

Toolbox Overview for Building Needle-Moving Community Collaborations

Resources for Communities

To better understand what makes change happen at the community level, the Council conducted significant research, including conversations with more than 50 experts and cross-sector leaders and an extensive review of approximately 100 collaborations, and identified communities that demonstrated needle-moving (+10%) change on a community-wide metric. Based on this research, the Council believes that long-term, cross-sector collaboratives that use data-driven decision making to create significant change on a community wide metric holds real promise in solving complex community challenges.

The Council has developed this Community Collaboratives Toolbox to guide communities in creating or improving their own needle-moving collaboratives. This Toolbox is geared toward:

- Local officials (such as mayors, school superintendents and police chiefs) exploring collaboratives as a means to create broad-based change in their community
- Leaders and staff of community organizations seeking to make significant progress in their community
- Intermediaries shaping and supporting collaboratives
- Partner organizations participating in collaboratives

The Community Collaboratives Toolbox includes a detailed guide of key activities and resources for each stage of a collaborative's "life cycle", as well as an assessment module to better understand whether a collaborative is prepared to move to the next stage. There are also tools on how to structure collaboratives most effectively and how to best generate meaningful community participation.

The Community Collaboratives Toolbox consists of four primary tools, each of which is filled with additional resources to move collaboratives toward success:

["Building or Improving a Community Collaborative – Guidance by Life Cycle Stage"](#):

Describes the five stages of a collaborative's life, including case studies, a checklist of key activities, and common roadblocks for each stage

["Community Collaborative Assessment – A Diagnostic of Success Readiness"](#): Helps you evaluate your collaborative's readiness to implement your plan in the community

["Community Collaboratives Learning Examples: Capacity, Structure, Data and Funding"](#): Provides examples from successful collaboratives on these four critical success factors.

["Community Collaboratives: The Next Generation of Community Participation"](#):

Describes how to generate meaningful community participation, which is fundamental to community collaborative success.

In addition to the Toolbox, the Council developed [Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives](#) and the impact achieved in their respective communities.

Building or Improving a Community Collaborative – Guidance by Life Cycle Stage

Introduction

Collaboration has long been a part of the social sector. But many have also experienced collaboratives that do not live up to their potential in one way or another—nothing happens between meetings, the group never reaches real agreement, the group loses steam as participants transition in and out, or the collaborative falls apart as participants jockey to claim whatever successes emerge.

There is an exciting groundswell right now in a new kind of collaborative that may hold the key to addressing some of these problems. A few collaboratives have made real progress in a fairly short time. The overarching difference we have experienced in these collaboratives is seriousness about having real, concrete impact on a community-wide goal. Unsatisfied with small gains for a smaller segment of the population, the leaders of these new collaboratives have put forth ambitious goals and backed them up with long-term investments of resources and effort.

This guide to collaborative life stages can assist community collaboratives to succeed at any stage in their life cycle – from planning and development, through roll-out and course-correcting, and on to deciding its next steps. We have thus organized it along a five-part timeline based on our extensive research into best practices. The first two sections will help guide new collaboratives in selecting goals and starting out on the right foot. The last three sections will help existing collaboratives stay on track to create the kind of outcomes that are inherently community-changing. Indeed, a hallmark of every successful collaborative is a high aspiration to make a meaningful difference.

With that ambition in mind, this guide to collaborative life stages is for collaboratives that say “yes” to the following questions:

- Do we aim to effect “**needle-moving**” change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that a **long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to **using measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to **having community members as partners and producers** of impact?

Many community efforts do not meet these criteria. Those focused on a single school or small neighborhood project, for instance, are eminently worthwhile. But we have designed this document for collaboratives that are taking on social challenges on a community-wide scale.

What’s in this guide to collaborative life stages?

- *Life stage roadmap*: This section lays out the key stages of a collaborative’s development, along with the lessons learned from our research. A best-practices case study illustrates each stage.
- The last three sections are valuable for collaboratives that are changing goals or wish to incorporate best practices gleaned from successful collaboratives.

Arrayed within each life stage section is a core set of resources:

- *Introduction*: This gives an overview of what happens at each stage.
- *Key discussion questions*: These are the essential questions a collaborative must grapple with and resolve to move to the next stage.
- *Checklists of tasks to complete*: These are the building-block activities that collaboratives must master within each stage.

- *Potential roadblocks*: These are the all-too-common setbacks that collaboratives can encounter, along with suggestions for how to address them and a list of useful resources for assistance.

Additionally, we have included a full list of valuable Web resources, which share proven solutions and highlight organizations that support collaboratives.

Life stage map

Collaboratives typically go through a common series of life stages. These are described below, along with a rough indication of their duration.



	Develop the Idea	Plan	Align Resources	Reflect and Adapt	Decide Next Steps
Description	Collaboratives need to prepare for a strong start – one built upon broad public support and interest in the collaborative.	Successful collaboratives define their vision and develop action plans for years ahead – all while building out their capacity and resources.	Collaboratives efficiently align community resources, programs and advocacy toward what works best, using data to continuously improve.	Collaboratives monitor progress against their goals constantly to understand how they must adapt to changing circumstances.	Big change takes time. But at some point, collaboratives need to realistically assess their progress and determine the path forward.
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on lead convener Define core problem, using data Conduct community landscape review Engage in peer learning Identify funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring in other players Develop a roadmap Agree on goals and metrics for measuring success Secure additional funding Launch public campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute action plan, aligning existing programs, policies, etc. against roadmap Test and refine direction based on data Communicate early successes Ensure long-term financial commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to coordinate efforts and track data Determine long-term plan for sustainability Revise goals by broadening or sharpening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take stock of progress and remaining work Acknowledge successes Decide on role for future
Duration	3-6 months	1-2 years	1-3 years with ongoing continuous learning	Ongoing , after Align and Improve	After 4-6 years
Key Players to Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core group of partners Lead convener Local funder(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community partners (i.e., nonprofits, businesses, funders) Data analyst Director/Facilitator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional community partners Additional dedicated staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional community partners Additional funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core group of partners

Develop the Idea stage (3-6 months)

Community collaboratives evolve out of pressing social needs and some initial thoughts about how to address them. The realization that collaboration is necessary to attack the problem at scale may be recent. Or, it may have come about when a prior set of partnerships has failed to yield significant results.

But whatever its origins, a collaborative needs to learn how to pull together. Therefore, when successfully completed, the “Develop the Idea” stage is characterized by an energized, cohesive core group of partners. This nucleus also develops a clear sense of the issue they want to address and a short list of additional players who should be involved. Typically, the lead convener, i.e., organization or individual(s) that will coordinate the collaborative process, is identified during this stage.

Spearheaded by this lead convener, new or refocused collaboratives often have to immediately address challenges. Not least of these is raising sufficient funds to start to build the staff necessary to support the collaborative process. When raising funds, collaboratives may find funders hesitant because their work is functionally more like overhead than program work. Its impact is indirect and the lines of accountability are less clear. Nonetheless, collaboratives need to identify local stakeholders in the short-term who are interested in sustaining the collaborative throughout the “plan” phase.

Also among these challenges is resistance from parts of the community that may feel unheard or disenfranchised, including individuals, families, service providers and advocates. To avoid such

friction, the core group must ensure that the idea will generate broad support. This begins with understanding the community context, including the political and cultural landscape, early in the process, as well as completing the necessary research needed to identify existing work in the community.

In the case of Nashville, failure in the public schools was the catalyst for community decision-makers to come together. A study conducted by the Nashville Chamber of Commerce in 2002 highlighted the fragmented support network for Nashville schools. Business leaders saw an opportunity to focus and coordinate existing efforts to impact youth in the community. Alignment Nashville, a nonprofit intermediary, was subsequently born out of the business community's interest in addressing this challenge. In turn, Alignment Nashville has continued efforts to include all relevant stakeholders using an innovative annual process, called Invitation to Participate (ITP), which provides community organizations with an opportunity to propose ways in which they can align their existing resources with the goals of the collaborative.

When done well, this stage begins the formal process of developing a roadmap, which is a detailed action plan for the future, and begins to attract additional players to the collaborative.

Key discussion questions for this stage

- 1) Is my community's history with collaboration positive or negative? How can we use either situation to our advantage?
- 2) What pressing issue or opportunity has brought us together? Will this idea galvanize leaders across sectors in my community?
- 3) Is this issue capable of attracting resources both for direct service providers and dedicated collaborative capacity?
- 4) What do we know about this issue? What data is out there to help us better understand the issue?
- 5) How does the issue identified by the collaborative fit into the broader context of our community? Are other efforts under way? Are there opportunities for partnership with existing collaboratives? In what ways is our work needed and additive to existing work?
- 6) What core group of people simply *has to* be at the table to make needle-moving change occur on this issue?
- 7) Is there a trusted, neutral, influential leader – usually an organization – that is coordinating and facilitating the collaborative? Note: This may be your organization.
- 8) How can we foster genuine community partnerships to help us understand the issue and create the necessary support for the interventions needed?

Checklist of key tasks to complete

- Bring a core group of stakeholders to the table** (i.e., those interested in and able to drive the early planning and whose engagement is fundamental to the success of the collaborative)
 - Include decision makers and funders relevant to the issue in the community; participants should be either chief executives of organizations or trusted deputies who can take responsibility for the issue and can influence chief executives
 - Start to discuss which key participants need to be at the table: For instance, consider reaching out to the local United Way, mayors or senior city officials, school superintendents, child welfare agencies, relevant nonprofit service providers, area Chambers of Commerce, community foundations, advocates, researchers and the likes
 - Ensure that this early planning group includes the core decision-makers within the community, without becoming unwieldy
 - Understand that the collaborative will evolve and gain more appropriate members during later stages
- Conduct landscape research as necessary to understand how to build the collaborative to be effective within the community context**
 - Use or undertake research to understand what else is happening in the community, such as

-
- the cultural and political landscape and other initiatives or collaboratives focused on similar or related topics
 - Determine if a new collaborative is actually needed; sometimes the right path is to reinvigorate an existing collaborative
 - Engage in conversations with relevant community leaders, residents (including youth, if applicable), business leaders and owners, and funders
 - Aim, ultimately, to understand how the collaborative fits in the broader community context
-
- Frame the challenge and the problem(s) you will address**
- Based on the results of the landscape review, complete a visioning process with the broader group to further define the core focus of your collaborative
 - Consider creating a high-quality research report, one that can: clarify the problem in local terms, gather baseline data for your community, and create a focal point for the public launch
-
- Identify funding sources for dedicated capacity of the collaborative**
- Identify a committed source(s) of funding to sustain the collaborative throughout the Plan phase, during which time there will be no success stories to attract resources
 - Understand current funding condition of collaborative members to determine if some of their current resources can be repurposed to support the collaborative. Please refer to the [“Capacity and Structure”](#) document for examples of how other collaboratives have raised funds.
-
- Work to secure the right leadership and operational support for the collaborative**
- Select a lead convener organization that will provide significant administrative capacity and resources for the collaborative.
 - Most importantly, select a lead convener with the trust and respect of the community; one that is both sufficiently neutral and has the ability to convene a broad group of decision-makers. Please refer to the [“Capacity and Structure”](#) document for more information on selecting a lead convener.
-
- Create the community engagement and participation plan**
- Conduct a series of meetings, forums and calls to engage other potential stakeholders, such as nonprofits, government agencies, advocates and community members with an interest in the issue involved
 - Determine how and when residents, parents or youth can be involved to ensure that the collaborative has authentic engagement. Please refer to [“The Next Generation of Community Participation”](#) document for guidance on engaging your community, examples of how other collaboratives have engaged their communities, and community engagement questions to ask yourself during each life stage.
-
- Complete “Community Collaborative Assessment” to make sure you have successfully completed the work required for this stage**
- The assessment will help you understand the degree of your success in this stage; specifically, it lays out the core principles of collaborative work and prepares you for the next stage
-
- Engage in peer learning and secure technical assistance, if possible**
- Understand what other communities are doing to solve similar problems: read about other collaboratives, set up relevant calls, visit other collaboratives, and get involved in peer learning opportunities
 - Use existing knowledge in this process, an effort that will likely save time and resources
 - Seek out the support of intermediaries designed to support this kind of work
-

Potential roadblocks

While this is one of the most exciting times for a collaborative, challenges also exist. Common roadblocks are listed below, along with suggestions and resources for addressing them.

Potential roadblock	Starter suggestions for addressing the roadblock	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our community already has other collaboratives, so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what is at the root of that reaction. Are those 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 17, “NLC New High Schools”

necessary stakeholders are not interested in the planning process	attempts actually working? Are there effective collaboratives you could join?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 27, “Ready by 21 Existing Efforts”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are having trouble completing the landscape review to fully understand the context of our community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review a guide on how to understand community context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 11, “NLC Comprehensive Youth Strategies” • Source 54, “NFVP Community Map” • Source 55, “Find Youth Community Assessment” • Source 63, “Keystone Constituent Mapping” • Source 69, “Harwood Institute Community Rhythms” • Source 71, “Harwood Institute Public Capital”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our leadership is not united around the identified challenge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring data into the conversation; share relevant statistics on the biggest challenges of your community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 22, “Ready by 21 Action Plan”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While we have a broad vision for what our community should be, we cannot agree on the key goal(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Again, bring data to the table to discuss which issues are most pressing. The numbers should point the way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 21, “Ready by 21 Goals for Youth” • Source 42, “McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships” • Source 43, “Charting Impact”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have funding for a dedicated capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for seed funding, or try to build the capacity out of existing funding from within organizations or agencies • Also pursue in-kind resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 25, “Ready by 21 Leadership Update” • Source 66, “AccountAbility Stakeholder Engagement”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have a clear lead convener of our collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to other collaboratives or community leaders to find the right group or organization (specifically those that are already respected in your community) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 6, “NLC Gang Violence Prevention” • Source 23, “Ready by 21 Leadership Council” • Source 27, “Ready by 21 Stakeholders Wheel”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leader of the collaborative does not have the clout or neutrality to convene the right participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have one-on-one conversations to discuss who is respected and neutral and who could best play that role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 46, “Ready by 21 Leadership Audit”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are unsure how to engage residents and youth in our community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review case studies to understand how other collaboratives have approached engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 2, “Mobile Blueprint” • Source 7, “NLC Youth Action Kit” • Source 16, “NLC City Leadership” • Source 70, “Harwood Institute Authentic Engagement” • Source 72, “America Speaks Voices and Choices” • Source 73, “Unified New Orleans Plan”

Plan stage (1-2 years)

The “plan” stage is all about developing the process by which the collaborative will map its path and then measure its progress. This takes some intensive up-front effort. For instance, this stage typically entails at least monthly – and sometimes more frequent – meetings of the core stakeholder group. It is their task now to put in place the collaborative’s structure, finalize agreement on the community-wide goal(s), gather the appropriate benchmark data and set the metrics for measuring success.

During this stage, it is critical to make sure the right people are at the table, across all sectors and interest groups, and working smoothly towards the goal. Clear decision processes and a sense of mutual accountability are two critical pieces to make sure the group is aligned. Effective collaboratives can differ on the decision-making processes they use, varying from highly formal (with MOUs and bylaws) to largely informal, where Collaborative work is difficult and lengthy, usually requiring at least three to five years of committed effort to see results. This length of investment combined with needle-moving aspirations make mutual accountability all the more important, given that collaboratives’ formation are based on the belief that all members are necessary to achieve success. Though accountability will look different depending on the collaborative’s structure, two key things can promote mutual accountability: 1) choose metrics that correspond to the collaborative’s performance rather than to partners’ individual outcomes; 2) provide leadership opportunities (e.g., subcommittee chairs) in order to create a sense of ownership on behalf of partners.

This group should include a funder that is committed to supporting the collaborative in the early years. While one source of funding may have been sufficient to sustain the collaborative during this “Plan” stage, going forward, members will need to develop a sustainable funding strategy to cover the cost of the staff managing the collaborative. The collaborative also needs to make sure there are funds available for their partners’ work on the problem(s) they are trying to address. Please refer to the “[Capacity and Structure](#)” document for examples of how collaboratives have obtained sufficient funding to implement their vision.

During this stage, a concrete action plan should be developed, one that specifies the measurable outcomes the collaborative wants to achieve and the major interventions required to reach them. The roadmap breaks down each goal into actionable steps. It also provides guidance and timing for who will be accountable and when. This roadmap requires collaboratives to indicate how community resources, programs and systems will be aligned and the data metrics that match up with each desired outcome. Collaboratives should also continue to partner with future beneficiaries of this work to develop the roadmap.

As an example, underlying The Strive Partnership’s progress is its Student Roadmap to Success (<http://strivenetwork.org/vision-roadmap>) which was developed out of their “Plan” stage. The roadmap describes five life stages: early childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, transition from school or postsecondary training into a career. The map has critical checkpoints at each stage – and the indicators for tracking success all along the way. Using a common roadmap also allows The Strive Partnership’s networks to better align their community of efforts. The genesis of the roadmap served as a forcing function for the alignment of partners. Indeed, its development was a critical part of the process for creating a shared vision, along with an agenda for moving forward. Though critical, it was not easy to gain consensus. Core partners grappled with the research and Cincinnati’s data over several years before agreeing to this course of action. As in this case, data will often be necessary to bring shareholders into agreement concerning the vision and agenda of the collaborative.

When all of these elements are in place, the “Plan” stage comes to fruition with a campaign launch designed to rally the community around the efforts.

Key discussion questions for this stage

- 1) Do we have the right people at the table? Have we thought about what assets and perspectives each brings to the collaborative?
- 2) What exact change do we plan to see in five years? How will we measure our progress?
- 3) How will data be tracked and is there a data analyst or other resource available to support the collaborative in this regard?
- 4) What roles are needed to staff the collaborative? What resources are available to do this?
- 5) Do we have a funder(s) at the table willing to provide resources for the collaborative as it begins to implement its plans? What will it take to get funders on board?
- 6) Based on the assessment results, what are our collaborative’s strengths and weaknesses? What steps do we need to take to address weaknesses?

Checklist of key tasks to complete

- Bring additional people to the table, as needed, and engage the community**
 - Determine what sectors need to be involved and approach relevant leaders identified in the “Develop the idea” stage (e.g., funders, business leaders, government agencies)
 - Proactively address any changes in community leadership
 - Review “[Community Engagement Examples](#)” and make sure the collaborative continues to invest in engaging with residents and youth (if applicable)
- Analyze and discuss the data around the problem**
 - Use data around the issue as a starting point to bring the collaborative to a common understanding and vision
- Finalize collaborative goals and build buy-in to the shared vision**
 - Ask the question: What are the few key goals for the community over the next five years regarding this issue? Examples include “changing dropout rates by XX% or increasing graduation rates by YY%”
 - Such goals will often be characterized by a desired ultimate outcome (e.g., increased graduation rates) and several intermediate goals (e.g., increased slots in alternative schools) that lead to the overall result
 - Determine the geographic boundaries of the goal or goals. Do they apply to the entire city, the metropolitan area, or a large neighborhood within the city (e.g., Manhattan in New York City)?
 - Get final agreement on the metrics that will be tracked
 - Analyze the data to understand your goals and create a plan for data collection and analysis moving forward. Please refer to the “[Capacity and Structure](#)” document for common uses of data and examples of how other collaborative have used data.
Create a clear leadership and governance process if not already established
- Develop a roadmap and create an action plan**
 - Devise a roadmap or logic model for what it will take to achieve the vision and targets.
 - Develop a clear action plan to create the various pathways required to achieve the goal and work to align the programs, interventions, resources and advocacy efforts around what works
 - Include milestones and metrics to help track success over the next phase; these should also measure organizational goals such as hiring X people in year 2
 - Clarify accountability for organizational goals
- Understand evidence-based practices**
 - Research existing evidence-based practices and interventions that have been proven to address the issue you are trying to solve
 - Determine if your community is currently using evidence-based practices where appropriate, and if you should shift towards those practices in any areas
- Get commitment or at least common agreement from participants on a timeline**

- Ensure that participants are committed for the long-term
-
- Secure funding (or at least a committed private funder) for the next few years**
- Consider if funds can be obtained from an existing organization, the government or other efforts—if not, work to secure new funds sufficient to cover the collaborative’s required capacity. Please refer to the [“Community Collaboratives Learning Examples: Capacity, Structure, Data and Funding”](#) document for examples of how other collaboratives have raised funds.
 - Determine capacity required to manage the collaborative
-
- Secure the key staff required to support the work**
- Repurpose or hire the first few staff members and start to define roles. Please refer to the [“Capacity and Structure”](#) document for guidance on hiring dedicated collaborative staff and examples of how other communities have staffed their collaboratives.
-
- Start to build out the data effort for continuous improvement**
- Determine what data needs to be collected or reviewed to understand your community’s progress against your goal
 - Gather baseline data, where possible, to track your roadmap’s key metrics
 - Alternatively, develop a plan for how to collect that data in the future
-
- Revisit the “Community Collaborative Assessment”**
- Review this document with particular attention to the [“Plan & Align Resources”](#) stage in order to track progress against the guidelines in this section
-
- Develop a sustainability philosophy**
- Consider long-term options for the collaborative (e.g. achieve goals and dissolve, reach milestones and transfer to existing provider)
 - Determine funding required to pursue the options considered
-
- Launch a public campaign**
- Develop a communications plan to guide how to build public interest and enthusiasm, and to manage perceptions
 - Organize a launch event to announce the collaborative and its partners; share the goals, the roadmap and the benchmark data
 - Develop related press materials detailing compelling data and local stories about the problem, as well as planned solutions and commitments from key leaders (e.g. the mayor or CEOs)
 - If you have created a research report during the [“Develop the Idea”](#) stage, consider publishing the report to both communicate the challenge, lay out the roadmap as a solution, and attract supporters and partners as a part of the public launch

Potential roadblocks

Common roadblocks in the “Plan” stage involve failure to reach agreement on goals and missing representation. Here are some suggestions and resources for addressing each

Potential roadblock	Starter suggestions for addressing the roadblock	Resources (from inventory)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We cannot agree on a final set of community goals (usually 1 to 5 goals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm a longer list first, and then return to the data to clarify which goals relate to the most pressing issues in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 42, “McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are missing representatives from certain sectors at the table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key people representing the missing sector and have one-on-one conversations to understand people’s interest • Start with those whom you have, and target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 12, “NLC Stakeholder Engagement” • Source 13, “NLC Vital Partners” • Source 14, “NLC Violence Reduction Strategy” • Source 21, “Ready by 21”

	interventions where you have the right participants at the table	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Council • Source 27, "Ready by 21 Stakeholders Wheel"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are having challenges developing the roadmap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review case studies and examples of other communities' roadmaps • Solicit the help of technical assistance providers and facilitators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 2, "Mobile Blueprint" • Source 68, "Living Cities Collaborative Logic"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have the funding and/or the capacity to build data systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to public data may be enough; evaluate if you need to build out full systems • If so, see if you can share data systems with schools or other organizations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are having trouble getting data to assess the starting point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify proxy data, even if it does not exactly align with your goals • Develop a plan for future data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 64, "Keystone Feedback Surveys" • Source 67, "Keystone Constituency Voice"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders have not committed for the long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a key stakeholder who is committed for the long-term • Use that advocate to set an example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 63, "Keystone Constituent Mapping" • Source 66, "Accountability Stakeholder Engagement"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We find it difficult to determine how to formally organize our collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review case studies on how other collaboratives were structured • Discuss the pros and cons of the various options as a group to determine the structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 53, "NFVP Plan" • Source 68, "Living Cities Collaborative Logic"

Align Resources stage (1-3 years)

The “Align Resources” stage is where the rubber meets the road and, ideally, the collaborative starts to yield early results against the goals laid out in the roadmap. Indeed, it is during this stage that collaboratives start to build momentum.

