth;** and **protecting youth**. These common pillars serve as the focal point for the work at the neighborhood level to address the root causes of youth violence and includes approximately 500 engaged TFC members who have aligned together in this work.

Across coalitions, community members and anchor partners collaborated to coordinate services for families in alignment with the action plan pillars including: hosting events in collaboration to provide resources to communities, expand access to mental health services, provide and supporting in-person and virtual programming for children and families, developing social justice initiatives, leading civic and community engagement activities, and continuing to support families throughout the pandemic with food and emergency item distributions while making sure to bring any new challenges and trends to the forefront so that they can be best addressed by community leaders and partners.

At a countywide level, there is the TFC Youth Committee, TFC Parent/Caregiver Committee, Accountability Committee, and Legislative Committee. These four committees are led by representation from all six coalitions and their priorities are driven by its members.

2021 continued to hold challenges and further exposed inequities and vulnerabilities in our community, exacerbated by the continuation of the pandemic and affordable housing challenges. Through it all, TFC membership continued to grow and expand in reach, continually seeking to respond to needs in the community. The strong foundation of partnership and collaboration at both the neighborhood coalition level and the Board of Trustees allowed for flexibility to address new community needs while remaining focused on the mission of TFC and addressing the root causes of youth violence through strengthening of families, empowering and protecting our youth.





Countywide Updates



Included in the Board of Trustees are the chairs and vice chairs of each neighborhood coalition, in addition to a representative from each anchor partner. The Board of Trustees Chair, T. Willard Fair; Vice Chair, Alisha Reyes; and Secretary, Valtena Brown, continued to lead and serve their communities throughout 2021.

Align

- Priorities
- Action Plans
- Decision Making
- Accountability/Reporting
- Referral Process

Support

- Coalition Collaboration
- Anchor Integration
- Fund Development
- Prioritization
- Capacity Building

Measure

- Outcomes & Impact
- Consensus on Accountability Strategy: Coalition & Countywide Action Plans

There are four countywide committees are composed of members from each of the neighborhood coalitions that support key priorities and work to achieve the goals of Together for Children.



Youth Committee

Function as an advisory board to gain insight from youth and explore their role in the action plan.



Parent/Caregiver Committee

Function as an advisory board to gain insight from parents/caregivers and explore their role in the action plan.



Legislative Committee

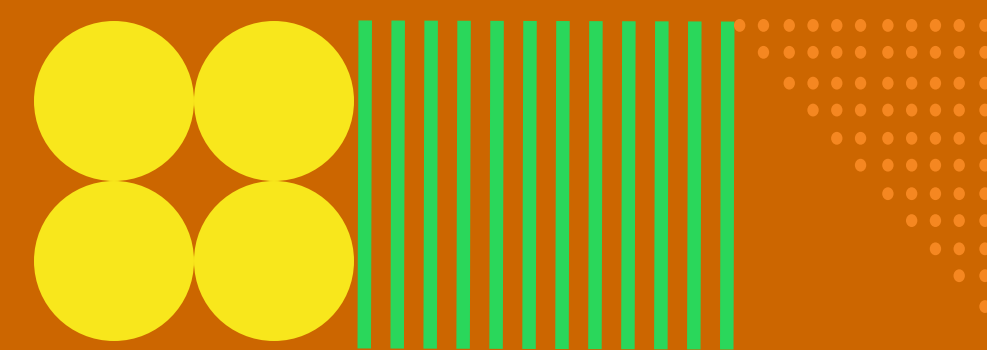
Develop a collaborative legislative and policy priorities agenda for the legislative platform.



Accountability Committee

Develop agreed upon metrics for success and a data strategy for TFC to measure impact and inform service delivery.

