COLLECTIVE IMPACT:
LEADING CHANGE TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

NGA Talent Pipeline Policy Academy

October 10, 2014
Topics for this morning’s session

1 | Introduction to Collective Impact

2 | Deep dive on five conditions of Collective Impact

3 | Leading and implementing Collective Impact
The premise: the talent pipeline issues your states are working on are complex

Simple
- step-by-step recipes

Complicated
- technical solutions

Complex
- emergent systems

The social sector treats problems as simple or complicated

Source: Adapted from “Getting to Maybe”.
Traditional approaches are not solving our toughest — often complex — challenges

- Funders (feds, states, foundations) often select individual grantees
- State agencies and other organizations often work separately and compete
- Evaluation attempts to isolate a particular organization’s impact
- Large scale change is assumed to depend on scaling organizations
- Private and government sectors are often disconnected

Imagine a different approach —

**Collective Impact** is the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.

Juvenile justice is an example of a complex system

Fragmentation across state, cities and 62 counties

$286,000 cost per juvenile per year

60% recidivism within two years

No agreement on the purpose of the system among key leaders
In New York State, the Collective Impact approach has resulted in large scale change within a few years

Since 2010:

- Juvenile arrests have dropped by 24%
- Juvenile admissions to state placement declined by 28%
- The number of youth in state custody declined by 45%

These precipitous drops in numbers of youth across the system have not led to any increase in crime or risk to public safety
Five conditions of Collective Impact

1. **Common Agenda**
   Participants share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem & a joint approach to solving the problem.

2. **Shared Measurement System**
   All participating organizations agree on the ways progress & success will be measured & reported.

3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
   A diverse set of actors, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing action plan.

4. **Continuous Communication**
   Partners engage in frequent & structured communication to build trust, mutual objectives, & create common motivation.

5. **Backbone Support**
   Initiative staff provide ongoing support: guiding the initiative’s vision & strategy; aligning activities; reporting on shared measures; building public will; advancing policy; & mobilizing resources.

Source: FSG interviews and analysis.
Table discussion

How is Collective Impact relevant to developing a talent pipeline in your state?
A common agenda typically has these five elements:

1. A description of the problem (informed by data)
2. Clear goal for change
3. A portfolio of key strategies to drive large scale change
4. A set of principles that guide the group’s behavior
5. Agreement on success indicators and learning culture
Developing a common agenda requires creating boundaries for the initiative

**Setting Boundaries Example: Teen Substance Abuse in Staten Island, NY**

- **Local Level**
  - Treatment Activities
    - Methamphetamine
  - Prevention Activities
  - Prescription Drugs

- **Parental & Youth Social Norms**
  - Parental Neglect & Endangerment
  - Youth Unemployment
  - Access
  - Advocacy

- **State Level**
  - Alcohol
  - Mental Health
  - Domestic Violence
  - School Completion
A common agenda: getting to “common” is hard!

A establishing a shared vision for change can be challenging due to:

- **Siloed perspectives** – stakeholders are accustomed to focusing on the day to day challenges of their agency/organization’s work and are not as familiar with solving system-wide issues

- **Distrust** – stakeholders may be unaware that they share motivations, especially when they compete for funding or hold conflicting philosophies; past failed attempts at collaboration further fuel distrust

- **Misaligned incentives** – stakeholders are rarely incentivized to collaborate to improve systems and share a vision for success
Common agenda developed in New York State around juvenile justice reform

**Vision:** Across New York State, the juvenile justice system promotes youth success and ensures public safety

**Community Outcomes**
- Community quality of life and safety are enhanced because youth are held accountable in a fair and just manner, and the system itself is held accountable for positive outcomes
- Fewer delinquent acts are committed, both in initial offenses and in reoffending
- Victims are given an opportunity to have a voice in the process, and efforts are made to remedy harm when possible

