Collective Impact Roles

Collective impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions that advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change. There are 3 key roles that make this possible and it is important to understand how they each and differentially move the 5 key elements of the collective impact approach forward.

Collective Impact Work	Steering Committee	Action Team (or Workgroup)	Backbone Role
Common Agenda: *Agreed upon result(s), strategies, performance measures, and implementation plan that will move population and/or systems change*	• Oversee development and implementation of **common agenda** by diverse network including community engagement with clear goals, strategies, performance measures; • Ensure **racial equity** is central to the common agenda, membership, and participation within the collective; • Approve **annual workplans** for Backbone Staff and Action Teams to advance strategies and achieve performance measures; • Help Action Teams and partners **advocate** to funders, policy makers, and other system leaders to support and **align** with common agenda strategies	• **Coordinate** and align partners needed to **implement** one or more strategies in the common agenda; • Create **annual workplans** with milestones and metrics to advance common agenda strategies and performance measures; • Assess data, partners, and strategies to **center equity**; • Identify and work to move policy and other **systems change** levers needed to advance strategies	• **Facilitate** diverse network of stakeholders to create and commit to clear, specific **common agenda** with potential to move agreed upon results; • Gather **data, research, evidence-based practices**, and other resources to support planning; • Ensure **diverse stakeholder engagement** in the planning process to ensure goals and strategies are relevant, credible, and owned across the network; • Facilitate development of **annual workplans** and create systems for project management across Action Teams
Shared Measurement: *Collect data community-wide and from network partners to assess progress on performance measures and overall results to*	• Create **policies for** how **data** will be collected, used, governed, and shared by the collective; • Support and advocate for systems changes necessary to	• Utilize community-level and programmatic data to **coordinate actions** across partners to move strategies and outcomes; • Share and assess data to continually **assess**	• Create **data sharing agreements** where necessary to support data gathering and sharing across organizations and systems; • **Gather, curate, and share data** on community conditions and

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support coordination, learning, improvement	**collect necessary data** from organizations and systems; • **Assess data** on community conditions and collective impact strategy progress; • Hold Initiative overall and Action Teams **accountable** to annual goals, performance measures, milestones, and agreed upon indicators; • **Refine the common agenda when necessary** based on data, learning, and shifts in community context;	**effectiveness, coordinate, learn, and improve** in real time to advance strategies	collective impact performance measures, milestones, and indicators to support coordination, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability for results
Mutually Reinforcing Activities: *Networks of organizations and programs coordinate and integrate activities to move common outcomes, results, and systems changes*	• **Establish Action Teams** and Select **Co-chairs** who will align and coordinate commitments across organizations to implement strategies; • Encourage **leaders and organizations to align** their work with the common agenda and join Action Teams; • Support **coordination and integration** among Action Teams and key partners to prevent silos and competition; • Advocate for **funders and Systems Leaders** to align to and support the Common Agenda;	• **Recruit members** to join Action Teams and align their work with common agenda; • Identify **opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and integration** of work across organizations; • Utilize **annual workplans to guide actions** that advance common agenda strategies and performance measures; • Make **action commitments** that move strategies and performance measures forward between meetings;	• Conduct outreach and support to **recruit members;** • **Monitor composition** of Action Teams to ensure diverse participation among Partners needed to align to and move agenda; • Identify opportunities and **encourage partners to coordinate, collaborate, and integrate** their work to move agenda; • **Project manage action commitment**s and progress on annual workplan; • **Hold partners accountable** for action commitments and progress on performance measures

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	• Hold **partners accountable** for commitments to common agenda;	• **Hold each other accountable** to action commitments that advance strategies and performance measures	
Continuous Communication and Engagement: *Regular meetings of diverse workgroups and committees and open, consistent communication that engenders trust*	• Ensure **transparent decision making, inclusive engagement, and consistent communication** across the network to build trust and support collaboration; • Annually **assess effectiveness and participation** of Action Teams and support continuous improvement; • Ensure **diverse and equitable participation**, especially from those with lived experience or most proximate to those with lived experience at every level of the collective; • **Establish and model core values** that support trust, inclusion, equity, learning, and accountability in the collective; • **Publicly communicate** progress on goals; • **Champion** the collective and common agenda in the community	• Define and implement **community engagement** to support more effective and expansive implementation of our strategies; • **Adhere to workgroup culture agreements**; identify and work through conflicts, competing interests, and other barriers to move our strategic results together; • **Maintain transparent, inclusive, and fair process** for all partners**;** • **Champion** the collective in our organizations and community	• **Coordinate and Facilitate** steering committee and work groups meetings to advance common agenda strategies; • **Build a culture** through clear values or groundrules, relationships, communications, and meetings that support trust, inclusion, equity, accountability, and celebration • **Ensure equity and community engagement** to ensure diverse voices guide and participate in decision making at every level; • **Build individual relationships** and work with people one-on-one and in small groups when necessary to support participation and solve interpersonal dynamics; • **Champion and promote** the work of the collective impact and the **publicly celebrate collective impact partners** in the community

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Backbone Staffing: *Dedicated staff with skills and resources to convene and coordinate the network*	• **Hire, support, and evaluate a backbone staff director** who will oversee the facilitation, coordination, and project management of the common agenda; • Approve **an annual workplan and budget** that gives backbone staff authority and capacity to move the agenda forward; • **Ensure sufficient resources** to support the backbone and implementation of the common agenda; • **Evaluate** annually the effectiveness of backbone staff based upon results and partner engagement	• **Partner with, respond to, and provide timely feedback** to backbone staff to support their work with you to move the Team's agenda forward; • **Identify, commit your time and resources, and help secure additional resources** to support the Action Team's agenda; • Identify **impediments** and resource or other **gaps** that the backbone staff can help partners individually or collectively address to move forward the agenda;	• **Build capacity of backbone staff and tools** to support effective facilitation and project management of the common agenda across Action Teams and Partners; • **Model the core values and a culture** that encourages community engagement, equity and inclusion, trust, learning, and accountability; • **Coordinate, facilitate, and project manage** work among backbone staff and across Action Teams to achieve annual plan milestones and common agenda performance measures, and **communicate progress, misses, and lessons** to the network; • **Propose annual workplan and budget** each year sufficient to move the common agenda forward

Important note about the **Steering Committee Role**

Most leaders' experience with governance is on boards of directors. The mental models and habits we have come from an organization-centric perspective not a network perspective. This is different. One helpful if inexact metaphor we often use is that you are governing Air BnB not the Hyatt – you are not governing an organization where you can manage things you control to achieve your goals; you are instead governing a platform that enables and supports others you do not manage or control to act individually and together in ways that advance the common agenda. The governance to steward the common agenda created by the network and to support the backbone, teams, and partners to implement that agenda together.

The backbone role is also unique. From studies and experience, we have found the **Key Leadership Qualities of effective Backbone Staff** are:

- **Results-based:** Rigorous and data driven in developing agenda, keeps collective focused on common agenda goals, strategies;
- **Equity-focused**: Ensures strategies produce equitable outcomes, and ensure equitable membership, engagement, and participation at all your tables;
- **Political savvy:** Deep understanding of systems and how to influence them;
- **Project management:** Support implementation of common agenda across workgroups and partners, holding individuals and groups accountable for action commitments;
- **Inclusive culture builder:** Effective communicator and trusted facilitator who engages, motivates, celebrates, and resolves differences and conflicts among diverse partners;