Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness (Homeless Steering Committee)
061824 Minutes June 18, 2024 DRAFT

Minutes/notes of meeting

- Meeting was held in the City Council Chambers
- Attendance: see below

- Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM
- May 16 meeting minutes were approved.
- Chair introduced the guest Larry Morrissey
- Larry Morrissey, former Mayor of Rockford, IL (See short bio below) made a presentation on achieving functional zero homelessness for Veterans and chronic homeless.
  - **Concord TV video recording** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6I4-aubDQk)
    - Morrissey (Start at: 1:38, Ends: 50:00)
    - Q&A, Discussion (50:00-1:22)
  - **Presentation slides** (see attachments below)
  - Some takeaways:
    - Key Elements: 1) Governance structure and 2) credibility with data (By-Name-List)
    - Used a Collective Impact Model, the city of Rockford served as the Backbone Agency (see attached article on Collective Impact)
    - Organized three tiers of governance for the initiative: Policy, Operations and Outreach
    - Collaborative case management working plans for specific individuals was important
- Q&A highlights –Committee and public
  - Conducted regular (e.g. monthly) review of the BNL--publicly, holding work accountable
    - Even if we are "not ready" we need to start, and the process will get better over time
  - Achieving some success builds momentum and additional collaboration
  - Make community aware that we have a plan and are working the plan and moving toward results (e.g. work of the Communications and Public Education work group)
- Rockford had a small fund (through city Housing Department) for landlord unfunded tenant costs (not sure if ever used)
- In-person case conferencing helped with maintaining commitments and accountability

Committee business: The five priority actions developed at the May 16 meeting were reviewed and committee members were invited to join one of the workgroups.

DRAFT Workgroup membership:

Workgroup	Lead(s)	Potential Members	Aim	Possible Metric
End Veteran homelessness	Jim Schlosser	VA Harbor Care Veterans Inc NH Dept Mil & Vet	Achieve functional zero for homeless Veterans by November, 2024	Number of unhoused Veterans
Create common operating system	Peter Surmanis		Create and implement a working model of shared operating system for preventing and reducing homelessness	Single process to achieve shared aims, single source of quality data to measure progress and guide strategy
Communicate and engage community		Laura Simoes Robin Nafshi Ruth Perencevich Gwen Whitney-Gill	Inform and engage community at large and key audiences about City's strategy, progress against goals and ways to contribute	Surveys, consistent reporting of numbers of homeless and progress against aims
Increase housing opportunities		Tom Furtado [Tim Sink] [Julie Palmeri]	Increase housing opportunities for homeless persons by 100 units by Dec 2025	Number of opportunities secured
Reduce unsheltered homelessness	Karen Jantzen	Karen Emis-Williams Nicole Petrin Connor Spern CAP-BM rep	Reduce unsheltered homelessness in Concord by 25% by July 2025	Number of unsheltered homeless persons in Concord

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Attendance:

Members	Role/Organization	June 18, 2024
**Byron Champlin ex officio	Mayor, City of Concord	X
*Karen Jantzen	Exec. Dir., Concord Coalition to End Homelessness	
Barrett Moulton	Dept. Chief, Concord Police Department	
Gwen Whitney-Gill	Community Health Coordinator, Concord Hospital	X
Jim Schlosser	City Council Representative	X
Julie Palmeri	Exec. Dir., Concord Housing + Development	
Kara Coffey	Director, Merrimack County Human Services	
Karen Emis-Williams	Director, Concord Human Services	X
Laura Simoes	Exec. Dir., Loeb School of Communications	X
Linda Lorden	President, Merrimack Saving Bank	
Lisa Madden	CEO, Riverbend	
Peteris Surmanis	Community Representative	X
Rabbi Robin Nafshi	Temple Beth Jacob	X
Rosanne Haggerty	Chair	X
Ruth Perencevich	Community Representative	X
Thomas Furtado	CEO, CATCH Neighborhood Housing	X
Tim Sink	President, Concord Chamber of Commerce	X
Valerie Guy	Exec. Dir., The Friendly Kitchen	X

Additional references (see below):

- 1. Morrissey Bio
- 2. Morrissey Slides
- 3. Harvard Bloomberg Rockford Case Study
- 4. Collective Impact Model article: by Kania and Kramer 2011

Larry Morrissey
Former Mayor, Rockford, IL
2005-2017

After 12 years as mayor of the City of Rockford, Larry Morrissey joined Marathon Health in 2017 as Vice President of Government Affairs. During his time in office, Mayor Morrissey adopted a population health approach to support the health of his employees and his community. The City turned a multi-million-dollar health fund deficit into a surplus and launched its own health center to provide no-cost primary care for City employees and their family members.