Neighborhood Coalitions

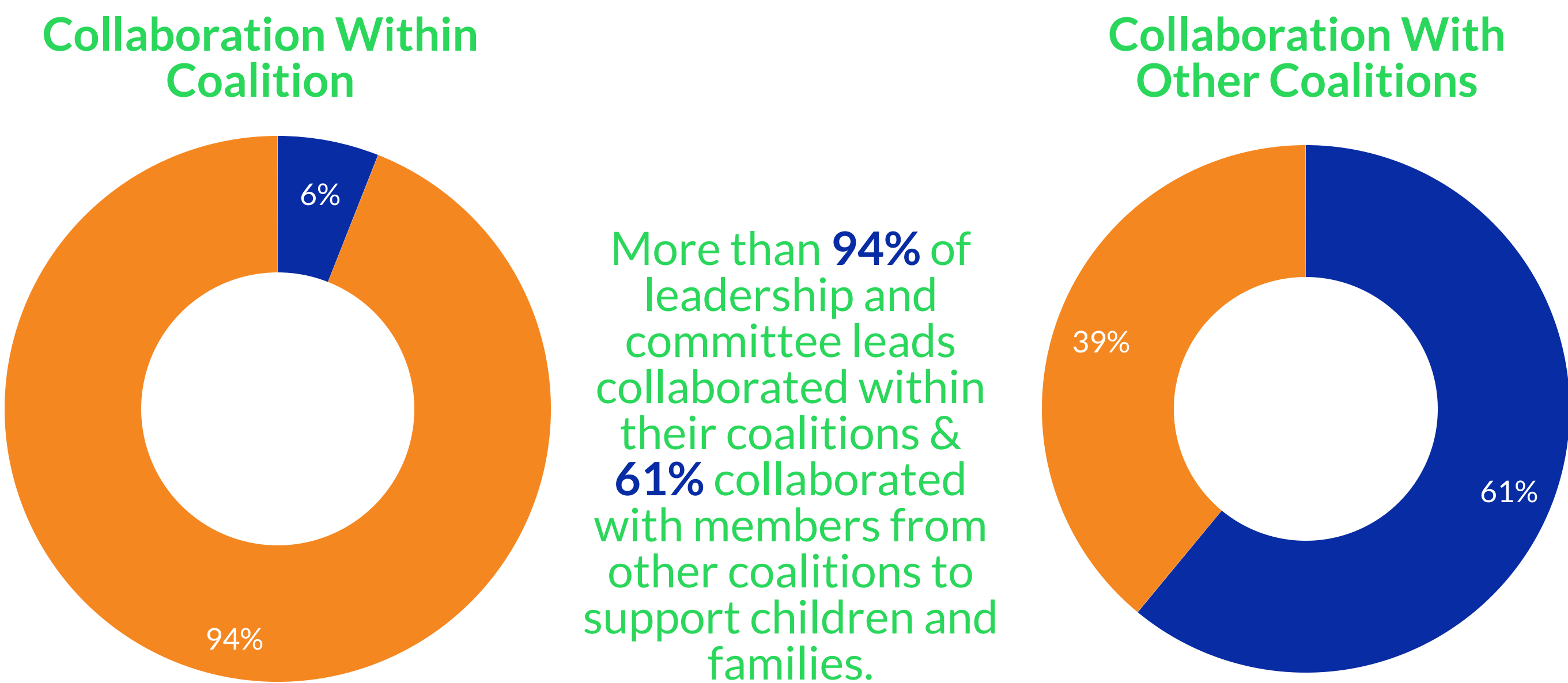


Six Neighborhood Coalitions, One Miami-Dade

The six neighborhood coalitions have each developed distinctive neighborhood action plans to address the individual needs of their community. A key component of all Together for Children’s neighborhood action plans is a referral network that uses shared data and resources to identify children in crisis and refer them for intervention and/or prevention services that foster positive outcomes for families and ultimately help reduce violence among youth. This established infrastructure proved critical in 2020 which presented new and unforeseen needs across our communities.

Engagement at the neighborhood coalition level is essential for the success of Together for Children. There are over **490 members** across all six coalitions. Through this engagement, much was accomplished in all three pillars of the action plans, with Strengthening Families taking priority in response to the emerging needs in the community. Even with the challenges presented, members remained engaged and new members joined the coalitions. Coalitions quickly pivoted to virtual work and continued to serve their communities.

By the Numbers



Across the common pillars of the action plans - **Strengthening Families, Empowering Youth and Protecting Youth**, coalition members worked collectively to provide coordinated services for children and families and contributed to revised action plans in response to the emerging needs in each of the neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Coalition Highlights

Homestead/ Florida City/Naranja

Hosted Mental Wellness online youth forum for youth and providers, turning the online clips into a resource for providers. Hosted Provider Lunches to provide the platform to discuss and address challenges and share best practices. Expanded partnerships with local schools and nonprofits.

Perrine/Goulds/ Richmond Heights

Expanded membership and reach of TFC services across the neighborhood, engaging community activists, the police department and CBOs. Sharing or statistics and current data to better inform the community.