But staying on course entails making constant adjustments and improvements as the collaborative collects data and learns more about what works and what does not work in the community. These bends and twists in the road require that the collaborative’s stakeholders meet at least monthly to make decisions based on where the tracked data is leading them.

In some instances, new programs may be required. However, for most collaboratives, this stage is more about improving the alignment of existing programs and resources. This steering activity continues as the collaborative develops, receives feedback through new data, and manages its continuous-improvement processes. Done right, this iterative phase will begin to improve the effectiveness of a community’s existing programs and resources.

As the work progresses, it is a good idea to highlight early “wins” to maintain community support and excitement. Likewise, publicly recognizing participating organizations and their programs helps build cohesion.

Chicago’s Pathway to Success exemplified the “Align Resources” stage. Data has determined Pathway to Success’ strategy since the question was asked: Who is at-risk of not graduating? CPS initially relied on its partnership with the Chicago Consortium on School Research (CCSR) and later The Parthenon Group to profile the at-risk student and determine which interventions were successful in improving graduation rates. Pathways to Success then worked to move the community towards programs that have demonstrated success in helping students graduate. For example, consulting firm Parthenon found that sixteen year-old first-time freshmen who attended Achievement Academies, the two-year schools for over-age students who have not met promotion criteria for high school admission, were almost twice as likely to graduate as their peers. As a result, Pathways to Success is looking to expand the academies to a four year program. If successful, CPS can then roll out an intervention to other district schools and partners.

Finally, it is important to build longevity into the collaborative so that it can weather changes in leadership both inside and outside the collaborative. Because the issues addressed are complex, many collaboratives will outlive the tenure of any single mayor, CEO, or ED. Successful collaboratives embed their strategies and roadmap throughout the systems in which they work, so that a change in any given leader does not halt progress. Building strong consensus around the roadmap or logic model—both internally and with key groups external to the collaborative—creates strong momentum that can carry new leaders with it. It may also be wise to brief all the major candidates for elective office to be sure each one understands the issue, the roadmap, and has a chance to voice any concerns prior to taking office.

Key discussion questions for this stage

- 1) What will it take to align our community’s efforts with the roadmap? What are potential barriers? How will we overcome those barriers?
- 2) What is the data telling us about the work of the collaborative? Are we on track? Are metrics moving in the right direction? How can we improve?

- a. Are we starting to see early changes in our community, due to the work in the above stage (this assessment may be qualitative at this point)?
- 3) Do we have long-term financial commitments? If not, how will we fund this in the next few years?

Checklist of key tasks to complete

- Execute the action plan by aligning existing programs in the community against the roadmap and creating new programs if necessary**
- Schedule regular meetings with relevant stakeholders (form sub-committees if the collaborative is focused on multiple goals)
 - Create new programs as necessary and Realign elements of your collaborative as needed, as you start to execute against the roadmap
-
- Advocate for or enact policy change in the community to change systems**
- Develop a policy agenda/plan, in the event that you will need to influence other groups or organizations in your community to change policies
 - Include policymakers in your community to help influence the flow of resources to what works
-
- Test, refine, course-correct along the way**
- Begin to collect and review relevant data points; determine what additional data points will be needed
 - Meet regularly to maintain focus on what is working, while quickly modifying what is not working, based on data and findings
 - Continue to proactively address any community leadership changes and to ensure the leadership group has all necessary stakeholders at the table
-
- Develop characteristics of success**
- Ensure the **vision and agenda** are evolving as your collaborative learns
 - Make sure **leadership and governance** structures are clear to everyone and effective
 - Grow **dedicated capacity and the structure** as the collaborative’s work expands
 - Make sure your **resources** are adequate for the size and goal of the collaborative (and continuing to grow, if necessary).
-
- Highlight early successes; give credit strategically to bolster the collaborative**
- Determine how to share credit with specific organizations and when it should be given to the collaborative as a whole
 - Develop an accompanying communications plan and build in regular opportunities to celebrate the success of your work with the public
-
- Ensure your collaborative’s culture is in place and being cultivated**
- Test to see if: participants are working together offline, personal relationships have been formed, institutional agendas have melted away and people are acting for the common good. Please refer to the “[Capacity and Structure](#)” document for more information on creating a collaborative culture that will promote success.
-

Potential roadblocks

Common roadblocks on the way to proper alignment and execution typically involve trouble aligning your community’s work or challenges tracking the data. Here are some suggestions and resources for addressing them:

Potential roadblock	Starter suggestions for addressing the roadblock	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are having trouble aligning programs, systems or resources to our collaborative’s vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you have the right people at the table (people with detailed knowledge and people who have decision-making authority) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 25, “Ready by 21 Leadership Update”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We still do not have data to measure and track our 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that your data collection plan is feasible and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 8, “NLC Evaluation Recommendations”

<p>progress</p>	<p>simple enough to execute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit the help of technical assistance providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 20, “Ready by 21 Data Coordination” Source 25, “Ready by 21 Leadership Update”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are concerned by data privacy constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the guide to data privacy; solicit help from university researchers in your community Determine if you need individual student data or if you can use publically available aggregated data sources Leverage stakeholders’ data sources. For example, have the school district or city representatives provide data or report trends 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some stakeholders still do not agree with the shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reevaluate whether you have the right stakeholders in place Go back to visioning if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 42, “McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships” Source 66, “Accountability Stakeholder Engagement” Source 67, “Keystone Constituency Voice” Source 73, “America Speaks Unified New Orleans”

Reflect and Adapt stage (ongoing, starting after “Align Resources”)

The “Reflect and Adapt” stage kicks in after the launch and maintains a rigorous focus on improving the collaborative’s evolving work. By this point, a collaborative typically has gathered and analyzed significant amounts of data. Many successes have taken place, along with the discovery of significant challenges. Given their track records, collaboratives often make one of two choices at this point: They either expand to better reach their goals, or they become even more intensely focused on a specific community problem.

During this stage, collaboratives also must confront the issue of long-term sustainability. What will happen to the collaborative in five to 10 years? What will be its legacy? Collaboratives must therefore begin to consider whether elements of their work can be spun off or institutionalized within other parts of the community. For example, with working models now in place, should collaboratives move their operations to schools or to nonprofits? These are questions of not only scope and scale but of mission. And they must be answered amid continually changing political and funding landscapes.

Yet some things remain constant. The need to celebrate successes continues to be crucial, as does the necessity of regularly reporting data results to the community. And as collaboratives successfully morph in response to changing needs, they usually find that community residents, parents and youth become ever more active in shaping their daily decisions and future direction.

Project U-Turn, which is now more than six years into its work, is now at the “Reflect and Adapt” stage. Several key participants from the early steering committee have transitioned to new roles and been replaced on the committee. At the same time, the group has chalked up impressive policy wins, nearly doubling the number of slots available in alternative high schools. In the current era of fiscal austerity, much of the collaborative’s work has shifted to protecting these gains and defining the next steps to further improve graduation rates. Many of the most senior participants, who had stepped back from the collaborative to let deputies push things forward, are now re-engaging to set the agenda for the next few years.

Key discussion questions for this stage

- 1) Are we starting to move the needle, i.e., see more significant changes in our data?
- 2) What is our five- to 10-year vision for this collaborative, particularly in our community context?
- 3) How do we manage our collaborative to maintain influence through turnover in participants, changes in political administrations and changing cultural trends?
- 4) Are we using data effectively to understand our progress, determine the appropriate adjustments and improve our collaborative?

Checklist of key tasks to complete

- Continue to coordinate efforts and track data**
 - Maintain the active tracking of data and report back to collaborative planners and the community
 - Continue to hold stakeholder meetings to execute against the roadmap
 - Make system adjustments to ensure that the collaborative’s impact is permanent
 - Complete the continuous improvement loop between data and programming**
 - Use data actively to inform programming and to make major decisions about the collaborative’s path forward
 - Maintain accountability for reaching goals by continuously monitoring the data
 - Make modifications and changes as needed, depending on the results of the data
 - Continue to proceed with the roadmap and adjust the roadmap as collaborative**
-

members have a better sense of what works

- Be ready, for example, to expand or narrow the collaborative’s focus to ensure that it is effectively addressing its goals

 Develop a long-term plan, specifically around sustainability

- Determine the required long-term programmatic elements of the collaborative, as well as its organization, infrastructure and financial-support needs
- Decide whether the collaborative should “put itself out of business” by having its efforts appropriately institutionalized

 Ensure the community is still actively engaged in formal and informal ways

- Study examples of community engagement, specifically those described in “[The Next Generation of Community Participation](#)” document
-

Potential roadblocks

Roadblocks typical to the Reflect and Adapt stage revolve around maintaining progress and addressing long-term sustainability. Here are some suggestions and resources for addressing them.

Potential roadblock	Starter suggestions for addressing the roadblock	Resources (from inventory)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People have become uninterested	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure you continue to celebrate successes to show the progress you are making towards your goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source 42, “McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships”• Source 65, “Keystone Formal Dialogues”• Source 66, “Account Ability Stakeholder Engagement”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The needle is not moving as fast as expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin your diagnosis of what is holding you back by determining if you have the right interventions, systems and resources in place in the community	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are having trouble completing the feedback loop and using data to improve the collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a feedback-loop mentality into your meeting agenda and think of ways to hold individual groups accountable• Be sure your collaborative is ready to actually act on the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source 8, “NLC Evaluation Recommendations”• Source 9, “NLC Municipal Action Guide”• Source 16, “NLC City Leadership”• Source 20, “Ready by 21 Data Coordination”• Source 64, “Keystone Feedback Surveys”• Source 65, “Keystone Formal Dialogues”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our fundraising plan is for the very short-term, but long-term sustainability is an issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work on building the right team of funders for your collaborative• Start with one long-term funder and build from that catalyst	

Decide Next Steps stage (after 4-6+ years)

It has been a long haul, but this is the stage at which the fruits of collaborative work are starting to show: You are making measurable strides toward your goals and congratulations are in order. Yet after a collaborative has been in operation for a significant period (of from four to six or more years), this is also the time to assess the ultimate success of the collaborative and determine a path forward.

Times change and the community may have too. Indeed, over the years, new external political conditions, new opportunities or even new challenges may have emerged. Now is the time for a collaborative to evaluate its role within today's context. As they take stock, many collaboratives face three options: whether to seek new ways to become more effective, whether to address other challenges or opportunities, or whether to end on a high note.

The variations on such future roles are numerous. For example, a collaborative might decide to:

- Maintain its current structure and role, as long as it can continue to have significant impact
- Utilize its structure, but change its mission to address new goals
- Institutionalize the gains made by embedding them within a public agency – such as a school or a health department – and transition out of existence

Celebrations become most poignant in the last instance, but it remains critical to regularly mark successes and thank those involved no matter what the future holds.

Milwaukee's Teen Pregnancy Reduction Initiative is now working to decide its next steps, having reduced births to teen girls by roughly 30% over the last five years. The oversight committee of the initiative believes the data will continue to improve as positive messages are reinforced both in schools and in out-of-school programs for kids before they become teens. United Way of Greater Milwaukee will maintain its support of the collaborative, but having shown its unique ability to convene and staff effective collaboratives, it is now launching a related initiative to reduce infant mortality.

Key discussion questions for this stage

- 1) Have we achieved our goal? Is there more progress that could be made?
- 2) Will the gains be maintained if the collaborative were to disappear tomorrow?
- 3) If we decide to end operations, what is the best way to communicate this and thank the community and stakeholders who were involved?

Checklist of key tasks to complete

- Assess your progress to-date**
 - Determine if the interventions are working and if you have achieved your goals
 - If unsure, discuss if you are on track and how you should proceed
 - If you have achieved your goals, decide on a path forward (options include continuing, adapting to a new form or focus, or ending well)**
 - Determine how to proceed over the next three to five years
 - List the pros and cons of each option, including how and who it will impact in your community
 - Formally create a roadmap forward based on your discussion of the options
 - Ensure that institutionalized efforts are being supported**
 - Ensure that your efforts will live on in existing institutions (such as school districts, government agencies and nonprofits), in terms of funding, public support and continuing impact
 - Work to transfer the knowledge and processes that made the collaborative successful to the
-

new host organization

If ending, make sure to acknowledge successes

- Recognize the successes of the collaborative publically
- Honor the community and stakeholders who led the effort

Potential roadblocks

Taking stock can result in the following list of roadblocks. Here are some suggestions and resources for addressing them.

Potential roadblock	Starter suggestions for addressing the roadblock	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We do not know if we are in this stage yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This stage should only be considered if you have achieved major data milestones against your goals, or if you believe that your collaborative has been ineffective• Ask yourself: “Is there more work we can be doing to really complete the collaborative process on our issue?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source 43, “Charting Impact”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our collaborative cannot agree on the path forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine if multiple, viable paths forward really exist• If so, decide if your stakeholders can take any of these different paths• If not, have members of the collaborative make the case for different paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source 42, “McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our efforts have not been institutionalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure you still have the right institutional players and decision-makers at the table	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source 21, “Ready by 21 Goals for Youth”

Resources

Organization	Topics	Website
Accountability	Stakeholder engagement	http://www.accountability.org/standards/aa1000ses/index.html
America Speaks	Community engagement	http://americaspeaks.org/resources/publications/
America's Promise Alliance	Knowledge center, general resources for education-focused efforts	http://www.americaspromise.org/Resources.aspx
Charting Impact	Setting goals	http://www.chartingimpact.org/complete-your-report/
Coalition for Community Schools	Range of resources for launching and sustaining community schools	http://www.communityschools.org/resources/howto.aspx
Collaboration Handbook	General guidance	http://www.amazon.com/Collaboration-Handbook-Creating-Sustaining-Enjoying/dp/0940069032
Findyouth.gov Collaboration Center	Case studies, general guidance	http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/collaboration.shtml
Grad Nation Resources	Parent engagement, research reports (i.e., dropout crisis)	http://www.americaspromise.org/our-work/Grad-Nation/Additional-Resources.aspx
Harwood Institute	Community engagement	http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/index.php?ht=a/StartToolExerciseAction/d/StartToolExercises/tool_id/12352/project_id/12351
IDEO Human-Centered Design Toolkit	Support for collaboratives focused on educational goals	http://www.ideo.com/work/human-centered-design-toolkit/
Institute for Educational Leadership	Support for collaboratives on community engagement	http://www.iel.org/publications/index.html
Keystone	Community engagement	http://www.keystoneaccountability.org/resources
Mobile Area Education Foundation	Sample documents about the foundation's efforts	http://maef.net/Resources/Documents/tabid/708/Default.aspx
National League of Cities: Institute for Youth and Families	Range of resources for youth and education initiatives (case studies, tools, strategy guides, research)	http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/iyef/yef-institute-publications
Philadelphia Youth Network	Research reports, policy briefs on youth-related topics	http://www.pyninc.org/resourcecenter/index.php
The Forum for Youth Investment	Case studies, general guidance	http://www.forumfyi.org/pubs
The Strive Partnership	Range of resources for continuous improvement, general guidance	http://www.strivetgether.org/education-results-resource/

Community Collaborative Assessment – A Diagnostic of Success Readiness

It looks like the countdown has begun. You have identified your community's most pressing issue, gathered a group eager to attack it, and now you are all ready to go. Or are you? This assessment will help you know whether your community fully understands the requirements and implications of forming a collaborative – *before* you start down a long and hard road.

Indeed, the essential purpose of this assessment is to improve the likelihood of creating significant impact against social problems that by definition have long been intractable. Though no community is ever completely ready to take on large-scale change, this checklist will assist you in identifying areas where you may need to do extra work, or just think some more. Ideally suited for organizations less than three years old, this assessment should nevertheless assist any collaborative that: 1) has just begun planning, or is in the early stages of rolling out its operations; 2) may be facing some challenges; or 3) is willing to revisit basic principles to ensure that it is maximizing its chances for success.

Who should use this assessment?

This readiness aid is for collaboratives that say “yes” to the following questions:

- Do we aim to effect “**needle-moving**” change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that a **long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to **using measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to **having community members as partners and producers** of impact?

How does it work?

This assessment contains two parts.

Part A: Develop the Idea < [Building or Improving a Community Collaborative - Develop the Idea](#)> will help you start out (or get refocused) by having you review your community's past experience with collaboratives, and by getting you to determine whether your answers to the questions above are truly affirmative. To do this, Part A poses a pair of critical questions:

- *Section 1:* How will our community's history with collaboratives influence our new collaborative work?
- *Section 2:* Do we have the core principles in place for a successful collaboration?

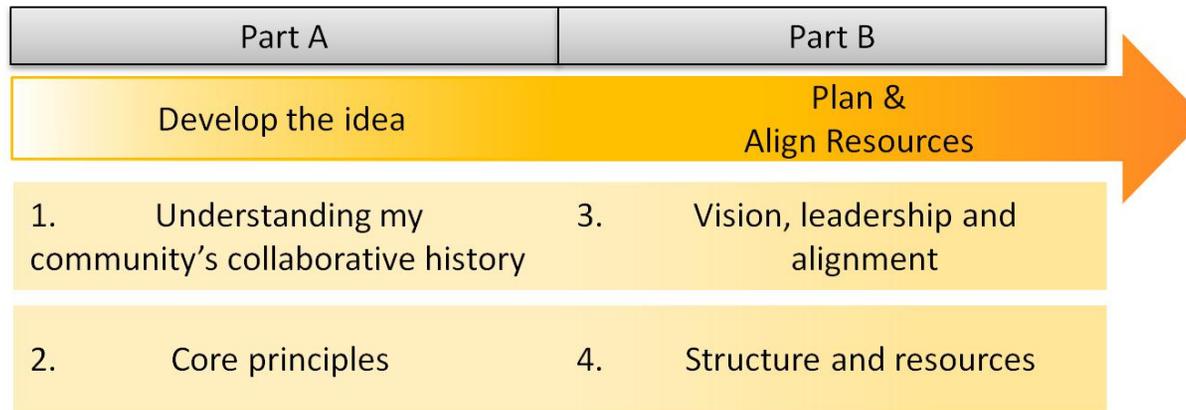
Part B: Plan & Align Resources < [Building or Improving a Community Collaborative – Plan](#)> and < [Building or Improving a Community Collaborative – Align Resources](#)> will support your collaboration's work after it has started. It helps you gauge how well you align with some common characteristics of successful collaborations. Again, this self-rating exercise entails answering two key questions:

- *Section 3:* How well aligned and organized is our community?
- *Section 4:* Do we have the capacity and resources in place to be successful?

Though based on a continuum, both parts should be useful to virtually any collaborative, regardless of how long in operation.

Here’s how the assessment works: Each section leads users through a series of key topics that are linked to statements. These statements reveal variations in readiness. Based on the selection of which statement you identify with, you will receive a score. That score, in turn, will give you a sense of your strengths and weaknesses on each topic. More than simply revealing areas of need, though, the assessment also provides related links to the Building or Improving a Community Collaborative document, which offers guidance, checklists, case studies, best practices, resources and effective tools that can help you improve in each area and stage of development. Please refer to <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#)> for this information.

The figure below illustrates the breakdown of this Assessment:



We have discovered that successful collaboratives share common characteristics. Yet, varying widely in approach and design, each is unique. This assessment acknowledges those differences while raising universal questions about how much forethought your team has put into mapping your collaborative’s future. Here are some preliminary questions to ask yourself as you either start down that path or change direction:

- What is our collaborative’s vision for the impact we want to achieve in five to 10 years?
- Is there anything we can or should do to strengthen our position before launching?
- How do the approaches and questions in this assessment resonate with our intentions and how do they not?

Part A: Develop the Idea

Section 1: How ready is my community for collaborative work?