**Youth Outcomes**
- Youth are held accountable in a fair and just manner that is consistent with adolescent development
- Youth are objectively assessed and receive timely, effective services that build upon their strengths and meet their needs
- Youth are successfully reintegrated into appropriate education settings and the community when they exit the system, supporting ongoing positive youth development and reducing reoffending

**Strategies for System Excellence**
1. System Governance and Coordination
2. Effective Continuum of Diversion, Supervision, Treatment, and Confinement
3. Accountability of System and Organizations Within the System
4. Shared Data and Information Driven Decisions and Policy

**Principles**
- Effectiveness
- Fairness
- Safety
- Accountability
Shared measurement is a key part of learning and evaluation in Collective Impact

- Tracking progress toward a shared goal
- Enabling coordination and collaboration
- Improved data quality
- Continuous learning and course correction
- Catalyzing action
Common challenges in developing shared measurement

A establishing a shared measurement system is easier said than done due to several challenges:

• **Letting the perfect be the enemy of the good** – perfect metrics don’t exist and we shouldn’t exhaust ourselves looking for them

• **Funder and policy silos** – these create dozens of data sets that aren’t compatible

• **Trust** – sharing data can be scary

• **Cost** – shared measurement IT and data collection systems are expensive
Continuous communication is key for trust, momentum and accountability

Given the dozens of actors and moving pieces, communication is critical:

• **Collective impact moves at the speed of trust** – trust in turn is fueled by regular, structured dialogue and knowledge sharing

• **Big change takes time, but there are little victories happening every month** – these need to be shared and celebrated

• **Participants in collective impact need to be accountable** – to each other, and the community at large
### The backbone is a key driver of Collective Impact

| Guide vision and strategy | • Build a common understanding of the problem that needs to be addressed  
• Provide strategic guidance to develop a common agenda |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Support aligned activities | Ensure mutually reinforcing activities take place, i.e.,  
• Coordinate & facilitate partners’ continuous communication & collaboration  
• Catalyze or incubate new initiatives, collaborations & partnerships  
• Seek out opportunities for alignment with other efforts |
| Establish shared measurement practices | • Collect, analyze, interpret, & report data  
• Support the development of shared measurement systems  
• Provide technical assistance for building partners’ data capacity |
| Build public will | Build public will, consensus & commitment:  
• Support public engagement activities to create a sense of urgency & articulate a call to action  
• Produce and manage communications (e.g., news releases, reports) |
| Advance policy | • Advocate for an aligned policy agenda |
| Mobilize resources | • Mobilize & align public & private resources to support initiative’s goals |

Source: FSG and Greater Cincinnati Foundation.
There are several common misperceptions about backbones

That the backbone:

- sets the agenda for the group
- drives the solutions
- receives all the funding
- is self appointed rather than selected by the community
- is “business as usual” in terms of staffing, time, and resources

Source: FSG interviews and analysis.
Backbones typically require at least three key staff roles or functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Project Director</th>
<th>Data Manager</th>
<th>Facilitator(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oversees effort</td>
<td>• Manages accountability</td>
<td>• Manages working groups/networks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Advises Steering Committee</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>• Represents work done</td>
<td>• Reports data</td>
<td>• Connects working groups/networks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Connects working groups/networks</td>
<td>• Shares data for use</td>
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<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>• Addresses complex issues</td>
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<td>• Addresses complex issues</td>
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<td>Planning</td>
<td>• Leads vision, goal, strategy setting</td>
<td>• Plans data collection, data sharing</td>
<td>• Aligns partners to implement</td>
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<td>Embracing Change</td>
<td>• Champions change at senior level</td>
<td>• Provides data to help change occur</td>
<td>• Champions change in groups</td>
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<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>• Listens, reinforces senior collaboration</td>
<td>• Partners with data providers</td>
<td>• Helps community partners align</td>
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Illustration of a Backbone Structure:

Source: Adapted from Strive Network.
Table discussion

Which of the five conditions of Collective Impact are most developed in your action plan?