Overtown

Civic engagement collaborations; approximately 150 students participated in summer employment and engagement opportunities.

Liberty City/ Brownsville

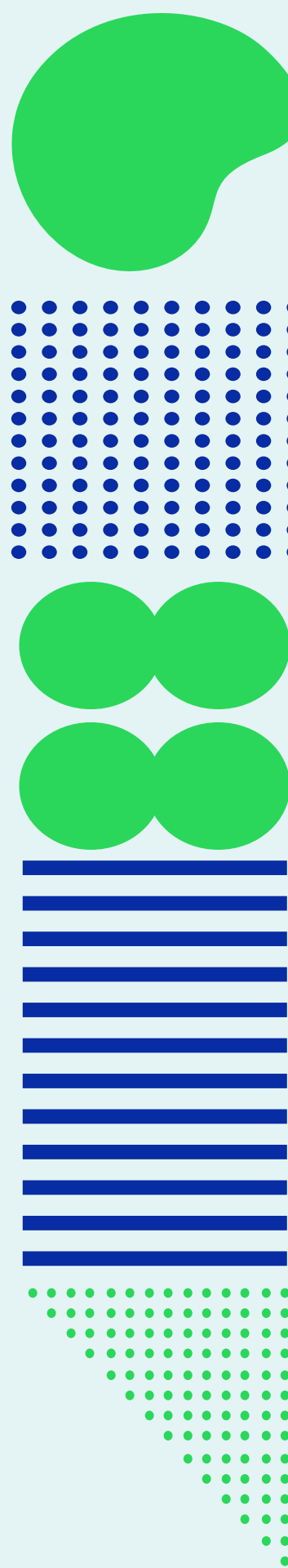
Focus on Evidence2Success efforts including a collection of youth survey data across the neighborhood to better inform work of nonprofits and the needs of youth. Hosted multiple outreach events to share TFC member services with the community and Farmshare events for families in need.

Northeast Corridor

Expanded internship opportunities for local youth and providing workshops to help students complete applications and prepare for internships. Launched the planning of an Early Education App for families to learn and get resources.

Miami Gardens/ Opa-Locka

Focused efforts to support foster youth and expand resource sharing for post-secondary support. Partnered with TFC Youth Committee to launch Summer Rush, providing options for youth to stay engaged.



Referral & Case Management Program

Together for Children was led by anchor partners who collectively developed the TFC referral and family case management process including the **H.E.R.O. Program**, the **Middle School Aged Youth Program**, and the expansion of **Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) One Stop Centers**. These programs have become integral components of all six coalitions' Together for Children action plans and the referral backbone of all coalitions' Protecting Youth committees' work and has expanded to integrate into all committees' work.

Collaborating on prevention and early intervention efforts are the path to addressing long-term and long-lasting solutions that nurture and develop safe and thriving communities. Focusing on early warning indicators like attendance in the earliest grades allows TFC to collectively work on systems and resources for the families and youth that most need our support; nevertheless, there are youth in our neighborhoods facing the need for immediate and time sensitive interventions. Referral and case management entryways, like the One Stop Centers, build the lines of trust and communication among all partners working on behalf of anchor organizations and our communities.

H . E . R . O . T r u a n c y P r e v e n t i o n P r o g r a m

The **H.E.R.O. Truancy Prevention Program** is a countywide systematic approach to reducing youth violence by identifying children most at-risk (those receiving 5 or more absences) and providing them with the necessary prevention and intervention services to increase daily school attendance. Intervention services include but are not limited to student conferences, parent/guardian conferences, court appearances, wrap-around services, and follow up sessions.

In the 2020-2021 cycle, the program served **1,356 families** through a variety of support services that resulted in **54%** of those families' school-aged children demonstrating an improvement in attendance. In the 2020-2021 cycle, a total of **16,495 elementary school children** were contacted across the **39 schools** introducing them to the program, and of which **9,902** participated in the H.E.R.O. truancy prevention program through the response to intervention model. A total of **1,135** home visits were conducted, and **1,356 families** participated in Truancy Child Study Team meetings.

Middle School Aged Youth Program

TFC middle school aged children continued to be a priority as part of Miami-Dade County's Juvenile Services Department's (JSD) comprehensive approach to prevention. The program offers evidence-based assessments, referrals, and case management services. Additionally, multi-disciplinary meetings are held and include professionals from different disciplines who meet regularly to discuss the service needs of participants and their treatment plans. As part of the Program, (M-DCPS) identifies school-aged students, with an emphasis on middle school-aged youth, who have demonstrated four or more early-warning indicators. These indicators include but are not limited to chronic school absences, behavioral problems, failing core courses, and/or any other at-risk factors.