Overview of Section 1: This section will allow you to evaluate your community’s experiences with collaboration, its successes and challenges, now and in the past. It should also enable you to gain a deeper understanding of the community context within which you will be working (including how to assess the need for a new collaborative) and how to think about partnerships for change. For more information concerning this phase in the development of your collaborative, please refer to <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative - Develop the Idea](#)>.

*Pick the statement in the rows marked A, B or C that best describes your community **over the past five years**. Each topic may require more than one row to cover adequately.*

Topic area	Statement A	Statement B	Statement C
History of collaboratives	My community has demonstrated interest in the issue we are trying to address (e.g., crime, dropouts) over the past five years through the mayor’s office, community initiatives and in other ways.	Ideas have been generated for collaborative efforts on this issue, along with some early attempts, but no sustained collaborative efforts.	My community has not demonstrated interest in this type of work.
	My community has collaborated across sectors when necessary over the past five years (e.g., among nonprofit, government, business).	We have had conversations across sectors, but have not formally collaborated.	While we needed to collaborate across sectors, we were not able to do so (due to lack of either interest or capacity).
History of community engagement	My community has a strong history of citizen engagement (parents, small businesses, etc.) in community affairs.	My community has had some successes and some failures in engaging citizens.	We have not tried to engage.
	My community has a strong history of youth engagement in community affairs involving them.	My community has had some successes and some failures in engaging youth.	We have failed to engage youth.
Ecosystem of providers and collaboratives	Historically, a strong provider network (i.e. network of organizations) has focused on our issue.	We have a moderately strong provider community, but it is not very aligned.	We do not have a strong provider network focused on this issue.
	We have a clear need for our collaborative; no other effective	Similar collaborative efforts exist that we could join; but those collaboratives	We are not sure what else is happening in our community on this

	collaboratives exist addressing this or related issues.	are only partially effective or only partially aligned on the issue.	issue.
	The providers in my community are using evidence-based practices to address this issue.	Some providers use evidence-based practices; some do not.	Most providers do not use evidence-based practices, or are not familiar with evidence-based practices for this issue.
	Providers or funders have acted successfully as leaders in my community by convening peers and facilitating collaborative conversations.	Prior efforts have produced leadership that has gained mixed results.	No one has done work in this area, or the leaders of that work were unsuccessful.
	We have providers or funders that are respected and maintain a relatively neutral stance on the issue.	The providers or funders have won the respect of some, but not all.	We are not sure about the agendas of our providers or funders.
History of funder collaboration	Over the past five years, my local funder community has worked well together, collaborating many times.	We have seen some funder collaboration and organization.	Our funder community is not organized and has not collaborated in the past.
	Over the past five years, my community's funders have been aligned around a common set of goals about what to fund in my community.	Some funder alignment has occurred on what to fund.	There has been no funder alignment on what to fund.
History of data use	Over the past five years, our community has used data to examine, assess and create shared understanding of our challenges.	We have sometimes used data to create shared understanding of our challenges.	We have not used data to create shared understanding of our challenges.
	My community has tracked a set of indicators or outcomes related to the goals of my collaborative.	Some tracking is happening in my community, but it is in very early stages.	No data tracking is taking place.
	My community has used data to create actionable plans for the future and set the current agenda.	We sometime use the data we collect to influence our plans for the future.	Our plans are not determined by data.

Scoring Assessment

The following graph helps you to see how ready you are in each category. Where you have the least shading are areas that may make beginning your collaborative more challenging. It is important to take time to create plans to address these areas. Please refer to resources in <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#)> and please consult the full list of resources at the end of this document for further information on any of the above topics.

ILLUSTRATIVE SCORING:

[Note on scoring methodology: For each Statement A you select, you will receive 3 points, for each Statement B you select, you will receive 2 points, for each Statement C, you will receive 1 point. The shading represents the percentage of points you have, out of the total potential number of points. The overall readiness for this area is a simple average of the above percentages.]

Topic Area	0%	100%
History of collaboratives		
History of community engagement		
Ecosystem of providers and collaboratives		
History of funder collaboration		
History of data use		
Overall		

Section 2: Do we have the core principles in place for a successful collaboration?

Overview of Section 2: This section measures something that equates to a collaborative's ambition, resolve and realistic expectations. The last – expectations – involves a hardheaded understanding about who needs to be on board, how progress is to be measured in unarguable ways, and whether or not the community is genuinely ready and mobilized. We call these the core principles of success for collaboratives. To increase your odds, go back through the questions copied below.

- Do we aim to effect “**needle-moving**” change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that a **long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to **using measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to **having community members as partners and producers** of impact?

Is your collaborative adequately prepared, based on these principles? Answering the queries below will help you determine if you are. Pick the statement in the rows marked A, B and C that best describes your collaborative's perspectives on the core precepts. Again, the topics may require several rows of statements to cover.

Core principle	Statement A	Statement B	Statement C
Aspires to “needle-moving” change	Our collaborative aspires to needle-moving change: 10%-plus change from the baseline on our outcomes.	Some potential participants are committed to 10%-plus change from the baseline on our outcomes.	The issue is not on key leaders’ radar screens; we do not have consensus yet.
	We have a clear sense of what the collaborative uniquely can add to our community and how we can partner with existing work.	We know what else is happening related to our issue and are figuring out how our work fits in.	We have not looked deeply at related work happening in our community.
	Our collaborative is focused on moving the entire community, city or region forward (i.e., graduation rates across the city).	We have only somewhat defined our boundaries. Or, our boundaries represent a subset of the community.	We have not defined our boundaries at all.
Long-term investment in success	Key stakeholders are committed to this work for the long-term (three to five-plus years).	Key stakeholders are committed to this work for at least the early phase of the work (i.e., one to two years); we are still building commitment for the long-term.	Key stakeholders have not defined how long they will remain committed.
	We have identified a key funder that has expressed interest in a long-term commitment (of three to five-plus years).	We have held exploratory conversations, but no funder has expressed an interest in long-term commitment.	We are still identifying potential funders.
Cross-sector engagement	We have multiple participants ready to support the collaborative from the sectors that are relevant to our issue area, (i.e., government, philanthropy, nonprofit, business and the like).	We have some, but not all, of the appropriate participants.	We are missing many of the relevant participants.
Data and continuous learning	We are committed to regularly using data that others or we collect in order to determine our direction and priorities.	Data will be a part of our work, but secondary to some other aspects of the collaborative’s work	We do not plan to collect data as a part of our collaborative.
	We have a plan, now underway, for capturing and analyzing relevant data,	We have a plan for how to capture relevant data, but we have not	We are in the process of developing a plan.

	considering the data as a group, and adjusting course based on the data.	determined how to regularly incorporate it into our work.	
Community engagement	We have identified individuals from the community who should be involved in our collaborative process and have decided how they should be involved.	We are thinking about the engagement of key individuals, but don't know who to engage or how.	We have not thought about engagement beyond the institutional participants in our collaborative.
	Our leadership has established a process for gaining buy-in from relevant community members in our community (e.g., parents and youth).	We are developing a process to establish buy-in.	We are not going to develop a buy-in process.

Scoring Assessment

The following graph helps you to see how ready you are in each category. Where you have the least shading are areas where you are least ready. Please refer to resources in <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#)> for general help with this section, <[Community Collaboratives Learning Examples](#)> for data and continuous learning help and <[The Next Generation of Community Participation](#)> for help with community engagement, and please consult the full list of resources at the end of this document for further information on any of the above topics.

ILLUSTRATIVE SCORING:

[Note on scoring methodology: For each Statement A you select, you will receive 3 points, for each Statement B you select, you will receive 2 points, for each Statement C, you will receive 1 point. The shading represents the percentage of points you have, out of the total potential number of points. The overall readiness for this area is a simple average of the above percentages.]

Core Principle	0%	100%
Aspires to “needle moving” change		
Long-term investment in success		
Cross-sector engagement		
Data and continuous learning		
Community engagement		
Overall		

Successful collaboratives share common characteristics:



The next two sections rate your adoption of and adherence to some proven success traits shared among collaboratives demonstrating best practices. How do you line up along these five characteristics of success?

- 1. Shared vision and agenda:** Does our entire collaborative community have a shared vision, with milestones that will demonstrate our progress?
- 2. Effective leadership and governance:** Do we have a clear leadership structure, with accountability systems built into place?
- 3. Deliberate alignment of resources, programs and advocacy toward what works:** Have we identified programs and strategies with demonstrated effectiveness and aligned our resources to them?
- 4. Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure:** Do we have the people (including a lead convener) to facilitate this work? Do we have the right staffing? How will we build the capacity of our collaborative in the future?
- 5. Sufficient resources:** Do we have a long-term (three to five-plus year) plan for funding? Have we thought about how this can become sustainable?

As you complete these sections, ask yourself:

**“For our collaborative, which of these characteristics are most important to have in our collaborative?
Which are less important and why?”**

Section 3: How aligned and organized is our community?

Overview of Section 3: This section will help you assess your collaborative’s alignment, organization and approach as you start to implement your work. This section will help you understand how ready you are to do that work. For more information concerning this phase in the development of your collaborative, please refer to <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative - Plan](#)> and <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative - Align Resources](#)>.

Pick the statement in each row A, B or C that best describes your collaborative’s work on each of the common characteristics of success. Each characteristic may require several rows of statements to cover.

Characteristics of success	Statement A	Statement B	Statement C
Shared vision and agenda	The collaborative participants and broader community share a common vision for the future about the issue.	Parties have somewhat distinct visions about this issue in our community.	No one has clearly articulated vision statements for the community; the issue is not on people’s minds.
	We have agreed upon a road map to guide how we will achieve community-wide change.	We do have a road map, but it is under development. Or, we have only reached partial agreement on our path.	We tried to create a road map, but there is no agreement.
	We have data metrics that match up with our goals and action plan.	We are not sure how to measure metrics to assess progress against the road map.	We do not plan to use data.
Effective leadership and governance	We have achieved buy-in from engaged community leaders around the collaborative’s vision, road map and defined goals.	Some community leaders are engaged and have bought in.	We have gained very little engagement and little buy-in from community leaders.
	We currently have a respected, neutral leader at the head of our collaborative, who is able to convene and maintain a diverse collaborative.	Our leadership lacks some characteristics and skills required to convene and maintain the collaborative.	Our leadership lacks most of the necessary characteristics and skills to convene and maintain the collaborative.
Deliberate alignment of resources, programs and advocacy toward what works	We have engaged the full set of organizations and leaders that must be aligned to reach our goals.	We are missing some of the necessary organizations and leaders in our collaborative.	We are not sure if we have the right organizations and leaders at the table.

We have researched similar efforts outside our community to identify effective strategies that we can adapt.	We have researched some effective strategies, but are unsure how to adapt them to our model.	We have not researched other similar efforts.
Our roadmap specifies a complete set of interventions that logically lead to the changes we want to see.	Our roadmap includes only some of the interventions we believe are necessary for change; our roadmap is partially complete	We have not thought about how our interventions lead to the change we want to see; our roadmap is not completed at all.
Where applicable, we have advocacy efforts focused on changing the policies, funding and systems in our community to better address the issue.	We have a plan for how to create advocacy effectively.	We need advocacy in our community, but we have not thought about how to create it.

Scoring Assessment

The following graph helps you to see how ready you are in each category. Where you have the least shading are areas where you are least ready. Please refer to resources in <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#)> to help with this section and please consult the full list of resources at the end of this document for further information on any of the above topics.

ILLUSTRATIVE SCORING:

[Note on scoring methodology: For each Statement A you select, you will receive 3 points, for each Statement B you select, you will receive 2 points, for each Statement C, you will receive 1 point. The shading represents the percentage of points you have, out of the total potential number of points. The overall readiness for this area is a simple average of the above percentages.]



Section 4: Do we have the capacity and resources in place to be successful?

Overview of Section 4: This section will assist you in making an assessment of your collaborative’s infrastructure and resources as you start your work.

Pick the statement in each row A, B or C that best describes your collaborative’s work on these core characteristics. Several statement rows may be required to cover each.

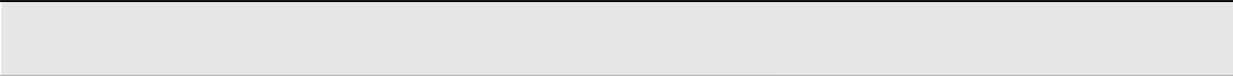
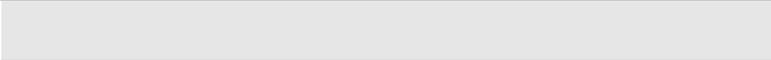
Characteristics of success	Statement A	Statement B	Statement C
Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure	We have a clear sense of the time and talent needed to run the collaborative itself (separate from participating organizations’ capacity).	We have not considered what capacity is needed, but will in the future.	We do not plan to have dedicated capacity for the collaborative.
	We have identified paid staff who can help coordinate or facilitate the collaborative process.	We are not sure how to get paid staff.	We do not plan to have paid staff.
	We have clearly defined roles within the collaborative (such as a facilitator, data measurement specialist and so on).	We have some roles, but they are not explicitly defined.	We do not have clear roles.
	We have the necessary structure, processes and systems to support our work (committees, systems to analyze data and so on).	We have some of this in place.	We do not have any structures, processes or systems in place.
	Providers in my community have the capacity to come together and collaborate or partner.	Providers have some capacity, but not enough for our collaborative.	Providers have minimal capacity to come together and collaborate.
	Sufficient resources	We have a clear sense of what it will take to fund our collaborative, including dedicated capacity, over the next five years.	We have estimates, but are not sure how to figure out what resources are required.
We have long-term financial commitments from funders to cover the dedicated capacity and collaborative work.		We have short-term commitments from funders.	We don’t have any financial commitments.

Scoring Assessment

Please refer to resources in <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#)> and <[Community Collaboratives Learning Examples](#)> to help with this section and please consult the full list of resources at the end of this document for further information on any of the above topics.

ILLUSTRATIVE SCORING:

[Note on scoring methodology: For each Statement A you select, you will receive 3 points, for each Statement B you select, you will receive 2 points, for each Statement C, you will receive 1 point. The shading represents the percentage of points you have, out of the total potential number of points. The overall readiness for this area is a simple average of the above percentages.]

Characteristics of Success	0%	100%
Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure		
Sufficient resources		
Overall		

Overall Score

ILLUSTRATIVE SCORING:

Your score on this assessment is intended to give you a sense of where you are in the collaborative life stages (please refer to [Community Collaboratives Learning Examples - Life Stage Map](#)). Armed with an understanding of what stage your collaborative is in, you can determine what is next for your collaborative and its partners. In addition, the individual sections of the assessment are intended to show you where your investments have paid off and you are making progress, and where you need to concentrate going forward. Your score on the assessment can be used to jump start conversations with collaborative partners and to “align resources” your efforts as you continue the hard work of collaboration.

[Note on scoring methodology: For each Statement A you select, you will receive 3 points, for each Statement B you select, you will receive 2 points, for each Statement C, you will receive 1 point. The shading represents the percentage of points you have, out of the total potential number of points. The overall readiness for this area is a simple average of the above percentages.]

Section of Assessment	0%	100%
Part A: Develop the Idea		
Part B: Plan & Align Resources		
Overall		

Overall, you have a [high, medium, low] level of readiness.

How to understand your score:

- If your score is high: Nice work!
You are likely ready to successfully implement your plan. Use this assessment to understand your relative strengths and weaknesses, continuing to build your strengths and looking for ways to improve your weaknesses.
- If your score is medium: You have made significant progress!
While you may be ready to begin implementing, it is important that you carefully consider the areas where you scored the lowest and address those by referencing relevant resources.
- If your score is low: You are on your way, but consider addressing the weaker areas before beginning!
By now, you are likely well aware that needle-moving collaboratives require a significant investment of time and energy. Though you likely still have significant work to do before implementing, completing this assessment has put you on a path to understanding where to focus your efforts. Please consult the full set of resources below.

Regardless of how you scored on the assessment, the full list of resources below, organized by assessment section, will be helpful in continuing to strengthen your collaborative and extend its impact in your community.

Resources

Topic	Tool
Develop the Idea	
Ecosystem of providers and collaborative	<Source 55, Find Youth Community Assessment>
	<Source 54, NFVP Community Map>
	<Source 53, NFVP Plan>
	<Source 27, Ready by 21 Stakeholders Wheel>
	<Source 12, NLC Stakeholder Engagement>
Core Principles	
	<Source 7, NLC Youth Action Kit>
	<Source 42, McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships>
	<Source 78, Adaptive Problems>
Long-term investment in success	<Source 42, McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships>
	<Source 78, Adaptive Problems>
	<Source 6, NLC Gang Violence Prevention>
	<Source 13, NLC Vital Partners>
	<Source 14, NLC Violence Reduction Strategy>
	<Source 28, Ready by 21 Existing Efforts>
	<Source 42, McKinsey Public-Private Partnerships>
	<Source 53, NFVP Plan>
	<Source 85, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Herkimer County Narrative>
	<Source 87, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Boston Narrative>
	<Source 90, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Chicago Narrative>
	<Source 92, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Philadelphia Narrative>
	<Source 95, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: San Jose Narrative>
	<Source 8, NLC Evaluation Recommendations>
	<Source 9, NLC Municipal Action Guide>
<Source 43, Charting Impact>	
<Source 84, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Memphis - Use of Data>	
<Source 86, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Cincinnati, Covington, Newport Narrative - Use of Data>	
<Source 87, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Boston Narrative - Use of Data>	
<Source 88, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Parramore Narrative - Use of Data>	

	<Source 90, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Chicago Narrative - Use of Data>
Community Engagement	<Source 92, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Philadelphia Narrative - Use of Data>
	<Source 2, Mobile Blueprint>
	<Source 53, NFVP Plan>
	<Source 55, Find Youth Community Assessment>
	<Source 72, America Speaks Voices and Choices>
	<Source 73, America Speaks Unified New Orleans>
	<Source 74, Keystone Feedback App>
	<Source 76, Civic Engagement Measure>
	<Source 79, Keystone Prospectus>
	<Source 80, 21st Century Constituency Voice>
	<Source 83, Keystone Constituency Voice Overview>
	<Source 84, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Memphis Narrative - Community Engagement>
	<Source 88, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Parramore Narrative - Community Engagement>
	<Source 89, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives : Nashville Narrative - Community Engagement>
	<Source 91, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Milwaukee Narrative - Community Engagement>
	<Source 92, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Philadelphia Narrative - Community Engagement>
	<Source 93, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: San Joaquin County Narrative - Community Engagement>
	<Source 94, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Atlanta Narrative - Community Engagement>
Plan	Align Resources
Vision, leadership, and alignment	
Shared vision and agenda	<Source 2, Mobile Blueprint>
	<Source 6, NLC Gang Violence Prevention>
	<Source 7, NLC Youth Action Kit>
	<Source 11, NLC Comprehensive Youth Strategies>
	<Source 13, NLC Vital Partners>
	<Source 14, NLC Violence Reduction Strategy>
	<Source 43, Charting Impact>
	<Source 53, NFVP Plan>

	<Source 77, Intended Impact / Theory of Change Tool> <Source 84, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Memphis Narrative - Shared Vision> <Source 86, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Cincinnati, Covington, Newport Narrative - Shared Vision> <Source 89, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Nashville Narrative - Shared Vision> <Source 95, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: San Jose Narrative - Shared Vision>
Effective leadership and governance	<Source 7, NLC Youth Action Kit> <Source 13, NLC Vital Partners> <Source 14, NLC Violence Reduction Strategy> <Source 16, NLC City Leadership> <Source 46, Ready by 21 Leadership Audit> <Source 88, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Parramore Narrative - Effective Leadership & Governance> <Source 89, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Nashville Narrative - Effective Leadership & Governance> <Source 91, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Milwaukee Narrative - Effective Leadership & Governance> <Source 95, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: San Jose Narrative - Effective Leadership & Governance>
Deliberate alignment of resources, programs and advocacy	<Source 2, Mobile Blueprint> <Source 11, NLC Comprehensive Youth Strategies> <Source 16, NLC City Leadership> <Source 25, Ready by 21 Leadership Update> <Source 26, Ready by 21 Leadership Capacity> <Source 43, Charting Impact> <Source 84, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Memphis Narrative - Deliberate Alignment> <Source 87, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Boston Narrative - Deliberate Alignment> <Source 88, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Parramore Narrative - Deliberate Alignment> <Source 90, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Chicago Narrative - Deliberate Alignment>
Structure and resources	
Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure	<Source 2, Mobile Blueprint> <Source 6, NLC Gang Violence Prevention> <Source 13, NLC Vital Partners>

	<u><Source 16, NLC City Leadership></u>
	<u><Source 27, Ready by 21 Stakeholders Wheel></u>
	<u><Source 28, Ready by 21 Existing Efforts></u>
	<u><Source 43, Charting Impact></u>
	<u><Source 46, Ready by 21 Leadership Audit></u>
	<u><Source 84, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Memphis Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 86, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Cincinnati, Covington, Newport Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 89, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Nashville Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 90, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Chicago Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 91, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Milwaukee Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 92, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Philadelphia Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 94, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Atlanta Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
	<u><Source 95, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: San Jose Narrative - Dedicated Capacity & Appropriate Structure></u>
Sufficient resources	<u><Source 16, NLC City Leadership></u>
	<u><Source 85, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Herkimer County Narrative - Sufficient Resources></u>
	<u><Source 86, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives : Cincinnati, Covington, Newport Narrative - Sufficient Resources></u>
	<u><Source 89, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives : Nashville Narrative - Sufficient Resources></u>
	<u><Source 94, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Atlanta Narrative - Sufficient Resources></u>
	<u><Source 95, Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: San Jose Narrative - Sufficient Resources></u>

Community Collaboratives Learning Examples Capacity, Structure, Data and Funding

Introduction

One of the defining characteristics of collaboratives that really get things done is dedicated capacity. In conversations with leaders of “needle-moving” collaboratives, we have learned that this capacity – and the structure it supports – is often what differentiates the most effective efforts from other forms of collaboration. The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance and examples around how to structure and staff your collaborative. In this guide, we address several key aspects of how to organize a collaborative that we believe lead to success:

- Structure: The organization, governing body and the decision-making rules of the collaborative
- Dedicated capacity: The roles that support the collaborative day-to-day
- Culture: The norms that drive a collaborative to success

With regards to organizing the collaborative, we also recognize the importance of community participation and have provided a separate guide on this topic. Please refer to <[The Next Generation of Community Participation](#)> document for this separate guide. We also share thoughts on two other elements of collaborative organization, which are critical to success:

- Data and continuous learning: How to use data to improve and make decisions
- Funding: Profiles of how collaboratives are funded

Additionally, we have provided lists of resources in the guide’s appendices and have two other documents that can aid in the process of establishing your collaborative:

- Building or Improving a Community Collaborative – Guidance by Life Cycle Stage: Describes the five stages of a collaborative’s life, including: including case studies, a checklist of key activities, and common roadblocks for each stage (please refer to <[Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#)>)
- Community Collaborative Assessment – A Diagnostic of Success Readiness: An assessment that gauges your collaborative’s readiness to implement your plan in the community (please refer to <[Assessment](#)>)

This guide is tailored for collaboratives that say “yes” to the following questions:

- Do we aim to effect “**needle-moving**” change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that a **long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to **using measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to **having community members as partners and producers** of impact?