Late in 2014, Morrissey accepted the Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness. The City leveraged a population health model and developed a comprehensive governance structure to connect and coordinate community partners toward the goal.

By December of 2015, the City of Rockford was recognized as the first city in the nation to achieve "functional zero" essentially ending Veteran Homelessness. A little over a year later, utilizing the same approach, they received the same designation for ending chronic homelessness.

Today, Morrissey leverages his experience at Marathon Health, working with governments across the country to help them improve health outcomes for their organizations and transform our nation's approach to health: improving patient experience, improving patient health & lowering healthcare expenditures.

For a case study describing the City of Rockford's efforts to end homelessness, please see https://www.cityleadership.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/migrate/BHCLI_Rockford_0019EP.pdf.

Marathon
Health

Rockford, IL Homelessness Efforts

Background & Lessons Learned

June 2024

Hon. Larry Morrissey, Esq.
VP Government Affairs
Marathon Health
lmorrissey@marathon-health.com

Topics & Learning Objectives

- City of Rockford Community Context
- Population Health & Collective Impact Journey
- Applying the Approach to Homelessness
- Lessons Learned: Data & Governance
- Healthy City / Healthy Nation – local leadership for a better future
- References / Resources
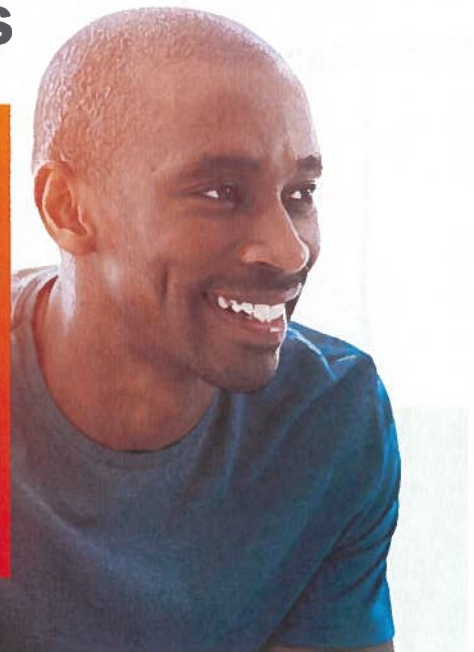
Rockford, IL

- Largest City in area, ~150,000 people; ~350,000 Area Pop.
- Approximately 80 miles northwest of Chicago
- Strong Mayor form of Government (By Local Ordinance)
- Two-County Community Action Agency (CAA) operated within City Human Services Dept.
- Consolidated Services Include: Head Start; Energy Assistance, Emergency Services, Employment Programs, Summer Food, Housing Advocacy, Scholarships, ESG Rapid Rehousing
- Continuum of Care Grant Recipient/Fiscal Agent/Staff; Single Point of Entry (SPOE) for homeless
- Mindset/Culture: Silos; Distrust; Scarcity

"The old American dream of the '50s has been realized here, and it's slowly crumbling because the checks aren't coming in anymore," said Glenn Turphoff, who runs the Northern Illinois Building Contractors Association. "The ability to work with your hands was the cornerstone of this town," he added. "There just aren't as many hands needed anymore."

Washington Post, June 6, 1983

Rockford named No. 3 on Forbes' 'Miserable' list

Posted Feb 22, 2013 at 12:01 AM
Updated Feb 22, 2013 at 9:00 PM

According to a Forbes' list of "America's Most Miserable Cities," Rockford ranks No. 3, behind Flint, Mich., and Detroit.

Rockford One Of Fattest Towns In United States

Real Estate

Rock To Li

USA TODA
the countr
By Rebecca Bles

Fin
dar

March 12, 2012 at 12:31 pm   Filed Under: BMI, Gallup, Illinois Obese, McAllen Texas, Rockford

CHICAGO (CBS) — Residents of Rockford: You are fat.