JSD received a total of **648 referrals** from the Case Management Referral Program. All referrals were triaged within a 24/7 operation for services, of which **78%** of the students were screened and offered linkage to community-based services. Home visits were provided to encourage families to participate in JSD's voluntary program. Youth were linked to assessment, case management, tutoring and/or employment services. Referrals were made to the Peace and Prosperity Fit2Lead Summer Internship Program. Additionally, **77 families** voluntarily agreed to receive on-going case management services through JSD Prevention Program, and **68 students** continued participating in community-based services.

One Stop Centers

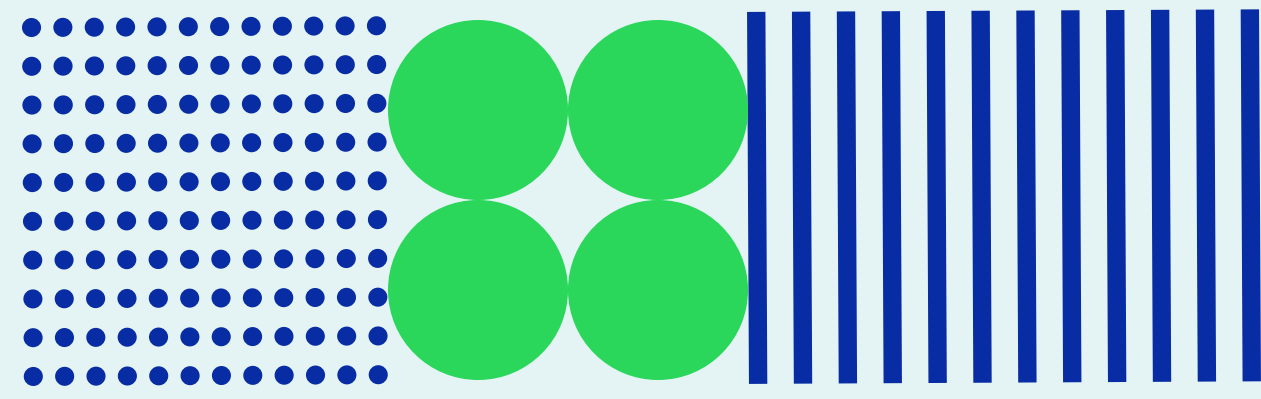
Students served at One Stop centers during the 2020-2021 school year received a variety of individual and family related academic and affective counseling. There were a total of **2,787** visits with One Stop personnel leading to **5,663** counseling sessions to support a successful transition. Nearly 1,500 students were contacted by a One Stop Specialist, representing 96% of eligible participants, and **92%** were provided an appropriate educational setting. Below is a breakdown of the top services provided and the number of occurrences for each service:



One Stop served a total of 868 unique students referred through the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). Recidivism was measured as returning to Miami-Dade Detention School following a previous stay in detention or completion of a commitment program. Segregating data for all DCF involved students, students for whom One Stop services were refused, and inability to contact families resulted in:



What's Next for TFC?



In 2022 and beyond, Together for Children continues to implement its preventative approach to breaking the cycle of youth violence in Miami-Dade County by addressing the root causes through a long-term sustainable strategy in collaboration with Miami-Dade County's Peace and Prosperity Plan. This year will be the launch of the pilot TFC Ambassador Program, thanks to the generous support of the Miami Foundation.

TFC Ambassador Program



Each neighborhood coalition has a sponsor organization to lead the hiring and support of a part-time TFC Ambassador, a community member who is part of a network of person-to-person support and trust to engage and empower parents and caregivers and help them more effectively access existing community resources and services.



The TFC Ambassador is a "natural helper" that will serve as the bridge between families and services; connecting the community to organizations that can address their needs.



This TFC Ambassador will serve as the bridge between families and services; connecting the community to organizations that can address their needs and sharing caregiver/youth input with TFC members to better inform the work of TFC..



TFC Neighborhood Ambassadors will facilitate communication between parents/caregivers and service providers, support programmatic best practices, and grow their neighborhood coalition of like-minded residents to help address the root causes of youth violence



This TFC Ambassador will serve as the bridge between families and services; connecting the community to organizations that can address their needs.