Starting with the same kind of will and planning, other collaboratives have been able to build the capacity, structure and continuous learning systems to achieve success. We encourage you to identify with the examples below, not compare yourself against them. This document will provide you with thoughts to help you learn from them.

Examples of Collaborative Structures

Our best practices grow from the experiences of three community collaboratives that have made remarkable progress: Nashville's efforts around youth and education, Project U-Turn of Philadelphia and The Partnership in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

1) *Structure or organization of the collaborative*

Let's look more deeply at the terms above. Structure encompasses how collaboratives are organized to address their goals. How they come together is important. Typically, a lead convener, which is an organization or individual, pulls the collaborative together and organizes it. This entity may also be known as the "anchor organization." Its role is central in every way. First off, the lead convener must have the trust and respect of the community. Almost always, this requires an organization with the clout to bring cross-sector leaders together and inspire them to stay engaged. The leader of this organization must command great respect, as well as be seen as having no political aims or ax to grind beyond having a positive impact on the issue at hand. This neutrality is absolutely necessary to ensure that the effort moves forward based on the data, not on any preconceived agenda. We have seen local United Ways, business leaders, university presidents, philanthropists, intermediaries and others play this role. City officials, including mayors, superintendents, and police chiefs often play an important supporting role.

Once formed, the collaborative is led by a steering or oversight committee made up of a core group of participants. In the beginning, the steering committee meetings must be held regularly and often (typically monthly). Who leads this committee? It may be the head of the convening organization, supported by his or her own staff. Sometimes, the steering committee may appoint a chairperson with staff support coming from another participating organization.

There is a range of formality in the collaboratives researched, but many trend towards the informal when it comes to decision-making. Instead, they rely on a strong culture of trust and mutual accountability among participants. Having aligned initially around a common vision and roadmap, formal decision rules become less necessary for the collaborative. In the case of Milwaukee's collaborative related to teen pregnancy, the oversight committee co-chairs have veto power over any new public awareness ads. But otherwise the collaborative operates without bylaws or formalized roles.

Subcommittees usually also form to focus on specific pathways to the broader goal or to tackle short-term efforts such as overseeing a research project. For example, if a community collaborative is addressing graduation rates, this might elicit the creation of one subcommittee focused on new alternative high schools and another working to improve students' transition from middle to high school. They typically meet more often than the steering committee. This kind of needs-based committee structure is common across the collaboratives we researched.

Examples of collaborative structures:

Description	
Nashville	<p><u>Alignment Nashville:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Operating board:</i> Alignment's Operating Board is composed of the chair and vice-chair of each committee. The board provides oversight, collaboration and accountability for the committees. • <i>Committees:</i> The collaborative developed a sophisticated committee structure to ensure its partners have a meaningful role. Each of the 22 committees meets monthly and has a chair and vice chair. Specific guidelines exist for committee membership and most have between 10 to 20 members.
Project U-Turn	<p><u>Child and Youth Master Plan (CYMP):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Task force:</i> More than 50 Nashville community leaders participate, and they are divided among subcommittees focused on pieces of the plan. • <i>Steering committee:</i> The committee started with 12 members and now has 20. It includes youth advocates, representatives of the mayor, schools, nonprofits and funders. The steering committee sets the strategy and agrees annually on a workplan for collective action. • <i>Broader partnership:</i> Other partners (roughly 40) are formally part of Project U-Turn, but participate on an as-needed basis in various committees and working teams.
The Strive Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive committee:</i> A 30 member executive committee meets quarterly to oversee the collaborative's work and provide recommendations on the general direction of the effort. • <i>Strategy teams:</i> The Executive Committee has formed 5 strategy teams (subcommittees) organized around the collaborative's priority areas. • <i>Collaboratives:</i> Strive's collaboratives are networks of providers and school officials ("networks") that are focused on specific goals. They recommend, then implement and track the interventions along Strive's roadmap to success. They also receive support from Strive's staff around facilitation, data and measurement, communications and grantwriting until they reach sustainability.

Variations in structure

While the above structures are most common, there are exceptions. One important variation on the structure outlined above is the “hub-and-spoke” structure. In the East Lake neighborhood of Atlanta, the East Lake Foundation acts as a hub for the collaborative, operating bilaterally with individual partner organizations. The full set of partners does not meet together. As the primary funder, the East Lake Foundation selects and recruits each partner, coordinates their efforts, and ensures integration of programs across all providers. This structure can offer advantages in simpler governance and centralized resources.

2) Dedicated capacity

Dedicated capacity translates into staff that support the day-to-day work of the collaborative and help move the agenda forward. The extent of this capacity ranges from two people to more than seven in the collaboratives researched for this project. In many cases, this capacity exists within a

single organization, but it can also be shared across organizations. The roles generally required are:

- *Leader and Convener*: Brings key leaders to the collaborative and moves the group towards a cohesive, collective strategic direction
- *Director and Facilitator*: Manages the day-to-day work to support the community collaborative; accountable for getting things done between meetings. Guides the collaborative’s meetings, with a specific eye towards moving the group to consensus and action.
 - This person often has deep skills related to strategic planning, process improvement and/or stakeholder management
- *Data analyst*: Supports continuous learning on the technical side by aggregating and analyzing data, finding trends and reporting back to groups. Rather than build this capacity, some collaboratives partner with researchers or an outside firm to play this role.
- *Policy analyst*: Monitors policy news and changes relevant to the collaborative’s work, reports back to the collaborative on policy wins and obstacles, and helps determine opportunities for the collaborative to have influence on policy decisions
- *Administrative support*: Coordinates all meetings across the collaborative, ensuring that the groups are on track and committee meetings are run consistently
- *Communications lead / Development director*: Manages external communications to maximize the impact of the collaborative’s work; ensures that the collaborative speaks as one entity when appropriate, coordinates with partners to ensure that their independent communications are aligned with the collaborative’s agenda and maintains and develops relationships with funders

In smaller collaboratives, one individual may fill many positions. Ultimately, the number depends on the breadth of the issues, complexity of the collaborative’s structure and available funding.

	Description	Overall size
Nashville	<p>Alignment Nashville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Core staff</i>: Seven staff support the committees, including an executive director, associate executive director, associate director, program manager, collaborative coordinator, grants developer and office manager. <p>Child and Youth Master Plan (CYMP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Project lead</i>: A seasoned manager with extensive experience in corporate planning and project management headed the project. • <i>Consultant</i>: Provided by a collaborative intermediary, this staff member helped support the process. • <i>Volunteers</i>: Provided by the Mayor’s Office, these are college interns who add capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment: 7 FTE • CYMP: 2 FTE and volunteers
Project U-Turn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lead VP</i>: Acts as lead convener and manages the daily operations. She creates agendas, facilitates the steering committee, pushes the work ahead between meetings, and maintains relationships within the broader partner group. She also maintains the steering committee’s work plan, which allows partners to respond quickly to opportunities. • <i>Data analyst</i>: One data analyst works within the school district, responding to the steering committee’s data requests with research reports and evaluations on school-based efforts. • <i>Policy analyst</i>: A policy analyst works within the Mayor’s Office, monitoring policy advancements and reporting to subcommittees on policy wins and obstacles. • <i>Ad hoc support</i>: The Lead VP ‘steals time’ from other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 FTE

The Strive Partnership

Philadelphia Youth Network administrators and communications staff as needed to support Project U-Turn.

- *Executive Director*: Oversees the work of the collaborative and works with the Executive Committee’s strategy teams to develop plans around the collaborative’s priorities.
 - *Program directors*: This includes a Director of Community Partnerships, who works on community engagement initiatives and supports the network of collaboratives, and a Director of School Support, who aligns out-of-school programs with school district efforts.
 - *Data director*: The Director of Continuous Improvement oversees the production of the progress report card and ongoing data reporting and analysis work, and helps collaboratives determine how to use the data.
 - *Additional support*: This includes a Team Coordinator, who supports other staff members, and a Strive Partnership Fellow, who works on various projects for the collaborative.
 - *Coaches*: Part-time coaches support the networks of collaboratives in the form of facilitation, data analysis, and communications.
 - *Gov’t affairs*: A contracted government affairs consultant helps the strategy team focus on policy and advocacy as-needed.
- 6+ FTE

3) Culture of the collaborative

Culture is the secret sauce of every successful community collaborative—it is difficult to define, difficult to develop, and yet one of the most powerful enablers of high impact. No two cultures are alike, but collaboratives that *do* move the needle on social issues display at least three similar traits. They revolve around what might be categorized as trust, modesty and maturity.

First, successful collaboratives develop deep relationships and trust among partners. This is the oil that makes the machinery of collaboration work. As one lead staffer said of the local health commissioner – who is also the co-chair of her oversight committee: “We know each other well. I can, and do, call him at home when I need to.” Helping to build these authentic relationships are both the goodwill that participants bring to the effort and the very process of grappling with data and research to unlock a solution to the issue. Having established strong relationships, ongoing communication between partners is critical to maintain trust.

Second, the lead conveners of successful collaboratives generally place partners and the collaborative out front for publicity and credit. Though some lead conveners may operate in the foreground, sharing credit helps create a sense of cohesion and mutual value among partners. Project U-Turn’s Jenny Bogoni expresses the value of sharing credit this way: “It’s better if PYN [Philadelphia Youth Network] is in the background, and partners are in the foreground getting credit for what they are doing. The partners own this campaign, not PYN.”

Lastly, in needle-moving collaboratives, participants willingly suppress their institutional or individual agendas in support of the collective good. One hallmark of a mature collaborative is that partners take a coordinated approach to funding. With money and jobs potentially at stake, this is a true test of trust. Participating organizations may write a joint application, the group

might jointly agree on which organization should apply for the funding, or the lead convener may apply for funding with the intent of subcontracting portions of the funding to partner organizations. In Milwaukee, one subcommittee is a “funders’ collaborative.” It makes joint grants to support projects that United Way cannot fund. This absence of competition is a symptom of both a strong culture and a collective endorsement of the collaborative’s roadmap.

Data and Continuous Learning Examples

Using data to set priorities, drive the collaborative process, and make decisions are key characteristics that needle-moving collaboratives share. Data is often used to:

- 1) Understand the problem or issues that a collaborative is trying to address
- 2) Gain alignment around what the data is saying
- 3) Make specific decisions about the collaborative's agenda and roadmap
- 4) Learn about what is working and not working
- 5) Track the progress against community-wide goals, using relevant metrics
- 6) Publicly highlight successes to increase community and stakeholder backing
- 7) Attract funding by showing progress

Successful collaboratives routinely use data to align resources behind what is shown to work. Collaboratives may compile data from existing sources or do their own data collection. Either way, though, it must be relevant, up to date and accurate. It is, after all, the raw material for decision-making. Collaboratives may build and operate their own data-collection systems, or they may rely on partners such as school districts or health departments. In its forms, it can be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet – which tracks progress over time – or as complex as shared data systems that allow schools, service providers and other parties to jointly report on their work with an individual. Below, we highlight how some communities have utilized data in this way.

Operation Ceasefire:

Direction-setting use of data: Boston's Operation Ceasefire undertook a rigorous "problem-oriented" approach to attack the issue of gun-related youth violence in that city. This strategy required extensive research and analysis to shape both the definition of the problem and resulting actions. For example, the working team originally classified the problem in Boston as one of "juvenile gun violence." But after in-depth research on gang-related violence in Boston, the working group discovered that the majority of the youth violence offenders came from a small community of 1,300 chronic offenders involved in Boston-area gangs. Only 1% of Boston youth actually participated in youth gangs. Yet these youth generated at least 60% of youth homicide in the city. This data helped refine the group's broad focus on "juvenile gun violence" to a more actionable focus on "chronic gang offenders." Please refer to the <[Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Boston Narrative](#)> for a more complete story of the Operation Ceasefire collaborative.

The Strive Partnership:

Data-informed decision making: Data is at the core of Cincinnati's and Northern Kentucky's Strive Partnership process and is one of the key reasons for the success of this collaborative devoted to higher high school graduation rates and upward mobility for the area's youth. From the beginning, data informed The Strive Partnership's strategy and shaped its operations. Each of the collaborative "networks" that make up The Strive Partnership has made a significant commitment to data collection. They collectively discuss what the data reveal and employ it for continuous improvement. Early in its history, Strive identified core metrics as mileposts for its roadmap, but the collaborative "networks" are responsible for guiding the continuous improvement process. Strive regularly reports out its progress against those metrics to the community. Then, it uses that data to make decisions about how to organize community interventions or where to focus resources. Currently, Strive is working with partners to create advanced data systems, most

notably a common Learning Partner Dashboard. The Dashboard will include shared data about each student in order to make targeted interventions possible. Please refer to the <[Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Cincinnati, Covington, Newport Narrative](#)> for a more complete story of The Strive Partnership.

Funding Examples

Funding is a major barrier to creating community collaboratives that drive impact. Dedicated capacity for the collaborative requires flexible, patient funding sources that understand the long-term strategy of the collaborative. It is also often helpful for collaboratives to have a diverse base of funding sources that include both public and private investments. In addition to seeking grants to fund dedicated capacity, collaboratives may be able to obtain critical capacity via donated staff time from collaborative participants.

The examples below highlight the broad range of funding sources used by successful collaboratives.

East Lake:

Resources to attract more resources: The East Lake Foundation provided the funding and personnel necessary for the initial two-year planning phase, which culminated in the replacement of the public housing project with a mixed-income development. Costs of demolition and construction were split between the Foundation and the Atlanta Housing Authority. With three of its seven non-programming staff members dedicated to fundraising and a fourth focused on marketing and communication, the East Lake Foundation is able to attract resources in a diversified, sustainable manner from a variety of major partners. These contributors include the Coca-Cola Company, supermarket chain Publix, Georgia State University, Atlanta Public Schools and the Atlanta Housing Authority. The Foundation's dedicated fundraising team, combined with a patient long-term approach to investments and a commitment to tracking and publicizing progress on neighborhood metrics, attracts additional funds from local public and private funders and directly contributes to the sustainability of the collaborative's efforts. Please refer to the [<Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Atlanta Narrative>](#) for a more complete story of the East Lake collaborative.

Project U-Turn:

Anchor funders: The Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) began in 1999 as the intermediary convening the local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Council to oversee youth-related WIA dollars. This administrative and political base allowed PYN to found Project U-Turn through a 2004 grant from the Youth Transition Funders Group (YTFG) as one of five demonstration sites addressing dropout rates through community collaboratives. The YTFG grant led to many other good things. It not only provided \$275,000 annually for two years, it also came with support from the national intermediary Jobs For the Future, and access to collaboratives doing similar work in four other cities. The William Penn Foundation, a member of YTFG based locally in Philadelphia, also committed \$600,000 for the first two years. William Penn correctly saw that the issue required a long-term commitment of flexible funding and has continued to provide significant funding through three subsequent grants. While its funding requires PYN to reapply every 2 years, the foundation clearly understands the 10-year arc of such work. Their dual role as both funder and steering committee participant has been key to Project U-Turn's success. To supplement grants from William Penn and ensure their partners have adequate resources, PYN also applies for implementation funding on behalf of the collaborative and then re-grants the

funds to various partners. Please refer to the <[Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Philadelphia Narrative](#)> for a more complete story of the Project U-Turn collaborative.

The Strive Partnership:

Foundation of funders provides stability: A trio of Cincinnati funders – KnowledgeWorks, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and United Way of Greater Cincinnati – further helped the group’s efforts by helping guide funding towards strategies and programmatic efforts recommended by the collaborative. KnowledgeWorks has continued to fund The Strive Partnership’s dedicated staff through contributions of \$500,000 per year. Strive has also received commitments from two other foundations that will provide funds primarily to their partners, ensuring that they are capable of continuing their high-quality services. Despite two changes in school district superintendents and changes in the leadership of the committees, The Strive Partnership continues to function effectively and to build momentum. Please refer to the <[Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Cincinnati, Covington, Newport Narrative](#)> for a more complete story of The Strive collaborative.

Appendix A: Resources on Capacity and Structure

Name of resource	What suggestions are highlighted?	Who is this tool for?
< Source 22, Ready by 21 Action Plan >	Steps for convening a strong group of stakeholders to execute a realistic plan	Collaboratives, particularly those with access to municipal officials
< Source 6, NLC Gang Violence Prevention >	Suggestions for securing sustainable streams of capacity funding	Collaboratives looking to a variety of funding sources
< Source 66, Accountability Stakeholder Engagement >	Steps for encouraging quality stakeholder engagement	Collaboratives determining who to bring to the table
< Source 23, Ready by 21 Leadership Council >	Thoughts on finding a neutral and respected lead convener	Collaboratives ready to choose a lead individual or “umbrella” organization to build capacity
< Source 27, Ready by 21 Stakeholders Wheel >	Tips and chart for assessing current capacity	Collaboratives that want to evaluate their current capacity and level of stakeholder engagement
< Source 15, NLC High School Alternatives >	Ideas for building local capacity through a mayor’s involvement	Collaboratives with access to government resources (financial and otherwise)
< Source 46, Ready by 21 Leadership Audit >	Steps for identifying gaps and potential in community leadership	Collaboratives that want to develop capacity within the community

Appendix B: Data and Continuous Learning Resources

Name of resource	What suggestions are highlighted?	Who is this tool for?
<Source 64, Keystone Feedback Surveys>	Reasoning and tips for using surveys to gather feedback	Collaboratives planning to gather quantitative and/or qualitative data from constituents
<Source 65, Keystone Formal Dialogue Processes>	Reasoning and tips for using thoughtful dialogue to gather feedback	Collaboratives planning to gather qualitative data from constituents
<Source 67, Keystone Constituency Voice>	Explains relationship cycle of community engagement	Collaboratives at any stage of the community engagement process
<Source 67, Keystone Constituency Voice>	Framework for assessing and implementing continuous improvement	Collaboratives interested in using constituency voice to generate continuous learning
<Source 20, Ready by 21 Data Coordination>	Suggestions for turning data into a driver for success	Collaboratives that want to promote continuous learning
<Source 8, NLC Evaluation Recommendations>	Principles to consider when evaluating a comprehensive initiative	Collaboratives at any stage of the evaluation process

The Next Generation Community Participation

Introduction

To achieve their goals, collaboratives ultimately need to be more than just a collection of institutions. Without community members actively sharing in the process, collaboratives lose an opportunity for better results. Or, as one sector leader puts it: “Without true community ownership, collaborative efforts will not be sustainable and lasting.”

Indeed, it almost goes without saying that beneficiaries are what collaboratives are all about. Their culture gives the work its context. Their involvement accelerates the desired change. And their ultimate buy-in helps to embed that change into the fabric of the community for future generations.

Because their engagement and feedback is so crucial to success, we have prepared this guide to help collaboratives engage with individual community members. This is a guide for collaboratives that say “yes” to the following questions:

- Do we aim to effect “**needle-moving**” change (i.e., 10% or more) on a community-wide metric?
- Do we believe that a **long-term investment** (i.e., three to five-plus years) by stakeholders is necessary to achieve success?
- Do we believe that **cross-sector engagement** is essential for community-wide change?
- Are we committed to **using measurable data** to set the agenda and improve over time?
- Are we committed to **having community members as partners and producers** of impact?

This guide is also supported by three other documents:

- Building or Improving a Community Collaborative – Guidance by Life Cycle Stage: Describes the five stages of a collaborative’s life, including case studies, a checklist of key activities, and common roadblocks for each stage (please refer to [Building or Improving a Community Collaborative](#) >)
- Community Collaborative Assessment – A Diagnostic of Success Readiness: Helps you evaluate your collaborative’s readiness to implement your plan in the community (please refer to [Assessment](#)>)
- Community Collaboratives Learning Examples: Capacity, Structure, Data and Funding: Guides the process of organizing a collaborative and helps you answer questions, such as what dedicated staff is necessary and what structure should support the collaborative (please refer to [Community Collaboratives Learning Examples](#)>)

We have divided this guide into five sections:

- **Overview:** We make the brief case for why community involvement is critical in tackling complex social problems, which by definition, do not come with set solutions.
- **Examples of Community Collaborative Engagement:** Successful collaboratives figure out ways to tap into the energies of their communities. Here is how a few have done it.
- **Next Generation Community Partnership:** New ideas are constantly emerging to solve old problems. For example, if you want to help youth, why not partner with those youth and have them lead the collaborative?
- **Key Questions to Ask:** From the collective experience of successful collaboratives, these queries can help shape your approach.
- **Resources:** The combined best practices and lessons of many outstanding collaboratives and their partners are available here.