According to a Gallup study, more than a third of the people living in Rockford are obese. That puts the town No. 4 on the list of the nation's fattest metro areas. McAllen-Edinbugh-Mission, Texas ranks No. 1–where nearly 39 percent of its townsfolk are obese.

ECONOMY

Welcome to Rockford, Ill, the Underwater Mortgage Capital of America

The Housing Rebound Lifting Much of the U.S. Has Bypassed This Struggling Town

Scott Schneider stays warm Monday, Jan. 6, 2014, at the Apostolic Pentecostals of Rockford church. Schneider suffered frostbite twice from sleeping outside during previous winters. He has been at the church since Saturday, Jan. 4. *Rockford Register Star*

Rockford pastor may fight city order closing church warming shelter

Staff Writer Rockford Register Star

Published 10:10 a.m. CT March 25, 2014 | Updated 11:03 a.m. CT March 25, 2014

ROCKFORD — The city has closed a church's overnight warming shelter, and it has become national news.

ROCKFORD – A petition drive by the online community Faithful America collected 25,000 signatures supporting the warming shelter run during the winter by the Apostolic Pentecostals of Rockford that was ordered closed this month by the city.

The petitions will be taken to Rockford City Hall at 11 a.m. Monday during an event to urge the city to allow the shelter to continue operating.

https://www.rrstar.com/story/opinion/columns/2014/03/29/two-churches-x2019-homeless-shelters/37881946007/

A Rockford Fire Department inspector looks around the second floor of an abandoned home Monday, April 7, 2014, after an early morning fire killed two at the residence in the 400 block of Knowlton Street in Rockford. *Rockford Register Star*

Two dead in Rockford house fire

Jeff Kolkey Rockford Register Star

Published 6:37 a.m. CT April 7, 2014 | **Updated 4:44 p.m. CT April 7, 2014**

ROCKFORD — Two homeless men are dead and one was injured after an abandoned and condemned home they were sleeping inside caught fire at 12:02 a.m. Monday in the 400 block of Knowlton Street.

Improving Community Health

A Role for Local Governments & Other Local Employers

Leveraging Health Spending

Grim Forecast in 2006 Required Action
Insurance Fund Devoured Budget

COR INSURANCE EXPENSES

10
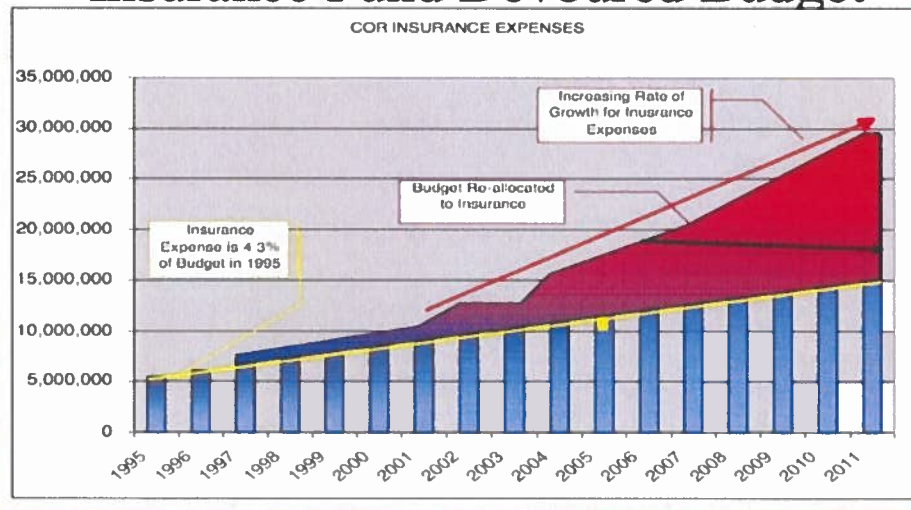
Population Health Approach

Focus on value not volume.
Gather & analyze data to identify at-risk individulas.
Engage and empower members to support new behaviors and smart decisions.
Continuous monitoring & review.