Which of the five conditions of Collective Impact do you anticipate to be the most challenging in your state?
### State leaders can catalyze the five CI conditions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CI Conditions</th>
<th>State Actions that Enable or Incentivize Each Condition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Common Agenda</strong></td>
<td>- Establish an integrated education &amp; workforce vision</td>
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<td>- Designate structure to coordinate priorities across agencies &amp; sectors</td>
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<td>- Develop measurable goals &amp; outcomes</td>
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<td><strong>Shared Measurement</strong></td>
<td>- Identify key policy questions &amp; create products to share answers</td>
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<td>- Support alignment &amp; use of education, workforce &amp; economic development data</td>
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<td>- Report progress on shared goals &amp; outcomes</td>
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<td><strong>Mutually Reinforcing Activities</strong></td>
<td>- Develop joint action plan</td>
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<td>- Create asset map to identify &amp; better coordinate resources/initiatives</td>
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<td>- Implement performance funding to align programs to goals/outcomes</td>
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<td><strong>Continuous Communication</strong></td>
<td>- Hold regular meetings of the leadership team &amp; coordinating structure</td>
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<td>- Engage key constituencies &amp; agency representatives</td>
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<td><strong>Backbone Support</strong></td>
<td>- Establish coordinating structure for state &amp; local activities, &amp; ensure it has ~3 FTEs to coordinate across agencies</td>
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<td>- Ensure strong connection of coordinating structure w/Governor’s office &amp; other key state &amp; local leaders</td>
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The steering committee, working groups & backbone functions all play pivotal roles in Collective Impact

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### Common Agenda and Shared Metrics

#### Steering Committee
- **Strategic guidance and support**
- **Partner-driven action**

#### Backbone Support
- Guides strategy
- Supports aligned activities
- Establishes shared measurement
- Builds public will
- Advances policy
- Mobilizes resources

#### Community partners working on strategies

*Adapted from [Listening to the Stars: The Constellation Model of Collaborative Social Change](https://www.surman.org/publications/listening-to-the-stars), by Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, 2008.*
Steering committee lessons learned

**Relationships > output:** In the long run, the relationships the Committee forms and the habits they build of working together are even more important than the initial strategies/indicators that they select.

**This takes time:** Past groups have spent anywhere from 5 – 18 months to agree on strategies and metrics, depending on internal dynamics and the extent to which the groups receive external support.

**Speed vs. inclusion:** Both for the Steering Committee and Working Groups, multiple, large groups with many members can be tempting. However, most CI efforts find a need to balance broad participation with the ability to make nimble decisions and get stuff done.

**Facilitation matters:** While some Steering Committees and Working Groups have evolved organically, these groups generally achieve their goals more quickly when outside staff support the Groups with facilitation and materials development.

**Groups are fluid:** Steering Committees typically evolve in their composition, and members may be added/subtracted over time; what’s important is their ability to adapt to new needs and refine their approaches as required.

Source: FSG interviews and analysis.
Quick wins are key to sustaining momentum

What is a quick win?

– A strategy in which you expect implementation and outcomes in next 3-6 months
– Requires a limited amount of resources (e.g., money, time, people)
– Results will be outputs and outcomes, not a major change in the initiative’s population level goal
– Results may be among a target population and/or target geography

How does a quick win fit in with longer term strategies?

– A quick win should align with at least one of the broader strategies laid forth by the working group
– It may be drawn directly from the plan, or aligned with the larger strategy areas
Paying attention to the intangibles

- Sustaining momentum with quick wins
- Building trust and relationships
- Prioritizing process and decisions over products and deliverables
- Navigating politics and turf protection

Source: FSG interviews and analysis.
Table discussion

Based on what you’ve learned about Collective Impact, what are the challenges in your state and potential strategies to overcome them?

Based on what you learned about Collective Impact and lessons from other states, what are some next steps?