Overview

Technical problems, such as where to put a school, do not require the formation of collaboratives. Based on population or geography criteria, there is usually only one good answer. Collaboratives, however, are needed to address the proverbial “can of worms.” Such “adaptive” problems are complex, multi-issue challenges that cannot be easily fixed with known or quickly discoverable solutions (please refer to <[Source 78, Adaptive Problems](#)>). What is needed, rather, is a process of discovery involving a diverse set of stakeholders.

Community participation is critical to ensure that the interlinked efforts of many partners both reflect the context of the community and genuinely meet its needs. All of which sounds complicated, because it is. But the community level is the starting point. It is where the raw data can be found. It is also a source for thoughtful responses and effective solutions.

Poverty and poor student achievement are prime examples of “adaptive” problems. Engaging deeply with community residents on such thorny matters helps collaboratives clearly identify the pivotal issues, generate the needed trust to get people to attempt the change, and to develop action solutions <[Source 63, Keystone Constituent Mapping](#)>.

Challenges to full community participation

Most collaboratives start out by bringing the top community leaders together to work towards achieving community-wide change. The key question, though, is: Are all the right people on the bus? Historical community divisions and power imbalances often mean that collaborative participants do not represent the true diversity of the community. Likewise, beneficiaries also may not have a place at the decision-making table. And, without everybody in the community on board, the wheels can fall off.

Funding is often another roadblock to generating true community involvement and representation. In a pay-for-performance atmosphere, providers might hesitate to report negative community feedback on their programs out of fear that it might draw attention to failure and cause dollar commitments to dry up (please refer to <[Source 79, Keystone Prospectus](#)>). Funders reinforce this through grant requirements linked to success metrics and an absence of specific funding for community feedback (please refer to <[Source 80, 21st Century Constituency Voice](#)> or <[Source 81, Models of Community Engagement](#)>).

Given these challenges, many collaboratives will readily admit that they are still struggling to fully engage the community. But they are also persisting by exploring and testing new ideas. Obviously, there is no one formula for excellent community participation. That, too, is an adaptive problem. But we can share some of the adaptations tried by successful collaboratives below.

Examples of Community Collaborative Engagement

Simply put, community engagement increases the likelihood that interventions will be aimed in the right direction. Tried and true vehicles for engagement include focus groups, interviews, surveys and community meetings. But sometimes it takes a large, coordinated effort.

Community meetings to gather resident perspectives

For example, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, the city desperately needed to rebuild its infrastructure and morale. But many people on the street felt they were not being heard. So, after several unsuccessful attempts to develop a city-wide plan, America Speaks, a nonprofit organization that engages citizens in high-impact public policy decisions, stepped in. Its mission: to listen to the people most affected by the disaster. The resulting “Unified New Orleans Plan” set up open forums for public officials to get feedback from citizens, which helped reestablish authorities’ credibility. For the first time, the city was able to ratify a roadmap that truly aligned recovery efforts with community need. The forums also helped restore hope and connection in the fragmented community. Today, 93% of participants are “co-owners” of the plan and are committed to remaining engaged (please refer to <[Source 73, America Speaks Unified New Orleans](#)>).

Collaboratives using focus groups and surveys to engage with the community

Parramore Kids Zone (“PKZ”) is a prime example of how a collaborative can use community engagement to get early feedback to set its direction. Before embarking, it staged a series of neighborhood meetings to get input on PKZ’s proposed services and marketing strategies, disseminate information and build resident ownership of the project. To increase attendance, PKZ provided free childcare and food as incentives. Looking back, a PKZ staff member reflected, “We never would have been successful if we tried to tell the community what services they needed instead of listening to their suggestions.” Please refer to the <[Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Parramore Narrative](#)> for more information on the PKZ collaborative.

Collaboratives leveraging media to engage community

When United Way of Greater Milwaukee began thinking about launching what became the Milwaukee’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, the agency clearly saw that teens needed multiple reinforcing messages to change their behavior. More was needed, agency leaders realized, than direct education and counseling within the public schools, at nonprofits, and in the faith community. The result: an innovative public awareness campaign developed by Serve Marketing. It aimed to change the conversation among teens, their friends and parents. Serve Marketing started by holding youth focus groups to understand their perspectives on teen pregnancy. It continued these focus sessions as it developed campaign materials to make sure the campaign resonated with youth. The roll-out began with ads making the case that teen pregnancy impacted everyone in greater Milwaukee, due to its staggering economic consequences. City teens literally played a central “role,” through a series of provocative ads, radio spots, and even a fake movie premiere (please refer to <[Source 82, Milwaukee Strong Babies](#)>). Later, the campaign expanded to engage parents through the delivery of a “Let’s Talk” toolkit designed to help them talk about sexuality with their kids. Please refer to the <[Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Milwaukee Narrative](#)> for more information on Milwaukee’s Teen Pregnancy Prevention collaborative.

Next Generation Community Partnership

The types of changes community collaboratives are seeking in their communities affect the lives of many people. It only makes sense, therefore, that the community be actively engaged in developing solutions and helping to make them work. Next generation community partnership builds on this principle to involve intended beneficiaries as advocates and participants in creating impact. This type of partnership opens collaboratives to a world of “natural allies” that can be tapped. Take, for instance, how a community can tackle the challenges of disconnected youth. Why not add peers, parents, extended family and faith leaders to the mix—the possibilities are numerous. These people that surround and influence youth can be supportive allies of the collaborative and its goals. Even in collaboratives that are not youth-focused, it is necessary to partner with natural allies, who may be residents or community members that can help move the work forward.

Examples of next generation partnership

Community members participating in collaboratives

Youth contributed directly to the development of Nashville’s Child and Youth Master Plan (CYMP). After all, they have the greatest stake in their own future. From the start, a local high school student served as one of the three co-chairs for the CYMP, joined by several other student slots on the taskforce. The taskforce worked closely with the mayor’s standing Youth Council and the students immediately had to overcome some barriers to participation: First, they changed all scheduled meetings until after the close of school at 3 p.m. Next, they gained assistance in transportation to meetings through bus fare waivers. Youth members also took significant responsibility for the work’s progress. Among other things, they wrote, administered and analyzed a large scale survey among 1,000 youth. They helped organize several listening sessions involving hundreds of residents and youth. They were also part of the decision that allowed other community members to interact with the taskforce through a variety of meeting formats, such as small-group discussions and one-on-one exchanges, and ensured that Spanish-speaking translators were at the sessions. Please refer to the [Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives: Nashville Narrative](#) for more information on Nashville’s efforts to increase graduation rates.

Community members as producers of impact

The Family Independence Institute’s (“FII”) work on empowering low-income families is another example of next generation engagement. The effort builds on the insight that low-income families have always worked together to address challenges, using their own assets and resourcefulness. In its latest pilot in Boston, FII invited immigrant Latino women (many from Colombia) to form groups of six to eight to meet together monthly. Each was given a computer and small stipend for reporting monthly data on a wide range of metrics related to the health, education, income and wealth of their families. The women also use these meetings to discuss the challenges they face, ranging from learning English to paying down debt to helping their children do better in school.

Paradoxically, the FII “program” is really an anti-program—it provides no direction or guidance to the women, and in fact has a strict policy not to do so. Families are asked to enroll with cohort of friends and turn to one another and not to FII staff. Results have been very

positive. Participating Boston families have seen an increase in income of 13% (excluding FII funds) in less than a year. In the West Oakland pilot, average income rose 27%, savings increased over 250%, debt was reduced and children's grades and attendance jumped over 30%. FII's founder is quick to point out that African American cohorts did far better than the Asian and Hispanic cohorts, showing that the concept applies beyond immigrant communities.

FII's view is that the positive gains are the result of two dynamics. First, participants share their social capital and know-how, multiplying the benefit for each individual family. For example, the women share experiences about where to find quality child care, how to navigate the school system, and where to find legal advice. Second, by focusing on their own family-level metrics related to health, education, income, and wealth, FII families are more likely to make positive changes. As families take action to pay down debt, they see its effect monthly as they report their data—which gives motivation to take more action, creating a virtuous cycle.

Community feedback for continuous learning

David Bonbright of Keystone emphasizes the importance of what he calls constituency voice (please refer to [Source 80, 21st Century Constituency Voice](#)). According to Bonbright, "Constituency voice refers to the practice of ensuring that the views of all relevant constituents, particularly primary constituents [beneficiaries], are seriously taken into account in the planning, monitoring, assessing, reporting and learning processes taking place within organizations." This type of feedback provides ongoing data to understand if and how specific efforts are leading to impact. Multiple methods can be used to gather this information, such as large-scale surveys, focus groups and everyday conversation (please refer to [Source 63, Keystone Constituent Mapping](#)).

Bonbright gives this classic example to demonstrate the importance of including constituency voice in any initiative:

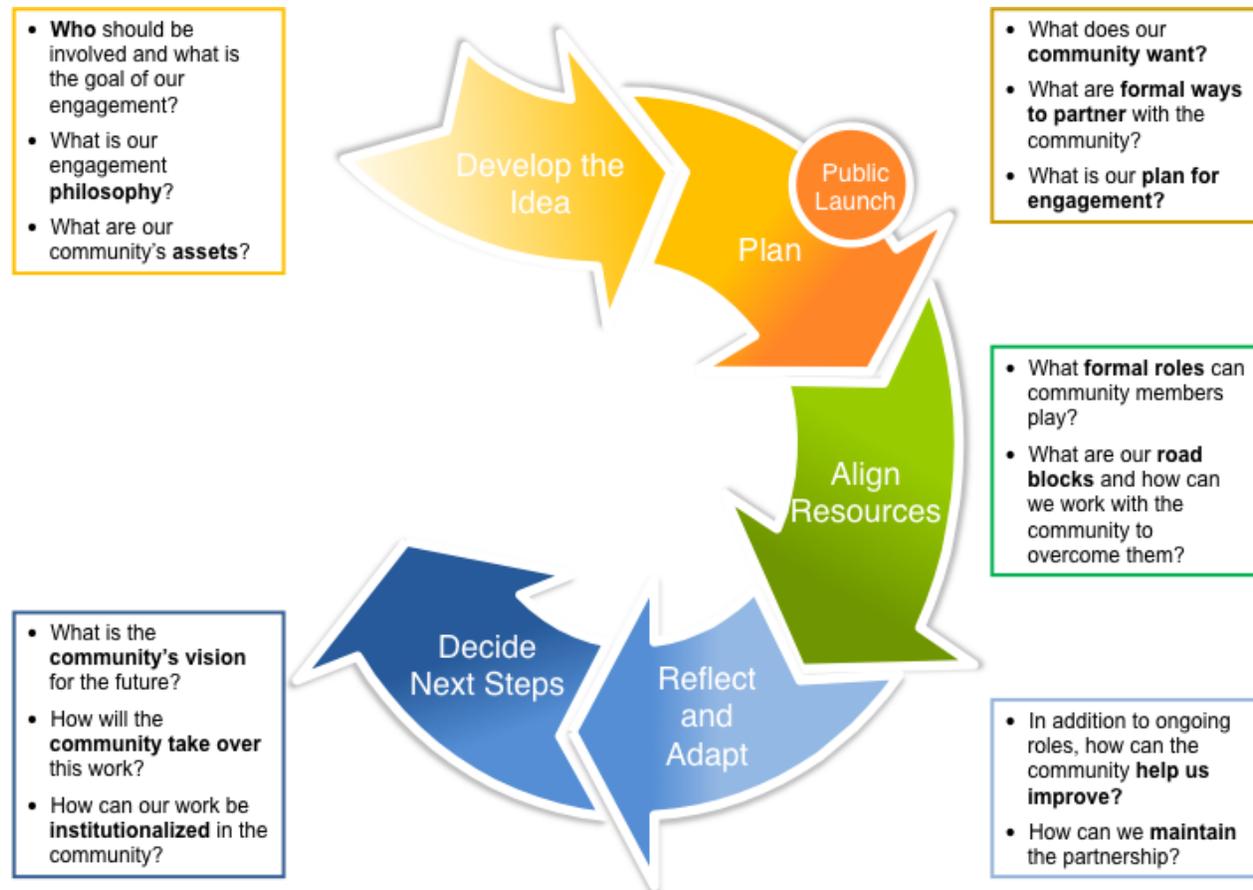
Agencies throughout Africa and Asia invested \$40 million in "tool carriers" so that rural farmers could carry their ploughs, carts and seed-drills. Some 10,000 of these tools poured forth in a variety of different programs. Technical experts thought that these tools would be of great value to farmers. But that was just a theory. The reality was that these tools were not adopted by farmers in any developing country because the farmers did not think they were a good idea. Not having early feedback cost these agencies because they lacked quick feedback mechanisms to receive these constituents' perspectives (please refer to [Source 83, Keystone Constituency Voice Overview](#)). Indeed, mass surveys or focus groups can not only avoid such missteps, they can quickly create highly targeted solutions and ensure resources are used in the best way possible.

Another example from the Family Independence Initiative (FII) mentioned above highlights the effectiveness of good feedback mechanisms. FII recently incorporated a "Yelp" feedback system to get residents to comment on services in their community. Through this means, those services can improve and community members can begin to see themselves as consumers of services rather than solely as beneficiaries.

And maybe that's the real benefit from the emergence of these various next generation solutions: to get people actively involved in helping themselves.

Key Questions to Ask by Life Stage

Community engagement can be difficult. But there's no substitute. The diagram below will help you navigate what you should be discussing and when.



Resources

Name of resource	What suggestions are highlighted?	Who is this tool for?
<Source 63, Keystone Constituent Mapping>	How to identify constituents and stakeholders who should be involved	Collaboratives gearing up to engage the community
<Source 64, Keystone Feedback Surveys>	Reasoning and tips for using surveys to gather feedback	Collaboratives planning to gather quantitative and/or qualitative data from constituents
<Source 65, Keystone Formal Dialogue Processes>	Reasoning and tips for using thoughtful dialogue to gather feedback	Collaboratives planning to gather qualitative data from constituents
<Source 66, Accountability Stakeholder Engagement>	Steps for encouraging quality stakeholder inclusivity and engagement	Collaboratives determining whom to bring to the table
<Source 67, Keystone Constituency Voice>	Explains relationship cycle of community engagement for organizations to follow	Collaboratives at any stage of the community engagement process
<Source 69, Harwood Institute Community Rhythms>	Assesses community's level of engagement	Collaboratives trying to evaluate the level of engagement in their communities
<Source 70, Harwood Institute Authentic Engagement>	Evaluates to what degree organizations listen and engage with constituents	Collaboratives that believe they are already engaged to some degree with the community
<Source 71, Harwood Institute Public Capital>	Identifies resources that community members might be able to offer to collaborative	Collaboratives looking to better involve the community in positive outcomes
<Source 22, Ready by 21 Action Plan>	Provides a case study of how city leaders engaged a community around a shared vision for youth	Collaboratives seeking examples of successful community engagement, especially around youth
<Source 7, NLC Youth Action Kit>	Offers best practices, key questions, and resources for engaging youth	Collaboratives, especially those with municipal leaders around the table, that are focused on disconnected youth
<Source 75, IDEO Toolkit>	Provides guidance on how to apply IDEO's "Human-Centered Design" to nonprofits	Collaboratives working to understand their community
<Source 76: Civic Engagement Measure>	Provides tools for measuring the current impact of a community engagement plan	Collaboratives looking to assess the success of their community engagement plans

Case Studies of Effective Collaboratives

SOURCE 84: CASE STUDY: MEMPHIS NARRATIVE

In 2005, Memphis ranked number 2 of the country's metropolitan areas for violent crime, including homicides, rape, aggravated assault and robbery. Officials in the city of Memphis and Shelby County decided that something had to be done to reverse the tide.

That "something" wasn't obvious. Memphis lacked the kind of renewal forces, such as nearby suburban affluence and gentrification by young professionals that had helped lift other cities. To find a solution, public- and private-sector leaders came together to create Operation Safe Community (OSC), a 15-point research-based, crime-reduction plan. The initiative was led by then-District Attorney Bill Gibbons, and sought to combine the efforts of local law enforcement and other community sectors in a comprehensive plan. The initial response was heartening – and so have been most of its results.

More than 50 leaders worked on OSC's implementation and strategies ranging from toughening gun laws to juvenile offender re-entry programs. And as the five-year plan comes to a close, Memphis has achieved dramatic declines in major violent crime and property crime. For example, comparing the first seven months of 2011 with those of 2006, major violent crime fell by 27%. Major property crime tumbled 32% during the same time period. And, in early 2011, the Memphis murder rate dropped to its lowest point in 30 years.

Amid these successes, however, youth violence continues to be a special concern. In 2009, more than 54% (1,462) of those arrested for committing a violent crime were 24 years or younger with some offenders as young as nine years old. As a result, the collaborative's work is evolving. It has developed a new comprehensive Youth Violence Prevention Plan that will serve as the foundation for Operation Safe Community Phase 2, Memphis's new five-year plan.

Five key things have made the Operation Safe Community collaborative successful:

Clear plan rooted in strategy: *Shared vision and agenda.*

Operation Safe Community has always been crystal clear about its vision. From the start, it has aimed to "make Memphis and Shelby County one of the safest communities of its size in the nation by the end of 2011." That aspiration was backed up by a 53-page strategic plan, called *Operation Safe Community Strategic Agenda*, which specified the initiative's goals, baseline data on crime levels, and 15 detailed plans of attack. Each of

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Memphis, TN
- **Problem:** Worst violent crime rates in country
- **Results:** 27% reduction in violent crime in the 5 years from 2006 to 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** Operation Safe Community's three-tiered structure, which consists of dedicated collaborative staff, a high profile board of directors and 15 distinct strategy teams, fosters long-term involvement from a broad group of stakeholders.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Shelby County Mayor, District Attorney, Memphis Shelby Crime Commission
- **Philanthropic Support:** Memphis Tomorrow, a group of local business leaders, leverages relationships with the private sector to raise funds.

the strategies lists lead partners, key success measures, specific action plans and the rationale behind the particular approach.

County-wide engagement: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

The broader community contributed to the vision in a variety of ways. During the planning stages, more than 800 attendees participated in town hall meetings, focus groups, work sessions and a final full-day Crime Summit. In addition, the Memphis Shelby County Youth Congress solicited feedback from 100 youths through postings on the Youth Congress Electronic Forum.

Three-tiered structure: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

Operation Safe Community has a three-tiered structure that includes dedicated collaborative staff, a high profile board of directors and 70+ stakeholders, which volunteer on 15 distinct strategy teams. The Memphis Shelby Crime Commission (MSCC) has a lean three-person team that serves as the dedicated capacity for the Operation Safe Community collaborative. MSCC has an executive director, a marketing and community relations manager and an administrative assistant.

Operation Safe Community was started by high-profile county leaders, including then-Shelby County Mayor A. C. Wharton, District Attorney Bill Gibbons, Sheriff Mark Luttrell, Memphis Police Director Larry Godwin, and U.S. Attorney David Kustoff, top business leaders from a group called Memphis Tomorrow and the University of Memphis Center for Community Criminology Research. Though the leadership has changed somewhat over the years, MSCC's 50-person board of directors remains a "who's who" of Memphis from both private and public sectors.

The real people power behind the OSC strategies, though, is the 70-plus stakeholders who volunteer their time. OSC engaged 20 "strategy leaders" (who are also board members) to head up the effort's 15 initiatives. For example, the anti-gang initiative includes members representing the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County, JustCare for Kids, law enforcement, education, school security, employment agencies, and other social service agencies. There's even a criminology professor on the board. And they get down to work. "*We make sure decision-makers are in the meeting from each organization. If a backup is sent, they need to have the power to make decisions,*" says Michelle Fowlkes, the executive director of MSCC.

Research-based strategies: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.*

Operation Safe Community utilizes 15 research-based strategies as a roadmap for achieving its aggressive goals. The strategies evolved out of a partnership with the University of Memphis' Center for Community Criminology and Research. Each strategy grew from careful research and is rooted in a proven approach. For example, the recommendation to toughen state laws for gun crime is modeled after reforms in Florida and New York. Similarly, the initiative's work to expand data-driven police deployment in Shelby County is based on recent research by the National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council.

Accountable to data: *Use of data to set agenda and improve over time.*

Operation Safe Community's tracking and use of data is exemplary. Memphis not only collects information on different types of major violent and property crime at a granular level but it publicly reports on progress against baseline levels on a monthly and annual basis. Results are posted on the OSC website in the form of straightforward scorecards. This level of transparency reinforces the collaborative's sense of accountability. The sophisticated measurement approach grew out of a partnership between the Memphis Shelby Crime Commission and the University of Memphis Center for Community Criminology and Research. Through this alliance, the Crime Commission is able to provide the citizens of Memphis and Shelby County with timely crime trend analysis.

Up-to-date information on crime is also actively used to continually shape OSC partner interventions. A key strategy was to adopt a data-driven approach to policing, an initiative called Blue CRUSH™. Through it, the Memphis Police Department (MPD) monitors hot spots and then deploys police officers accordingly. Michelle Fowlkes, the executive director of MSCC, explains that "*data allows MPD to focus resources on the most critical areas*". Data is even pushed out to community members through CyberWatch, a daily email reporting crimes, sex offenders and outstanding arrest warrants tailored to an individual's location. OSC uses these crime trends and statistics to measure the effectiveness of the MSCC's five-year crime reduction plan. And, through ongoing updates, the collaborative can systematically compare current crime statistics with those of 2006 as a benchmark for success.

SOURCES

- 1) Conley, Chris. "Memphis leads U.S. in violent crime." *The Commercial Appeal*. September 2007.
- 2) Operation Safe Community. *Memphis Youth Violence Prevention Plan*. Consilience Group, LLC. April 2011.