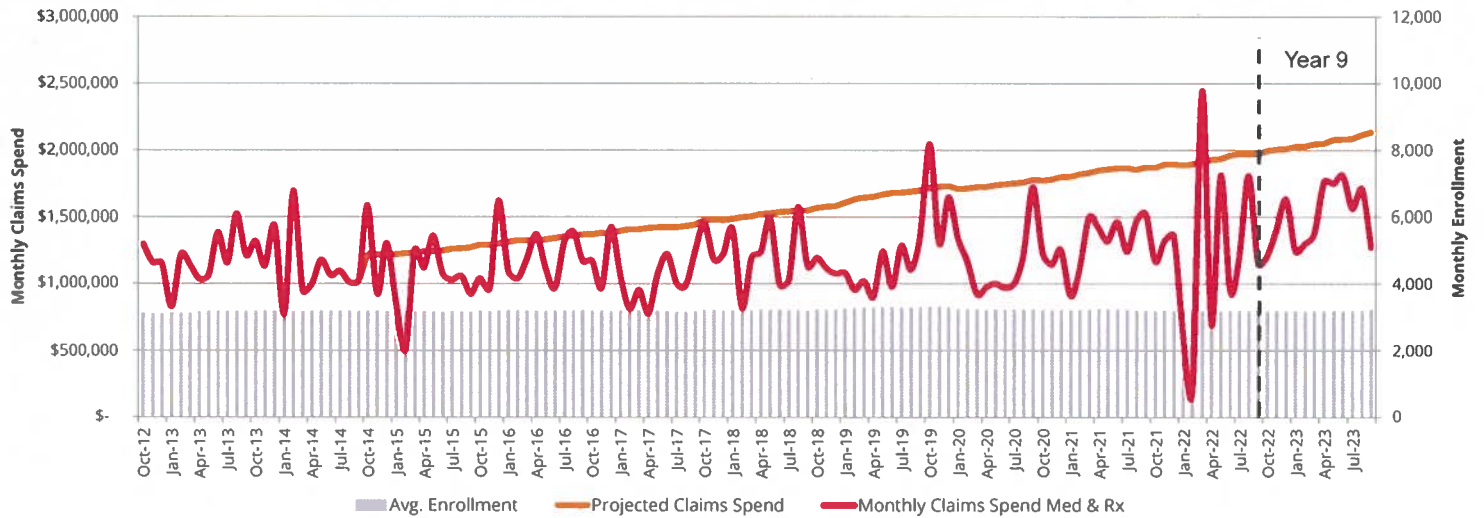| Risk stratification	Engagement	Care Coordination & Navigation	Ongoing Review & Program Adjustment

Sample Claims Trend Analysis
City of Rockford, IL – Total Claims Since Go-Live*

Year 9 claims $6.6M below projection (savings)
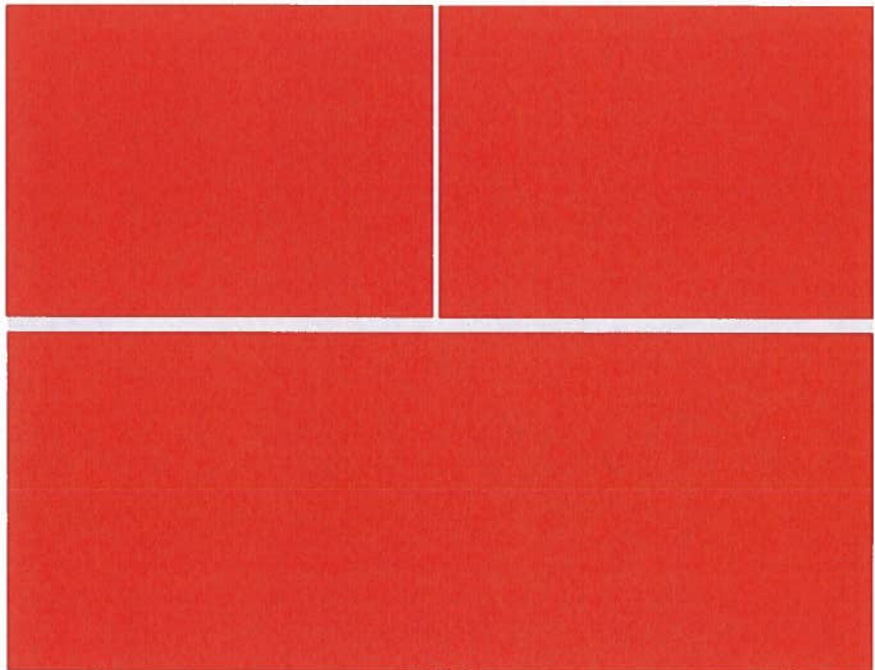Cumulative claims $44.5M below projection (savings)

*Slide presented to the City of Rockford City Council during a public council meeting on Dec. 4, 2023.