SOURCE 85: HERKIMER COUNTY NARRATIVE

In 1998, Herkimer County won a planning grant from New York State's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to establish an integrated county-level planning process. The county took on the grant in an effort to improve the lives of its low-income residents through greater coordination of existing services. The first big planning question was where to focus the group's efforts.

Unlike the extreme poverty seen in urban collaborative success stories, sprawling Herkimer County has high levels of "working poor" dispersed throughout 19 towns, 10 villages and one city with a population of 5,000, Little Falls.

Complicating matters, Herkimer County is spread out over 1,412 square miles in a long, thin rectangle, creating significant challenges for service coordination. Nor was largely rural geography the only challenge to planning. Herkimer County was struggling with multiple issues stemming from the low socioeconomic status and underemployment of its population. In particular, the county was facing rising levels of at-risk youth placed in residential facilities, an intervention that experts have shown to be costly and less effective in many cases.

Herkimer County's Integrated County Planning (ICP) teams started by creating a common vision: *"to establish an integrated, interagency planning process that promotes the health and well-being of children and families in our community."* The team then actively reviewed community level data to develop service priorities. Initially, ICP focused on five risk factors: economic deprivation, family management, family conflict, at-risk youth behaviors and the needs of the birth-to-age-five population. ICP researched best practices and developed comprehensive plans to address service gaps. The leaders of key human and social service delivery entities come together once a month to discuss priority issues, improve coordination, reduce duplication of efforts and make more efficient use of funds. Team members actively review over 800 community metrics to understand the community's needs. Over time, Herkimer County added bullying and youth violence as priorities in addition to its focus on at-risk youth in general.

One of the collaborative's recent efforts is the Return Home Early Project. It was established in 2008 in response to high out-of-home placement numbers for at-risk youth and tight county budgets. Consistent with best child-welfare practices, the project identifies children in residential facilities who would be better served by intensive community-based services in their homes. The initiative includes Herkimer County's Department of Social Services, Kids Herkimer (a nonprofit providing support to families with at-risk youth) and collaborates with placement facilities, families, family courts, school districts, and community partners. The intent is twofold: to provide services to

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Herkimer County, NY
- **Problem:** Economic hardship and a rising number of youth placed in residential facilities
- **Results:** 54% reduction in number of children in foster care between 2003 and 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** The Herkimer collaborative brings together more than 50 key stakeholders to improve service coordination in the largely rural county on a monthly basis.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Herkimer Integrated County Planning
- **Philanthropic Support:** NYS Office of Children and Family Services, local funds

children and families in their homes and communities (in lieu of expensive residential facilities) and to realize better results. Since 2003, Herkimer County's Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) program has also addressed youth who are a danger to themselves or others, with a combination of counseling, probation, preventive strategies and family support.

Herkimer County ICP's long-term commitment has paid off. The total number of children in foster care fell from a high of 138 in May 2003 to 64 in August 2011, which is the lowest in-care number recorded in the past 20 years. In parallel, Herkimer County significantly reduced costly juvenile placements in residential facilities through a series of coordinated interventions. Since 2002, the number of PINS youth placed has fallen by 55% and residential care days have dropped by 32%. This intervention saved the county hundreds of thousands of dollars and realized better outcomes for youth. With an 8% recidivism rate for children returning to residential care, the Return Home Early Project produced significantly better results than the national average. It has reduced care-day usage by a stunning 4,430 since 2008, resulting in a cost avoidance of more than \$1.1 million.

One coming challenge for Herkimer County is to further refine its data collection efforts. At the start, Herkimer County set up an extensive data collection effort with the help of Communities That Care, a research institution focused on risk factors that contribute to youth problem behaviors, and with Herkimer County HealthNet, a rural health network funded by the NYS Department of Health. As a result, the collaborative has maintained a formal report that has been updated every three years since 2000. But to add more rigor to its measurement, the team is now utilizing Ready By 21 funding allocated by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to formalize its evaluation capabilities and revisit its metrics.

Two key things have made the Herkimer collaborative successful in increasing the well-being of their county's children:

Matching involvement to scope on breadth: *Cross-sector engagement.*

The Herkimer Integrated County Planning collaborative regularly brings together more than 50 key stakeholders. Participants range from law enforcement and mental health professionals to school officials and the director of the youth bureau. Given the broad scope of the collaborative, several subgroups have formed: the human development committee, which is focused on children, youth, families and vulnerable adults; an overall steering committee; a youth violence prevention group; and a Best Start planning group, which is focused on the birth-to-five-year-old population. Such taskforces form and disband over time, based on the community's needs.

Proven impact sustains funding: *Sufficient resources.*

Bolstered by its early successes, Herkimer County was able to keep the initiative running after the state grants ran out in 2003. At the start, Herkimer County was one of 15 counties awarded funding for five years at \$65,000 per year from New York State's Office of Children and Family Services. The county used those funds in 1998 to hire

Darlene Haman as Herkimer County's strategic planning coordinator. Haman is ICP's sole dedicated staff resource and is responsible for coordinating data collection efforts, facilitating meetings and keeping the collaborative running. Jim Wallace, Herkimer's county administrator, served as ICP's legislative liaison and helped earned the legislature's backing by reporting on the collaborative's significant outcomes and money saved. While other communities had to modify their efforts when funding ran out in 2003, Herkimer County was able to push forward with the support of the legislature and Jim Wallace. County officials have also worked to find scarce county revenues to sustain Integrated County Planning to this day. ICP's proven impact, broad-based legislative support and lean management structure were instrumental in securing these ongoing sources of funding.

SOURCES

- 3) Pasti, Lawrence. "County Reflections." *New York State Office of Children and Family Services*. September 2005. <<http://sparkaction.org/node/31415>>.
- 4) "Herkimer County Integrated County Planning Project: Final Project Report 1998-2003." *Herkimer County ICP*. 2003.

SOURCE 86: CINCINNATI, COVINGTON, AND NEWPORT NARRATIVE

In 2006, Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky's school leaders realized that the region's students were slipping further behind in their preparedness for college and careers. As a dwindling number of employers demanded ever higher levels of education, it was becoming clear that students were simply not succeeding in school. Ohio ranked a discouraging 42nd out of the nation's 50 states in the attainment of bachelor's degrees among its youth. Nearby Kentucky was almost at the bottom, ranking 49th.

This was not news to the city's nonprofit providers. They were working hard to build a better future for the area's youth, but were often providing siloed services and using distinctly different approaches. Not surprisingly, the result was a community and educational system that was according to Cincinnati State's president Dr. O'dell Owens, "program rich" but "system poor." Put another way, a great deal of work added up to little traction against a problem that threatened the next generation's preparation for life and work.

The Strive Partnership of Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport began with conversations between Dr. Nancy Zimpher, the former president of the University of Cincinnati and Chad Wick, the former CEO of KnowledgeWorks. This conversation expanded to include Cincinnati's superintendent of schools, broadening the discussion to strengthen the public schools and create stronger pathways for students to enter college.

KnowledgeWorks, a leading education foundation, provided resources for this effort, which eventually came to be called The Strive Partnership. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and other universities from around the region got on board, and the emerging group began to conduct research into what actually works in increasing student success. Then, they jointly defined a vision for how to increase student achievement. The resulting plan recognized and incorporated a set of key points in a young person's life that are critical to student success. These were the basis for The Strive Partnership's "student roadmap of success." This roadmap guides the way forward by laying out the collaborative's perspective on what it takes to make all young people successful.

Out of this work, The Strive Partnership developed five broad goals for student success in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky:

- Be prepared for school
- Be supported inside and outside school
- Succeed academically

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Cincinnati, OH and Northern Kentucky
- **Problem:** Students leaving high school not prepared for college or careers
- **Results:** 10% increase in graduation rates in Cincinnati since 2003; 16% increase in college enrollment rate in Covington, KY since 2004
- **Differentiating Feature:** The Strive Partnership's Student Roadmap to Success outlines a series of systemic interventions that guide The Strive Partnership's cradle to career efforts.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** The Strive Partnership
- **Philanthropic Support:** KnowledgeWorks, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, United Way of Greater Cincinnati

- Enroll in college
- Graduate and enter a career

With the community focused on each goal, Strive partners have since seen 40 of its 54 indicators for student success move in a positive direction. On the following core indicators, The Strive Partnership has reached needle-moving change of 10% or more over the baseline in the following areas:

- Greater preparation for school
- School test scores, graduation rates and college enrollment in Cincinnati schools
- College readiness, retention rate and graduation in many of Cincinnati's colleges

These amount to stunning achievements over just five years.

Detailed roadmap to goals: *Shared vision and agenda.*

Underlying The Strive Partnership's progress is its Student Roadmap to Success. This roadmap diagram shows a series of systemic interventions needed for cradle to career progress for each child, based on education and child development research. The roadmap describes five life stages: early childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, transition from school or postsecondary training into a career. The map has critical checkpoints at each stage – and the indicators for tracking success all along the way. Using the roadmap allows the collaborative participants to align the community's efforts.

The roadmap was a critical part of the process for creating a shared vision, along with an agenda for moving forward. Its adoption was not easy. Core partners grappled with the research and Cincinnati's data over several years before agreeing to this course of action.

Structured to sustain impact: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

The Strive Partnership realized that the roadmap and clear goals were not enough in themselves. Success also hinged on creating a robust structure. Initially, that structure was led by a large steering committee that met monthly to review changes in the incoming data and to provide feedback on the process. By design, it represented a range of community members from across sectors. Continuing today, a 30 member executive committee meets quarterly to oversee the collaborative's efforts and make recommendations on the general direction of the effort. The executive committee houses five subcommittees or strategy teams focused on the core priorities of the partnership, including "Teacher and Principal Excellence" and "Advocacy and Funding Alignment to Support Innovation." The Strive Partnership also has 10 "collaboratives", which are networks of providers and school officials that are focused on specific goals, such as early education. They provide the specific interventions needed along Strive's roadmap to success and receive support from the Strive staff in one or all of the following areas: facilitation and coaching, data analysis, communications, advocacy and grant-writing.

KnowledgeWorks contributed staff and funding to support these collaborative efforts. Strive's dedicated capacity consists of six people, who include an executive director, two

programs directors, one director of the collaborative's data work, and two support personnel. This core group is responsible for supporting data management and use and for administrative and facilitation tasks across the network. In addition, Strive has a number of part-time coaches that provide support to its network of collaboratives and a contracted government affairs consultant to support the collaborative's advocacy work.

Data-informed decision-making: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.* Key to The Strive Partnership's process and success is data. From the beginning, data informed The Strive Partnership's strategy and shaped its process. Each of the collaborative networks has made a significant commitment to data collection, to collectively discussing the data's implications and to using it for continuous improvement. Strive regularly reports its progress against those metrics to the community. Currently, Strive is working with partners to create advanced data systems, most notably a common Learning Partner Dashboard. The dashboard will collect in-school and out-of-school data about each student in a shared system to make targeted interventions possible. Strive has worked closely with Cincinnati schools' legal team to respect privacy issues.

Foundation of funders provides stability: *Sufficient resources.*

A trio of Cincinnati funders – KnowledgeWorks, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, and United Way of Greater Cincinnati – further helped the collaborative's efforts by helping guide funding towards strategies and programmatic efforts recommended by the collaborative. KnowledgeWorks has continued to fund The Strive Partnership's dedicated staff through contributions of \$500,000 per year. Strive also has received commitments from two other foundations that will provide funds primarily to their partners, ensuring that they are capable of continuing their high-quality services. Despite two changes in school district superintendents and changes in the leadership of the committees, The Strive Partnership continues to function effectively and to build momentum.

SOURCES

- 5) Johnson, Lawrence, Shane Burris, Simon N. Jorgenson and Michael J. Sharp, [College Access and Success: Strive](#), The University of Cincinnati.
- 6) "[Vision / Road Map](#)." *StriveNetwork.org*. Strive, 2011.

SOURCE 87: BOSTON NARRATIVE

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Boston experienced an epidemic of youth homicides largely stemming from a rise in violent gang activity and the widespread use of crack-cocaine. Juvenile handgun homicides more than tripled – from 22 victims in 1987 to 73 victims in 1990. When youth homicide rates remained high, averaging 44 homicides per year between 1991 and 1995, Boston authorities knew they had to act.

Operation Ceasefire came into being in 1995 to address this issue, with the support of a grant from the National Institute of Justice. A working group of community participants – including the police force, educators and front-line practitioners – led the effort to develop a viable solution for this gun-related slaughter among its urban youth.

The project applied a radically different approach to gun violence, focusing on direct deterrence rather than traditional methods. The working group began by identifying gangs with the highest risk of gun-related violence. Then, it systematically contacted their members. In face-to-face confrontations, Operation Ceasefire communicated an unequivocal warning: if violence continued to occur, authorities would unleash an immediate and certain response. Operation Ceasefire's novel group accountability model, where attention is paid to everyone involved in the crime not just the killer, served as powerful deterrent.

The approach made powerful, strategic use of existing authorities – such as police, parole officers and the like – to aggressively prosecute violent actions and to create a strong deterrent. Family members, community leaders, and service providers also engaged directly with gang members to communicate a moral message against violence and to offer help to those willing to accept it.

Living up to its name, Operation Ceasefire was associated with significant reductions in youth homicides and gun assaults. Youth homicides dropped to 15 in 1997, about one-third of the average between 1991 and 1995. Shots-fired calls to police fell 32%, reflecting a 25% decrease in gun assaults. Due to its achievements, the Operation Ceasefire model was institutionalized as the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS) and since 2000 has been replicated in many other communities.

Yet Operation Ceasefire's initial successes were not unalloyed. In its early phase, one consequence of this success was that multiple sides tried to claim credit for the achievement. Those touting themselves included the police, probation officers, social workers and the Ten Point Coalition. Many groups stood to gain by claiming

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Boston, MA
- **Problem:** High and rising youth homicide rates
- **Results:** 66% reduction in youth homicide rates between 1995 and 1997
- **Differentiating Feature:** Operation Ceasefire focused on 1,300 gang-related chronic offenders after in-depth research showed that 60% of youth homicides were driven by this 1% of all youth.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Operation Ceasefire
- **Philanthropic Support:** National Institute of Justice

responsibility for “The Boston Miracle” even though it was really the sum of their efforts which made the difference.

All of these divisions created a toll. Operation Ceasefire discontinued operations in 2000 due to loss of key leadership, shortages of manpower and political wrangling. As a result, gang-related homicides started to increase again as conflicts among gangs grew unchecked. With the appointment of a new commissioner of the Boston Police Department in 2006, however, the effort was reinvigorated. The city has since experienced a decline in youth homicides. The experience in Boston highlights the need for a long-term investment to sustain progress.

Three key things made Operation Ceasefire successful in reducing youth homicide rates:

The power of diverse perspectives: *Cross-sector engagement.*

Operation Ceasefire expertly utilized a combination of enforcement officials, probation officers, front-line practitioners, black clergy and researchers to create a new working group. This group tapped into the strength of each member through bi-weekly meetings to discuss the activities within their agencies and the conditions they observed on the street. Over time, the experience sharing among working group members helped to evolve the direction and priorities of the project.

A key differentiating factor of this collaborative was the inclusion of both external researchers and practitioners on the streets. Researchers provided a vital outside perspective, bringing new practices to the group. The researchers also were able to communicate issues to agency leaders who had been unavailable to the working group members. Meantime, the use of the front-line practitioners provided a channel for acquiring qualitative research directly from the streets, validating the feasibility of programs and communicating directly to gang members.

Direction-setting use of data: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*

Boston’s Operation Ceasefire undertook a rigorous “problem-oriented” approach to attack the issue of gun-related youth violence in that city. This strategy required extensive research and analysis to shape both the definition of the problem and resulting actions. For example, the working team originally classified the problem in Boston as one of “juvenile gun violence.” But after in-depth research on gang-related violence in Boston, the working group discovered that the majority of the youth violence offenders came from a small community of 1,300 chronic offenders involved in Boston-area gangs. Only 1% of Boston youth actually participated in youth gangs. Yet these youth generated at least 60% of youth homicide in the city. This data helped refine the group’s broad focus on “juvenile gun violence” to a more actionable focus on “chronic gang offenders.”

Codifying success for replication: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.*

Operation Ceasefire’s best-practices have been utilized by other cities through the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS). Replication sites have experienced highly significant, near-term reductions in crime using existing resources in a strategic and focused way. Most recently, a target group comprising 11 cities is slated to be part of the

National Network “Leadership Group” to codify GVRS best practices and create a new national standard for addressing violent and drug-related crime. These cities must make a 5 year commitment and in return receive technical assistance. Looking back, several cities helped lay the foundation for the GVRS model and have had formal evaluations including:

- **Chicago, Illinois (2001 – Present):** An adaptation of the GVRS model focused on individual parolees in several violent neighborhoods with gun or violent crime convictions
 - **Results:** a 37% decrease in community homicide rate; 30% decrease in recidivism among treatment group parolees
- **Indianapolis, Indiana (2000 – 2002):** Citywide group violence reduction strategy
 - **Results:** a 34% reduction in total homicide; 70% reduction in black male homicides
- **Lowell, Massachusetts (2002):** Citywide group violence-reduction strategy
 - **Results:** a 44% reduction in fatal and non-fatal gun assaults
- **Stockton, California (2002):** Citywide group violence-reduction strategy
 - **Results:** a 42% decrease in gun homicide
- **Cincinnati, Ohio (2006 – Present):** Citywide group violence-reduction strategy
 - **Results:** a four-year, sustained 41% decrease in gang-related homicide; 22% decrease in non-fatal shootings

SOURCES

- 7) US Department of Justice Research Report. Reducing Gun Violence: The Boston Gun Project's Operation Ceasefire, September 2001.
- 8) National Network for Safe Communities. National Network Strategies: Crime Prevention Outcomes.
- 9) Harvard Kennedy School. Chart: Ceasefire
<<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/programs/criminaljustice/research-publications/gangs,-guns,-urban-violence/chart-ceasefire>>.
- 10) Braga, A. A., Hureau, D., & Winship, C. (2008). Losing Faith? Police, Black Churches, and the Resurgence of Youth Violence in Boston. Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law.

SOURCE 88: PARRAMORE NARRATIVE

Parramore was Orlando's toughest neighborhood when Buddy Dyer became the city's mayor in 2003. Data painted a bleak picture of the 1.4-square-mile neighborhood adjacent to downtown Orlando. Fully 73% of Parramore's children were living in poverty and 47% of neighborhood adults neither had a high school diploma nor a GED. A disproportionate percentage of city crime occurred in Parramore. Multiple structural issues contributed to the area's decline: the placement there of seven homeless shelters, closure of both the neighborhood's two elementary schools and the paving of a four-lane highway right through the residential sector.

But Parramore's luck began to change when Dyer was elected. As one of his earliest priorities, the mayor committed to its revitalization. The city began allocating significant resources to address the neighborhood's housing, public safety, quality-of-life and business-development problems. This effort culminated in the Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ), a neighborhood-based education collaborative modeled after the well-known Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ).

Using the HCZ model as a starting point, PKZ began investing in, enhancing and scaling up the neighborhood's existing services and institutions wherever possible. But it made some specific adaptations: Rather than centering services around a particular school, PKZ focused on providing primary prevention services, such as tutoring and youth development programs, to children at neighborhood-based sites. PKZ lowers barriers for kids to join such programs through grassroots marketing, subsidized fees, streamlined paperwork, and transportation to programs. PKZ has also expanded the capacity of participating (mostly neighborhood-based) non-profits serving Parramore children through funding, free rent, and technical and administrative support.

The result? Parramore's transformation was nothing short of remarkable. Scores for the FCAT, Florida's standardized test, have moved up sharply. For example, 60% of elementary students were at and above grade level in reading in 2010 compared with 45% in 2007. Similarly, the FCAT math percentages nearly doubled to 48% from 27%. And while Orlando's overall juvenile crime rate declined by an impressive 67% from 2006 to 2010, Parramore showed significantly better results – with an 81% reduction.

Housing-improvement projects and an influx of city funding played a critical role in Parramore's progress. But the key to its children's success has been the real collaboration among all its varied sectors – nonprofit, government, faith, civic, education,

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Parramore neighborhood in Orlando, FL
- **Problem:** 73% of children living in poverty; 47% of adults lacking high school diploma or GED
- **Results:** 21% increase in number of children at or above grade level on standardized math test (FCAT) between 2006 and 2010
- **Differentiating Feature:** Parramore deliberately incorporates proven strategies both inside and outside of the community in its initiatives, beginning with the Harlem Children's Zone model.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Mayor Dyer and Parramore Kidz Zone
- **Philanthropic Support:** Orlando's Mayor Dyer has raised most funds through city money and personal fundraisers.

philanthropy and corporate. As Lisa Early, director of Families, Parks and Recreation says, *“We make sure all boats are rowing in the same direction.”*

Another unique strategy was PKZ’s commitment to invest in the neighborhood’s nascent social capital. As a result, most partners today are grassroots organizations with offices and programs already inside Parramore. Armed with this experience, PKZ is exploring expansion into an adjacent neighborhood, Holden Heights. While PKZ will continue to invest in Parramore, the replication effort is a testament to the enormous progress PKZ has made over the last 5+ years.

Four key things have made PKZ successful in improving the lives of Parramore’s children:

Building on others’ successes: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.*

Parramore deliberately incorporated proven strategies both inside and outside of the community in its initiatives. Lisa Early recalls she was searching in 2004 for a viable strategy when she first read about Harlem Children’s Zone. Within months, a mayor’s office team visited Harlem, liked what they saw and began to model a similar PKZ. With Ms. Early leading the team, PKZ adopted and customized HCZ’s evidence-based and developmentally appropriate approaches across the cradle-to-career continuum. PKZ doubled the neighborhood’s Head Start program, established a childcare funding pool and, using research-based tools to measure quality of childcare centers, funded a childcare quality-improvement project. For older youth, PKZ also used the tried and true. It makes investments using the Positive Youth Development (PYD) theoretical framework, which 1) emphasizes the building of youth assets, skills and competencies, and 2) connects youth with trusted adults as the key mechanism for healthy development.

Powerful, committed leader: *Effective leadership and governance.*

Mayor Dyer’s commitment has endured. Indeed, he put his reputation on the line from the outset, saying: *“The time to act is now. You can measure my success as Mayor of Orlando by my ability to rebuild this once proud neighborhood.”* Dyer allocates significant city monies to Parramore and donates 100% of the proceeds from his annual charity fundraiser. Mayor Dyer also dedicates 50% of the time of his director of Families, Parks and Recreation to the project. Another strong advocate over time has been State Representative Geraldine F. Thompson.

Investing in data: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*

Data has always shaped PKZ’s course. From the start, PKZ engaged the Local Health Council of East Central Florida as an external evaluator to measure its progress against best practices. To establish a baseline, residents participated in a face-to-face survey in 2006, and they will be surveyed again in the first half of 2012. Survey results were used to shape programming. As the PKZ team declares: *“We invest in what the neighborhood wants. We found that 80% of parents wanted more tutoring for their kids and adapted our services accordingly.”* To provide ongoing data on service utilization and effectiveness, PKZ tracks each youth’s attendance through sign-in sheets.

Yet PKZ has to work hard to gather its data. Parramore does not have its own zip code and students attend many outside schools. PKZ and its external evaluator had to work with various government entities to get granular, geography-specific information. Tracked at the neighborhood level today are: teen pregnancy rates, reading and math proficiency scores, readiness for school by kindergarten indicators and juvenile arrest rates. The collaborative is working to start gathering individual indicators for youth on education progress and health issues.

Rooting programs in community opinions: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

Parramore residents are instrumental in shaping and marketing PKZ services. PKZ uses community feedback and survey results to design programming. Or as one PKZ staff member puts it: “*We never would have been successful if we tried to tell the community what services they needed instead of listening to what they wanted.*” To stay informed, the collaborative constantly holds neighborhood meetings. There, PKZ gathers feedback on its services and marketing strategies, disseminates information, plans activities and generally builds resident ownership of the effort. To boost attendance, PKZ provides free childcare, transportation and food. PKZ’s resident community ambassador is Brenda March, the city’s children and education manager. Born and raised in the community, Ms. March oversees day-to-day PKZ operations. Ms. March has led community engagement efforts in Parramore for her entire career and has earned the respect of neighborhood leaders, pastors, business people, and residents.

Door-to-door and street outreach and the engagement of community members directly drives impact by spreading the word about PKZ’s services. The marketing tactics employed by PKZ are unique and culturally relevant, including “wrapping” PKZ vans in the neighborhood youth’s designs; collaborating with youth to organize neighborhood events; and distributing PKZ t-shirts and other give-aways. The project has saturated the neighborhood with information about services and engaged so many grassroots partners that the brand is easily recognized throughout Parramore.

SOURCES

11) Parramore Kidz Zone Overview. <<http://www.cityoforlando.net/fpr/Html/PDFs/kidzzone.pdf>>. 2006.

SOURCE 89: NASHVILLE NARRATIVE

More is not always better. Despite the work of more than 175 nonprofits working separately to improve Nashville's public schools, by 2002, the system was near failure. High school graduation rates hovered around 58% and school attendance was dismal.

Most dispiriting was the wasted effort by all these nonprofits, whose net impact was negligible, if not negative. Each organization was addressing problems in the schools individually and no attempts had been made to coordinate efforts. Vast monetary and human resources were pouring into the district. Yet the end result was an administrative drain on the schools and ineffective support for students. Serving an urban district with more than 75,000 students who lived amid a poverty rate of more than 65%, Nashville's schools faced a daunting challenge.

A study conducted by the Nashville Chamber of Commerce in 2002 shone light on the fragmented nature of this support network. And with clear data to show the way, the city's business leaders seized an opportunity to focus and coordinate all the disparate efforts aimed at youth. Born from the business community's investigation and analysis was Alignment Nashville. Designed as a nonprofit intermediary, it began by pooling the thinking and advice of more than 100 nonprofit leaders and community members to develop a vision shared by all.

Building on Alignment Nashville's progress, the city's mayor convened a group to address student truancy once researchers connected it with graduation rates, school performance, youth crime and public safety. Then in 2010, community leaders worked diligently to develop what they called the Children and Youth Master Plan. It was the city's first overall formal roadmap for how Nashville would actually connect youth with needed services. Several significant reforms emerged from that effort. For example, research showed many youth had a hard time literally getting transportation to school and other programs. In response, the city created new bus stops, instituted fare waivers for qualifying students and touted these changes with several city-wide marketing campaigns. Moreover, this snowballing activity genuinely reflected the city's longtime culture. As Councilman Ronnie Steine put it: "*Nashville, with its consolidated city-county government, has a long history of collaboration. Anyone trying to act on their own in this town quickly realizes they are on the wrong bus.*"

Getting Nashville's school efforts on the same bus has definitely paid off. Graduation rates at public schools have risen by more than 20 percentage points, to 83%, since

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Nashville, TN
- **Problem:** High school graduation rates as low as 58%
- **Results:** 20% increase in graduation rates at Nashville Public Schools since 2002
- **Differentiating Feature:** Alignment Nashville's formalized collaborative structure includes dedicated staff, 22 committees, an operating board and a system for regularly inviting others in the community to participate.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Alignment Nashville, Mayor Karl Dean, Councilman Ronnie Steine
- **Philanthropic Support:** Local public funders: Nashville Public Schools, Mayor's Office, Nashville Chamber of Commerce. Other granters: America's Promise, State Farm, National Science Foundation, Centers for Disease Control

2002. Nashville has also shown a 35% to 40% reduction in student truancy in the last few years. Who should take the credit? Maybe that's not the real question. Rather, it's how can you tell what's working. Indeed, one key challenge in any community-wide effort is attributing progress to a specific set of interventions. Nashville is particularly complex, with multiple collaboratives and a reform-mind school district. While Metro Nashville Public Schools were the driving force behind graduation improvements, Alignment Nashville and other collaborative efforts in the city were integral to the progress. The striking shift in student outcomes would not have been possible without the coordinated efforts of the school, the mayor's office, Alignment Nashville, government entities, non-profits, and the Chamber of Commerce. In other words, each played a key and complementary role.

Five key things have made the Nashville collaborative successful in increasing graduation rates:

Data leads to unity: *Shared vision and agenda.*

As noted, Nashville came together in 2010 to create a formal shared roadmap for the city, the Child and Youth Master Plan (CYMP). Mayor Karl Dean delivered the initial call to action but the plan was painstakingly developed by a 52-person taskforce consisting of leaders from schools, government agencies, businesses and nonprofits, along with youth and parents. The taskforce was divided into topical committees – for example, separate focuses on out-of-school time, health, safety and the like. This is where most of the work was done. The groups started by analyzing data on a broad set of youth outcomes to set and prioritize goals. Armed with that critical information, the committees established strategic objectives and specific implementation strategies for each. And they had to hurry to do it. The mayor set a six-month timeframe for the development of the CYMP. This very-short deadline stirred some groans. But it also created a sense of urgency, and forced the group to put aside politics and individual agendas in support of the common vision. The Ready By 21 Quality Counts – a nationwide initiative that offers tools and technical assistance to improve the quality and reach of community programs for youth – also provided critical support to Nashville.

As a working rule, Alignment Nashville has committed itself to supporting the school district's strategic plan and carefully aligns its work with the district's vision.

Empowered community members: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

Right from the beginning, youth and families contributed to the development of the CYMP – at every level. A high school student served as one of the three co-chairs for the CYMP and other students took places on the taskforce. The taskforce worked closely with the mayor's standing Youth Council and removed barriers to student participation – for example, by scheduling meetings after the schools' 3 PM close and by assisting with transportation. Youth members also took responsibility for a creating large-scale survey of 1,000 city youth. They wrote, administered and analyzed it themselves. The broader community got actively engaged too, mainly through listening sessions involving hundreds of residents and youth. The taskforce employed a variety of meeting formats to

gain community insights, such as small group discussions and one-on-one exchanges. At each, translators enabled Hispanic participation.

Well-known leaders attract partners: *Effective leadership and governance.*

In calling for the development of the city-wide Child and Youth Master Plan, Mayor Dean stepped up to a daunting challenge. The convening power of the mayor and Councilman Ronnie Steine, in particular, was critical for the resulting broad, cross-sector engagement. Indeed, when asked why they participated in the CYMP, most participants simply responded: “Because Mayor Dean or Councilman Steine asked me.” The mayor’s office also used its power to allocate funding and resources to support the collaborative strategies. It has also acted as a strong advocate for education reform in Metro Nashville Public Schools. And this advocacy continues in hard economic times. Despite budget cuts in other areas, the mayor’s office has allocated funds from the Metro City government’s general operating budget to education-related programs.

The power of a strong leader can be seen as well in the city’s progress on truancy rates. Mayor Dean summoned a three-day conference on truancy in early 2008, bringing in representatives from the Metro Police, Metro Nashville Public Schools and the Juvenile Court. Among other strategies, the group devised an aggressive approach to attendance. Putting the strategy into place, Mayor Dean created the Metro Student Attendance Center, which involves a partnership among a number of government entities. It identifies and provides early intervention for chronically truant students.

Formalized structure: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

Alignment Nashville is an outstanding example of a formalized collaborative structure. It encompasses:

- **Committees:** The collaborative developed a sophisticated committee structure to ensure its partners have a meaningful role. Each of the 22 committees meet monthly and has a chair and vice chair in addition to its standing members. Specific guidelines exist for committee membership and most have between 10 to 20 members.
- **Dedicated staff:** More than seven individuals work directly for Alignment Nashville, organizing and supporting the committees.
- **Operating Board:** Alignment’s Operating Board is composed of the chair and vice-chair of each committee. Committees report out on their work in monthly meetings, and the board provides oversight, collaboration and accountability.
- **Community alignment:** At least yearly, the committees issue an Invitation to Participate (ITP), which is an open call to interested community organizations to share their expertise. Committees select organizations based on their ITP responses to determine which resources best align with a given initiative. Today, there are more than 300 organizations participating in Alignment initiatives.

Similarly, the Mayor’s Office has committed resources to coordinate the CYMP and tapped into a pool of college interns to provide additional capacity. Experience had shown that dedicated resources were necessary but not sufficient for the CYMP’s success. Among those making significant contributions was Laura Hansen of the

Mayor's Office for Children and Youth. The architect for the CYMP work, she was uniquely suited to take on the coordination role, given her extensive experience in strategic planning and project management.

Diverse fundraising success: *Sufficient Resources.*

Alignment Nashville has been remarkably successful in its fundraising efforts and consistently disperses almost half of its funding to partner organizations through grants. The collaborative is able to raise more than \$1.1 million each year. The base funding of \$450,000 per year comes from Nashville Public Schools, the Mayor's Office, and the Nashville Chamber of Commerce. An additional \$550,000 annually comes from federal and foundation grants, such as America's Promise, the National Science Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and State Farm.

SOURCES

- 12) "MNPS Way Ahead of the Curve for Graduation Rates." *Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools*. October 2011.
- 13) *Children and Youth Master Plan*. Mayor's Child and Youth Master Plan Taskforce. July 2010.
- 14) *Alignment Nashville 2010 Annual Report*. Alignment Nashville. 2010.

SOURCE 90: CHICAGO NARRATIVE

In 2004, less than half of Chicago's youth were graduating from its public high schools. And things weren't getting any better. Officials estimated that two-thirds of incoming freshmen were at risk of not graduating in four years. As the third-largest school district in the nation – with more than 80% of its economically challenged student population on free or reduced-cost lunch – Chicago's increasing drop-out crisis looked like it might affect the city for another generation, adding to the cycle of poverty.

Chicago Public Schools decided it needed to take bold action. To accurately determine the scope of the problem and find potential interventions, it partnered with the Chicago Consortium on School Research (CCSR), a University of Chicago research institution, and later the Parthenon Group, a consulting firm. This analysis led to the Chicago Public School's Pathways to Success program in 2008, which enlisted public agencies, nonprofit organizations and corporations in a collaborative to support the school system's determination to keep all students on pace to graduate.

At the core of the program's philosophy was the belief that no single provider or program was capable of improving graduation rates to the degree necessary. Rather, the problem begged for a broad and coordinated solution. To this end, the school system convened the first Graduation Pathways Summit in 2008. Upwards of 200 public officials, community partners and city agencies attended. More than gaining critical mass, though, the event drew appropriate attention to a problem that had been quietly building for years. And that helped allow "CPS," as the school system is known in the Windy city, to organize local stakeholders around a data-driven approach to combat the crisis.

Since that beginning, the Chicago Public School System has melded the efforts of such partners as the Chicago Urban League and the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago to produce multiple graduation pathways for students not well served by the traditional high school route.

With fewer than three years of collaboration under way, the city has already seen the proportion of freshmen on-track for graduation rise 10% and graduation rates inch upwards by 3% -- a figure that may not sound like much but translates into more than 13,000 students on their way to a better life. Meantime, the programs supporting Pathways to Success have grown more comprehensive and diverse, as well. Four key things have made the Chicago collaborative successful in beginning to increase graduation rates:

Data determines strategy: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Chicago, IL
- **Problem:** On-time graduation rates lower than 50%
- **Results:** 10% increase in number of freshmen on-track to graduate in the 3 years between 2008 and 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** Chicago Public Schools initially enlisted external organizations to conduct extensive research into students at risk of not graduating. It now has two offices analyzing data and flagging students that need more support from collaborative partners.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Chicago Public Schools
- **Philanthropic Support:** Gates Foundation

To keep the Pathway to Success's strategy on track, data has constantly marked the way. This has been true since the group first posed the critical question: Who is at risk of not graduating? CPS initially relied on the University of Chicago's CCSR research group and later the Parthenon Group to give an accurate profile of the at-risk student – and determine which interventions were successful in improving graduation rates. CPS now has two permanent offices, REA (Research, Evaluation, and Accountability) and IMPACT (Instructional Management Program and Academic Communication Tool) that work with CCSR to collect, analyze and present data to principals, instructional leadership teams and teachers. These groups jointly produce three regular reports that identify and monitor at-risk or off-pace students. In addition, a Freshmen Intervention Database, which documents interventions used with students, enables increased transparency and opportunities for communication among relevant stakeholders.

Getting behind proven programs: *Deliberate alignment toward what works.*

Simply put, Pathways to Success is committed to employing programs that have demonstrated success in helping students graduate. For example, Parthenon found that the two-year Achievement Academies program, a joint venture with Johns Hopkins to help over-aged students qualify for high school, almost doubled the graduation rates for participants. As a result, Pathways to Success is looking to expand the academies to a four-year program. Pathways to Success also constantly seeks out effective new interventions. With funding from the Gates Foundation, CPS has placed staff in six public schools as part of its On-Track Labs initiative to explore and test different strategies for keeping freshmen on track. Based on the level of On-Track Labs' success, CPS will roll out the best interventions to other district schools and partners.

Multiple pathways, multiple partners: *Cross-sector engagement.*

The collaborative's commitment to multiple graduation pathways requires many partners to provide a range of alternative education routes. CPS has integrated public, private and nonprofit organizations into the Pathways to Success program portfolio and publicly showcases their results at the annual Graduation Pathways Summit. Critical to the development of the collaborative's successful strategy have been the CCSR and Network for College Success, a provider of professional development resources for CPS leaders and teachers. Pathways to Success manages a variety of partners, ranging from Jobs for Illinois Graduates, a career-preparation program, to Aventa, a virtual learning provider. Also part of the mix is VOYCE, a youth-led collaborative focused on education reform, and the Chicago Police Department.

United around the primary service provider: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

Chicago Public Schools acts as the convener of the Pathways to Success collaborative. It has drawn awareness to the problem, convened stakeholders and administers the majority of its programs. In this central role, CPS works with individual partners to fold their respective programs into the larger portfolio. Partners primarily serve to support CPS' mission and agenda, rather than to collaborate on the goals and strategy of the group. This hub-and-spoke structure has been successful because of CPS' natural role as the primary service provider – as well as lead convener. CPS is figuratively and

literally at the center of things, well able to integrate services across providers, ensure alignment toward what works and provide an array of services that best meet the needs of its student beneficiaries.

SOURCES

- 15) The Chicago Alliance. [Overview Brief for the Grad Nation Action Forum](#). September 2009.
- 16) Editorial Projects in Education Research Center. [School District Graduation Report](#). 2011.
- 17) Allensworth, E. and Easton, John Q. (June 2005). [The On-Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation](#). Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- 18) The Parthenon Group. [Pathways to Graduation](#). April 2008.
- 19) Chicago Public Schools. [Freshmen On Track Rates 2008 – 2011](#). September 2011.
- 20) Ponder, Paige. [Graduation Pathways: Using Freshmen Year Indicators](#). Chicago Public Schools. 2010.

SOURCE 91: MILWAUKEE NARRATIVE

In 2006, Milwaukee took note of a sad distinction: it had one of the highest rates of teen births in the nation, with 52 births per thousand teen-age girls (defined as live births to female teens in Milwaukee between the ages of 15 and 17). Civic leaders became even more troubled when they explored the data and consequences. Rates for black teens were five times higher than for whites. The economic cost to Milwaukee of births by unmarried teens in 2002 came to a staggering \$137 million over the lifetime of the children born. The child poverty rate (41%) ranked fourth in the nation, fueled in part by teen birth rates. Most disturbingly, interviews with service providers showed that “teen pregnancy” statistics were quite often a manifestation of sexual abuse, incest, dating violence and statutory rape, with 71% of all teen births fathered by men over the age of 20.

Civic leaders recognized teen pregnancy as closely linked to other issues Milwaukee was grappling with: education, crime and the cycle of poverty. Moved to action, United Way of Greater Milwaukee (UWGM) convened a group that same year. They called it the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee. Chaired by Elizabeth Brenner, the publisher of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, and Bevan Baker, the city’s commissioner of health, it brought together a broad cross section of public officials, service providers, researchers, and funders. What emerged was a highly specific roadmap for action and an ambitious goal: to reduce the teen birth rate by 46% by 2015, bringing Milwaukee in line with the national average and well below the average for a large city.

Progress has been encouraging. Preliminary data for 2010 shows a 31% decrease in the teen birth rate since 2006; with births dropping to 36 per thousand teenage girls. A cutting edge public awareness campaign has ensured that virtually every Milwaukeean, both urban and suburban, is now aware of the issue. The greatest focus has been on teens, themselves. For example, in partnership with the Milwaukee Public Schools, the collaborative has trained close to 1,000 teachers. This effort has dramatically increased the proportion of MPS’ approximately 80,000 students who are receiving age-appropriate, science-based curriculum on sexuality. Meantime, United Way’s continuing Healthy Girls programs have provided about 16,000 young people with additional education on the topics of teen pregnancy, sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV prevention. Praise for the initiative has also come from the respected National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, which cited the collaborative’s broad partnership; focus on evidence-based interventions and ambitious goal.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Milwaukee, WI
- **Problem:** One of the highest rates of teen births in nation
- **Results:** 31% decline in teen birth rate for 15 to 17 year olds since 2006
- **Differentiating Feature:** United Way of Greater Milwaukee is uniquely positioned to play the convener role. It has the trust of the community, the power (and political neutrality) to convene at the highest levels, and the independence to make a long-term commitment to a politicized issue.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** United Way of Greater Milwaukee (UWGM)
- **Philanthropic Support:** Collaborative Fund, which includes the Brico Fund, Faye McBeath Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Johnson Controls, Inc. Foundation, Rockwell Automation Foundation, UWGM, Daniel M. Soref Charitable Trust, Aurora Health Care Foundation

Yet, given the controversial nature of teen pregnancy, predictable challenges have emerged. UWGM's CEO Mary Lou Young says, "I still answer questions from donors almost every day on why we are tackling this issue. It is a constant effort to reinforce the message that teen pregnancy is a catalyst for poverty." Early on, though, UWGM made the decision that it would commit to the issue long term. While some donors withdrew their support, others have stepped forward so that overall support has increased.

Three key things have made the Milwaukee collaborative successful in reducing teen pregnancy rates:

Dedicated staff provides momentum: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.* Describing UWGM's role in the collaborative, Nicole Angresano, vice president of Community Impact, states, "We conduct the orchestra." It does so by providing a full suite of administrative support that keeps things moving ahead. The Oversight Committee holds quarterly meetings open to the public, receiving input and advice for the effort. But the real work happens in four sub-committees that meet monthly. They focus on public awareness, sexual victimization, collaborative funding and the faith community. A UWGM staffer is assigned to each of the five committees to coordinate across committees by maintaining and updating the roadmap and logic model, creating agendas, handling public relations and providing talking points. UWGM supports these activities in-kind out of its own full-time staff, supplementing with interns, fellows and volunteers when needed.

Respected, neutral leader: *Effective leadership and governance.* UWGM was uniquely positioned to play the convener role—it had the trust of the community, the power (and political neutrality) to convene at the highest levels, and the independence to make a long-term commitment to an issue. While the UWGM convenes the group and staffs the collaborative, it does so with a light touch. As CEO Young is careful to point out: ["We have publicly committed to getting this done, but we don't own the agenda. The collaborative and the community own the agenda."] UWGM also ensures that proper credit goes to partner organizations, such as the Milwaukee Public Schools. The result is a collaborative focused on impact rather than on programs, funding or credit. In a very few cases, the collaborative has formalized decisions rules (for example, Oversight Committee co-chairs have veto power over any new public awareness ad), but otherwise operates without bylaws or formalized roles, relying on a strong culture of trust among participants.