Can a Population Health Approach Address Community Challenges?

The Political Blame Game

— An Illustration

The First Lady Announces the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness

JUNE 4, 2014 AT 6:07 PM ET BY COMMANDER CARA LAPOINTE

Summary: First Lady Michelle Obama announces a challenge by more than 80 mayors, county commissioners, and governors to end veteran homelessness in their communities by the end of 2015.

15

Taking the Pledge

Morrissey decided Rockford would accept the mayors' challenge to end veterans' homelessness. Accompanied by Jaeger and Walker, he traveled to Chicago in early 2015 for a kickoff event at the HUD field office downtown. "All the mayors had been invited," Walker recalled. "Larry was the only one who showed up." Both Walker and Jaeger remembered Morrissey as the "rock star" of the event, "fully invested at that point," in Walker's words, perhaps because it seemed like "it was really a movement." Morrissey confirmed: "I was a true believer after that HUD training." Immediately afterward the Rockford trio assembled on a freezing Chicago sidewalk where ice fell from the tops of skyscrapers above them. "If we're going to do this," Walker recalled the mayor saying, "you guys need to get going. You're going to come to Rockstat, and you're going to present your data every month and tell us how you're doing, because if I'm signing onto this, we're going to do it right and get it done."

Excerpt from Bloomberg – Harvard City Leadership Case Study, How Rockford Changed Course to tackle Veterans' Homelessness

https://content.cityleadership.harvard.edu/BHCLI_Rockford_0019TC.pdf

lawrencejmorrissey
Metcalfe Federal Building

View insights

Liked by **jenebuck** and **1 other**
lawrencejmorrissey Attending HUD RegionV #MayorsChallenge 2 #EndVeteransHomelessness in 2015.

February 6, 2015

Point-in-Time Count

The Point-In-Time (PIT) Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. HUD requires that CoCs conduct an annual count of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. CoCs also must conduct a count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness every other year (odd numbered years). Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally.

https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hdx/pit-hic/#2024-pit-count-and-hic-guidance-and-training

Survey says: Volunteers gain
insight during homeless count

COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS

What is a by-name list?

A by-name list is a comprehensive list of every person in a community experiencing homelessness, updated in real time. Using information collected and shared with their consent, each person on the list has a file that includes their name, homeless history, health, and housing needs.

https://community.solutions/what-is-a-by-name-list/

Rockford aims for zero homeless veterans by 2016

Jeff Kolkey Rockford Register Star
Published 9:00 a.m. CT March 26, 2015 | Updated 4:21 p.m. CT March 24, 2015


ROCKFORD — The city will eradicate chronic homelessness among veterans living on city streets this year.

That's the goal Mayor Larry Morrissey set when he accepted the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness in 2015. He first publicly referenced the challenge during his State of the City speech. Morrissey says it is an attainable objective and not as daunting as it sounds.

The city will work with partners and take a methodical approach, tapping a variety of housing programs to connect homeless veterans with housing and needed social services or mental health treatment.

"They estimate that in the state of Illinois there are about 1,000 homeless veterans," he said. "So it's not as big a number as people might think. The number we have in Rockford is estimated at under 50. So the goal of getting this group housed is doable."