Comprehensive public awareness: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

In Milwaukee's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, United Way of Greater Milwaukee saw clearly that teens needed multiple reinforcing messages to change their behavior. The initiative centers on direct education and counseling via public schools, nonprofits, and the faith community. In addition, an innovative public awareness campaign by Serve Marketing changed the conversation among teens, their friends and parents. The campaign began with ads making the case that teen pregnancy impacted everyone in greater Milwaukee (even the suburbs) due to its economic cost. Subsequently, peer

teens were engaged through a series of provocative ads, radio spots, and even a fake movie premiere. The collaborative also reached out to parents, providing them with a “Let’s Talk toolkit” to help them talk about sexuality with their kids

SOURCES

- 1) “Teen Pregnancy Prevention.” *United Way of Greater Milwaukee: Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative*. <<http://www.unitedwaymilwaukee.org/TeenPregnancyPrevention.htm>>. 2011.
- 2) “Strong Babies Invade Milwaukee.” *BVK News*. December 2010. <<http://www.bvk.com/289/289>>.

SOURCE 92: PHILADELPHIA NARRATIVE

Philadelphia was facing a high school drop-out epidemic that threatened the potential of the city's youth and the capacity of the region's future workforce. Only about half of the entering ninth graders slated to graduate in the classes of 2000 through 2005 in the city's public high schools graduated on time, and only a slightly higher proportion would graduate at all within a six-year time period (54-58%). From those classes alone, researchers estimated 30,000 students left school with no diploma.

To combat this crisis, the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), a local youth workforce intermediary, brought together a broad collaborative that would launch the Project U-Turn campaign. It was made up of representatives from the Mayor's office, school district, service providers, family court, child welfare system, advocacy groups and local funders. With funding from the Youth Transition Funders Group and the William Penn Foundation, the collaborative commissioned research to understand the drop-out problem, and created a call to action with roles and responsibilities for all sectors of the community. The group then developed a detailed roadmap and work plan, and began to align resources and programs toward practical solutions with an initial focus on juvenile justice and child welfare populations.

Today, coordination among city government, the school system, philanthropic entities, service organizations and young people themselves has never been more focused on getting students to graduation day. More students are on track to graduate, available slots in alternative and accelerated high schools have nearly doubled, and graduation rates are up by 6%. In 2011, Harvard Kennedy School included Project U-Turn as one of its "36 Noteworthy Government Programs and Practices."

Along the way, Project U-Turn has faced tough choices and real challenges. By choosing to tackle multiple systems at once (juvenile justice, child welfare, and education), the collaborative chose a slower but potentially more permanent path to change. From Project U-Turn's perspective, focusing on the easiest kids (juniors and seniors close to graduation) might have created larger short-term gains but would have sacrificed the institutional changes required to sustain the gains.

Data sharing also has been difficult, creating problems in tracking progress at the sub-group level. The collaborative began with commissioned research that linked graduation data with data about youth in the juvenile justice and child welfare system — the initial targets of the effort. Since the initial report, however, Project U-Turn has had to rely on the schools district's data, which does not disaggregate these sub-groups.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** Philadelphia, PA
- **Problem:** On-time graduation rates as low as 50%
- **Results:** 6% increase in graduation rate between 2006 and 2011
- **Differentiating Feature:** Project U-Turn's partnership with Youth United for Change, an organization of disconnected youth, has provided insight and generated buy-in among those the collaborative serves.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Philadelphia Youth Network (a local youth workforce intermediary)
- **Philanthropic Support:** William Penn Foundation, Youth Transition Funders Group

Lastly, project U-Turn has faced four changes in Philadelphia's superintendent of schools, a key partner in their pursuit of higher graduation rates. Nevertheless, the district's latest strategic planning process illustrates the collaborative's success in overcoming this revolving-door challenge. By working very closely with multiple institutions across the community, Project U-Turn's perspective continued to be represented on many of the district's planning committees, as well as in much of the input given by community members and parents.

Four key things have made Project U-Turn successful in beginning to turn around the dropout problem:

An inside/outside approach: *Cross-sector engagement.*

The collaborative approaches the problem from two sides, operating both within the school district and city government infrastructure, and outside of the normal bureaucratic and political channels through teaming with external organizations aligned with the same strategy. This comprehensive approach ensures that the collaborative can push for important changes that may be at odds with what the district or the city might want, without compromising key partnerships within the system.

Meaningful youth participation: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

Many collaboratives focused on youth issues, including graduation rates, struggle with getting young people, themselves, involved. Not so for Project U-Turn. In 2009, it partnered with Youth United for Change (YUC), which had just organized youth who were not in school, or were in alternative high schools. The purpose: to advocate for issues related to the public education system. The youth named their chapter of YUC "The Pushout Chapter," reflecting the sentiment among many "drop outs" that they did not choose to leave school. Rather, they believed they are pushed out by factors beyond their control. Youth for Change staff – many of them former disconnected youth themselves – then bring the views and ideas of the group to the collaborative, as well as seek to align their advocacy with the collaborative's vision.

Staffing to facilitate action: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

Through the support of the William Penn Foundation, PYN's vice president, Jenny Bogoni, is able to focus on daily operations of Project U-Turn. She creates agendas, facilitates the steering committee, pushes the work ahead between meetings, and maintains relationships with the broader partner group. One important benefit of Bogoni's active participation is the creation of the steering committee's workplan of required activities. Having a current document that captures the committee's consensus view allows partners to respond quickly to opportunities related to funding and policy change. The foundation also funds a policy analyst within the mayor's office, and a data analyst and a director of a re-engagement center at the school district.

Metrics, metrics, metrics: *Use of data to set the agenda and improve over time.*

The Network uses a unique four-part dashboard to gauge progress. It measures the six-year cohort graduation rate, the percentage of first-time 9th graders on track to on-time

graduation, the number of youths on waiting lists for alternative high schools, the available slots in those programs, and the dollars earmarked for the Project U-Turn agenda. All stakeholders receive updates to ensure everyone is working from the same data.

SOURCES

- 3) Balfanz, Robert, Neild, Ruth Curran. "Unfulfilled Promise: The Dimensions and Characteristic of Philadelphia's' Dropout Crisis, 2000-2005." Philadelphia Youth Network, 2006.
- 4) "2011 Bright Ideas." *Harvard Kennedy School*. 2011. < <http://www.ash.harvard.edu/Home/News-Events/Press-Releases/Innovations/Harvard-Announces-Bright-Ideas-in-Government/2011-Bright-Ideas>>.
- 5) *Project U-Turn Work Plan*. Project U-Turn. March 2009.
<http://www.pyninc.org/downloads/Project_UTurn_Work_Plan_years_5_6.pdf>.

SOURCE 93: SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY/STOCKTON NARRATIVE

In 2004, the City of Stockton was identified as the most violent city in California with a rate of 1,362 violent crimes per 100,000 residents. The broader San Joaquin County (SJC) has long been a hotspot for gang violence and was hit hard in the economic recessions. While Stockton and the surrounding San Joaquin County have many nonprofits and government agencies, historically everyone worked separately with narrowly focused services and different intake systems. The burden of coordinating services fell on the recipients. One study estimated that families literally had to fill out a barrel-full of paperwork and travel to multiple different offices to access services.

In the late 1990s, a group of 60 leaders came together to ask why outcomes had not improved for SJC families despite significant resources at the community's disposal. After reflection, the group came together to start the Community Partnership for Families San Joaquin (CPFSJ), a collaborative that brings local services for families under one roof. The approach was a radical departure from the past for a community that had previously acted as if the solution to every problem was to start a new nonprofit. To kick-start the effort, the community brought in Stewart Wakeling, currently a researcher-practitioner at the Public Health Institute with deep criminal justice expertise, to serve as a facilitator and leader.

CPFSJ transformed social service delivery in San Joaquin County enabling 25,000 families to easily access services and get help "where they are". CPFSJ co-locates multiple service providers in neighborhood centers to increase accessibility of services for families. CPFSJ even created a mobile unit to deliver services to more remote areas in San Joaquin County. The centers provide comprehensive, integrated services, including prevention and early intervention for issues such as obesity, truancy, unemployment and education. CPFSJ also developed a common intake form to minimize the administrative burden on families and better share information among providers.

Since their launch, neighborhoods around CPFSJ centers have been steadily making progress. The five centers have deep penetration in their neighborhoods with each supporting around 5,000 families. An extensive survey conducted by CPFSJ suggests that participants realize 25%+ reductions in arrests, child protective services interventions, unexcused absences and school suspensions. In crime-ridden North Central Stockton, crime is down 65% in the five years since the center was opened there.

One key thing has made CPFSJ particularly successful in reducing crime in San Joaquin County:

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** San Joaquin County / Stockton
- **Problem:** Hotspot for gang violence and acute financial need
- **Results:** 65% reduction in crime reporting since 2004 in the neighborhood around center
- **Differentiating Feature:** Meaningful engagement of a group of residents and faith-based institutions, the Coalition United for Families (CUFF), to shape programs and oversee center operations
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** Community Partnership for Families San Joaquin
- **Philanthropic Support:** Local funds

Developing community ownership: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

CPFSJ engaged the Coalition United for Families (CUFF), a group of community residents and faith-based institutions in the early days of the collaborative. CUFF was initially a reluctant participant, having had very negative experiences working with city and county government previously. The courtship was intense and CPFSJ backed up its collaboration overtures with action. CPFSJ collaborated with PACT, a community organizing nonprofit, to run a training program for CUFF. CPFSJ also brought in several private foundations to talk with CUFF and advocated for CUFF with city and county officials.

The relationship with CUFF culminated in the establishment of a new CPFSJ center in 2007 after four years of community organizing and planning. While CPFSJ provided funds and operated the center, CPFSJ put CUFF in the driver's seat. CUFF made key decisions for the Center, hired community residents to staff the Center and served as the Center's Advisory Board. CPFSJ earned the support of the local community in the process and ended up with programming that was more relevant to the community as a result.

CPFSJ, under the six-year leadership of Executive Director Robina Asghar, continues to develop the capacity of families to serve as forerunners for change in their neighborhoods around issues such as educational disparities, school readiness and attendance, foster care placement and civic engagement.

SOURCES

- 6) *Uniform Crime Reports*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2010. <<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>>.
- 7) "Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin: Fact Sheet." *Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin*. 2011.
- 8) "Three Year Overview of Community Partnership for Families January 2008 to December 2010." *Community Partnership for Families*. 2011.

SOURCE 94: ATLANTA NARRATIVE

East Lake was once one of Atlanta's wealthiest neighborhoods, attracting vacationers and professional golfers to the East Lake Golf Club. But by 1995 it had deteriorated into what some called "Little Vietnam" due to the level of violence. East Lake had become home to a murder each week and crime rates 18 times the national average. The neighborhood's public housing project, East Lake Meadows, was economically and educationally depressed, with 59% of its residents on welfare and only 5% of its fifth graders achieving state standards in mathematics. To create new opportunities for its besieged residents, a prominent real estate developer, Tom Cousins, started the East Lake Foundation in 1995. His ambitious goal: to transform the neighborhood. Over the next two years, the Foundation worked with the Atlanta Housing Authority and the East Lake Meadows housing project residents' association to evaluate the neighborhood's needs and to develop strategies to replace the dilapidated public housing project. A turning point for the community was the razing of East Lake Meadows housing project and the development of the new, mixed-income apartments, Villages of East Lake.

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** East Lake neighborhood of Atlanta, GA
- **Problem:** Crime rates 18 times the national average
- **Results:** 95% reduction in violent crime rates since 1995
- **Differentiating Feature:** East Lake Foundation acts as the hub for the collaborative, working directly with partner organizations individually, rather than bringing them together.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** East Lake Foundation
- **Philanthropic Support:** East Lake Foundation (initially), private donors

East Lake Foundation's comprehensive strategy focuses on three essential goals: cradle-to-college education, safe and affordable housing, and community wellness. A series of public and private partnerships serve as the scaffolding for the collaborative. For example, the nonprofit Sheltering Arms provides early childhood education; its EdisonLearning manages a new K-8 charter school with funding and a charter from the Atlanta Public Schools. Private real estate management group, JMG Realty, manages the safe new affordable housing within The Villages of East Lake. The local YMCA works closely with Drew Charter School to offer physical education classes in addition to its other services and the Charlie Yates Golf course offers classes and employment opportunities for neighborhood residents.

The collaborative's impact is evident in the transformation of East Lake from a warzone to a safe, inviting and attractive neighborhood. Violent crime has dropped by 95% in the neighborhood and the proportion of individuals supported by welfare has fallen from 59% for East Lake Meadows residents to just 5% for the entire neighborhood. Educational attainment has risen dramatically, as well. Today, fifth grade math proficiency has risen from its single digit low in 1995 for East Lake Meadows residents to greater than 80% for those who attend the neighborhood charter school. And the reading proficiency for all students in the K-8 charter school has attained the same high percentage number.

These dramatic improvements are partially the result of an influx of higher-income individuals and the exclusion of those former inhabitants with the worst criminal records. However, one-time residents who lived in the East Meadows project prior to 1995, and

have returned, have seen similarly impressive gains along these metrics among their children (Thomas Boston has tracked all residents who lived in the East Lake Meadows housing project in 1995. Comparing those who have returned to those who have not, shows that life is much better for those who have returned - *Benefits and Cost of Reducing Concentrated Poverty, 2005.*).

Three key things have made the East Lake Foundation and its partners successful:

Community shapes its own future: *Community members as partners and producers of impact.*

The East Lake Foundation began its efforts to help the neighborhood with two years of bi-weekly meetings with the local residents' association and the Atlanta Housing Authority. These meetings gave neighborhood participants a genuine opportunity to shape the future of their community. For example, as a result of community feedback, the residents' association's president strongly advocated for a 50/50 ratio of market-rate to subsidized housing in the new development. The original proposal was for an 80/20 mix, with the majority earmarked for market-rate housing.

Resources to attract more resources: *Sufficient resources.*

The East Lake Foundation provided the funding and personnel necessary for the initial two-year planning phase, which culminated in the replacement of the public housing project with a mixed-income development. Costs of demolition and construction were split between the Foundation and the Atlanta Housing Authority. With three of its seven non-programming staff members dedicated to fundraising and a fourth focused on marketing and communication, the East Lake Foundation is able to attract resources in a diversified, sustainable manner from a variety of major partners. These contributors include the Coca-Cola Company, supermarket chain Publix, Georgia State University, Atlanta Public Schools and the Atlanta Housing Authority. The Foundation's dedicated fundraising team, combined with a patient long-term approach to investments and a commitment to tracking and publicizing progress on neighborhood metrics, attracts additional funds from local public and private funders and directly contributes to the sustainability of the collaborative's efforts.

Hub and spoke model: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

In many collaboratives, partner organizations come together in a forum of equals to interact and take action, even when one organization is acting as the convener or leader. East Lake Foundation instead acts as the hub for the collaborative, working directly with partner organizations individually, rather than bringing them together. The Foundation has the sole power to select and recruit partners, reinforce the collaborative's vision and helps integrate programs across providers.

This hub and spoke structure allows for less-complex governance and centralized resources. East Lake Foundation's high level authority and dedicated program coordinator also allows it to effectively integrate partner services, identify gaps and fill them. The program coordinator meets regularly with partners to ensure their alignment with the collaborative goals and to collect data on their progress. In this role as convener

of public and private organizations, the Foundation is able to quickly respond to arising community needs by bringing on new service providers or phasing out existing partners no longer relevant to achieving the collaborative's goals. In other words, the Foundation uses its role as a funder and leader to ensure partners are aligned with the collaborative's goals. For such a hub and spoke model to work, the hub must be either the primary service provider or the lead fundraiser in a community and must have the capacity to actively coordinate among partners.

SOURCES

- 9) Strum, Philippa. "Creating Communities of Hope and Opportunity: The Revitalization of East Lake." *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*. March 2007.
- 10) Humphreys, J., Akioka, L., Kochut, B., & Armit, I. "A Chance to Succeed." *Selig Center for Economic Growth*, 2008.
- 11) East Lake Foundation. "East Lake Foundation 2009 Report to Community." 2009.
- 12) Davis, Martin A. Jr. "A Civic Hole-in-One." *The Philanthropy Roundtable*. 2005.
- 13) *East Lake Foundation*. The East Lake Foundation. 2011. <www.eastlakefoundation.org>.

SOURCE 95: SAN JOSE NARRATIVE

By the late 1980s, many of San Jose's once safe neighborhoods had become crime-ridden. The city had experienced a 300% rise in violent juvenile crime, along with significant increases in drug-related and other criminal activity. To take back their streets, community members, led by the citizens' group People Acting in Community Together (PACT), approached the City Council and mayor for help.

The resulting Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF), launched in 1991, has put forth a sustained commitment ever since to reducing violent and antisocial behavior within the city's youth population between the ages of 6 and 24, who exhibit high-risk behavior. With a mission to address the root cause of youth violence through personal transformation, MGPTF has aimed its strategy at prevention, intervention and most recently re-entry. It works directly with targeted youth, seeking to reconnect them with their families and communities, using law enforcement only as a last resort. The ultimate intent is to get troubled young people back into schools, provide them with a supportive and healthy environment in which to learn and grow, and redirect them towards more productive behaviors.

MGPTF today coordinates multiple efforts aimed at addressing the challenges of San Jose's disconnected youth. This wasn't always the case. Originally, MGPTF was focused on gang prevention in the San Jose area. But because of a commitment to continuous improvement, MGPTF has broadened its support of youth to include academic success, workforce preparation and neighborhood safety.

Due in large part to MGPTF, San Jose is now one of the safest big cities in America. The rate of violent crime in San Jose decreased by 38% from 1991 to 2010. During the same period, the city experienced a sustained 41% decrease in property crimes. Today 32% more high school graduates in the San Jose area meet the admissions requirements for the University of California than in prior recent years. The state has even adopted the "San Jose model" as the official structure for California gang prevention. In the midst of these successes, MGPTF acknowledges the need for greater involvement from philanthropy and the business community and is actively working to forge those partnerships.

Five key things have enabled MGPTF to have success in reducing crime in the city:

Strong, central leader: *Effective leadership and governance.*

With a strong precedent set by the founding Mayor Susan Hammer, MGPTF has had continuing prominent leadership by the subsequent mayors of San Jose. Today, Mayor Chuck Reed serves as the central leader and spokesperson, convening the monthly

Fast Facts:

- **Community:** San Jose, CA
- **Problem:** High and rising violent crime rates
- **Results:** 38% reduction in violent crime rate between 2001 and 2010
- **Differentiating Feature:** San Jose mayors have served as central leader and spokesperson for the collaborative, convening monthly meetings, heading up a principal subcommittee, and helping to support it with city funds.
- **Leaders / Lead Organization:** San Jose Mayor and Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF)
- **Philanthropic Support:** City Funds, BEST

meetings of MGPTF. He is also the head of the Technical subcommittee. Since the mayor has final approval of the city budget, strong mayoral leadership has helped guarantee adequate annual funding – in good times and bad. As the public face of MGPTF, the mayor frequently makes public appearances on behalf of the group including the community forums. Indeed, the leadership of a long line of San Jose mayors has helped to procure funding and get traction in the community.

Commitment to strategy refreshing: *Shared vision and agenda.*

To keep the group focused on the community's latest priorities, MGPTF revises its strategic plan every three years. This regular strategy-setting process is a collaborative effort between the group and community members. The group reviews city-wide statistics and previous performance of the collaborative's grantees to identify emerging trends on the street. This data, as well as qualitative information from MGPTF members, shapes the strategy for the next several years. Also determined through this process is the funding mix for grantees. As the process moves along, hundreds of community members also provide input through public forums, youth focus groups and designated seats in the policy team. As MGPTF puts it: "*Change must be driven by the community and sustained by the community*".

Emphasizing cross-collaboration: *Cross-sector engagement.*

MGPTF encompasses a wide variety of community organizations and members. These include representatives from the city and county, dozens of nonprofits, courts, law-enforcement agencies, school districts, faith-based organizations, gang intervention experts and parole officers. Government agencies play a larger role in MGPTF relative to other collaboratives. Cross-collaboration within this disparate group has been enhanced through much effort, with an astounding 80% of participants citing that they have established new or strengthened existing community-building relationships through participation in MGPTF.

Innovative allocation of funds: *Sufficient resources.*

Taking an innovative approach to funding, MGPTF's rolled out what it calls its Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) program. General city funds are pledged to BEST, which then makes yearly grants to more than 25 organizations. BEST represents one of the larger children and youth funding sources in San Jose. Originally, BEST allocated its funding with an emphasis on prevention, intervention and law enforcement. Today, the funding allocation mix is recalibrated each year to reflect San Jose's changing needs. Recently, funding has become tenuous for BEST. Due to budget cuts, BEST lost its entire budget of \$4.7 million in direct city funds last year. But the mayor saved the day by providing \$2.8M from the city's general fund to keep BEST running. Nevertheless, funding will continue to be a challenge.

Clearly defined roles: *Dedicated capacity and appropriate structure.*

MGPTF operates through a policy team and a technical team to ensure effective support, alignment and coordination. The policy team consists of government officials, school district leaders and representatives of key community-based organizations. Chaired by the mayor, this group provides strategic direction for MGPTF. The technical team

consists of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) staff, police officers and direct-service organizations. This latter team assures the effective development of programs for gang prevention, intervention and law enforcement. And with its members' direct knowledge of the street environment, the technical team provides updates to the policy group on changes in the gang climate. To support this infrastructure, MGPTF has a team of 6 BEST analysts and 2 supervisors at PRNS.

SOURCES

- 14) National Cities League and Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. *Beyond City Limits*. 2007
- 15) *Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force Strategic Work Plan: 2008 - 2011*. City of San Jose. 2011.