Rockford / Winnebago Boone Counties
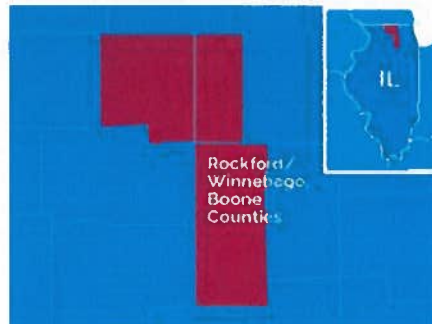
Core Strategies

- Coordinated / Single Point of Entry
- By-Name List — a "living" document
- Work the list as a group — Collective Impact Model
- Housing First — some partners (not all)
- Outreach, outreach, outreach
- Public Oversight (Rockstat)
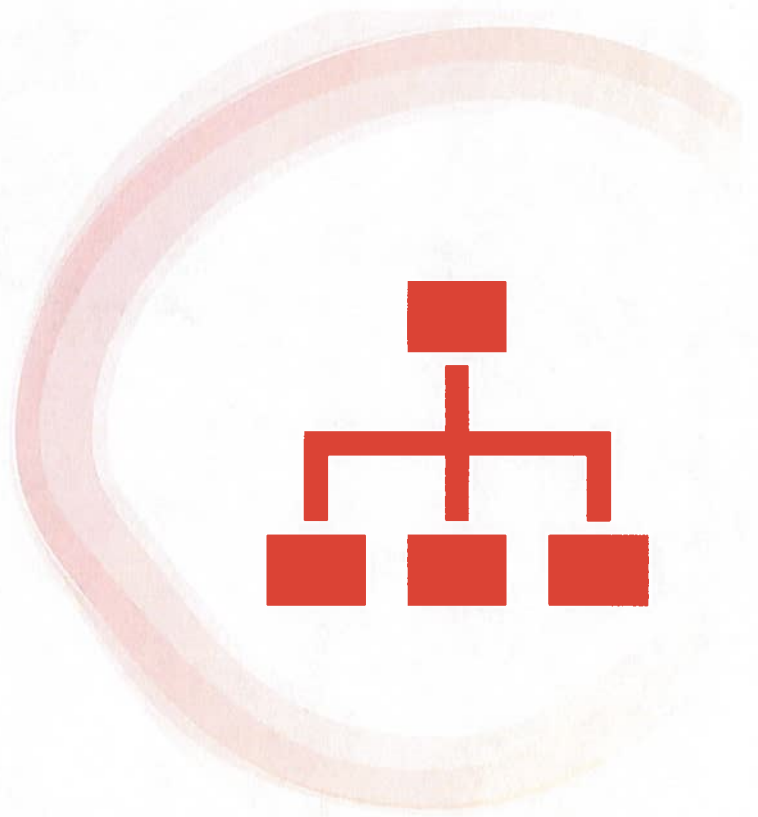
Governance 2.0:

Understanding Collective Impact

"Collective Impact is unlike most collaborations, collective impact initiatives involve a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants."
Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2011

CONNECTING THE DIVIDE:

CONVENE
Leverage Fiscal Role To Convene & Align

FACILITATE
Information Exchange

MONITOR
Outcomes & Reporting

CONTINUUM OF CARE BACKBONE FUNCTIONS

Population Health Governance Model

Veteran/Chronic Homelessness

Moving from program focus to people focus

Policy Leadership

Objectives, Goals	Resources / Review / Accountability

Operations Group

Oversight/Supervision/Management	Convening/Communicating/ Data & Client List Management

Tactical Teams

Street Level Outreach	Customized Client Solutions

Collective Impact Model

- Each BNL has a collective impact team of all agencies that would naturally interact with the population/have resources to serve them.

- Our list is on google docs and we pull out sub lists as needed to work on specific populations and we share them with the specific collective impact team.

- For each population, we start by meeting weekly to "work the list". Each person on the list is discussed and information shared. Then a housing plan in developed (and outreach strategy, if necessary).

- Using this method, the entire team becomes responsible for ensuring the people on the list are permanently housed.

- They also make up the outreach team that works to ensure we have contacted all members of the targeted homeless population.
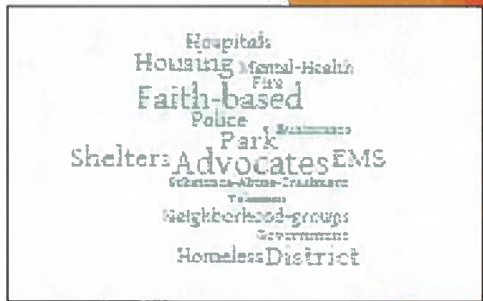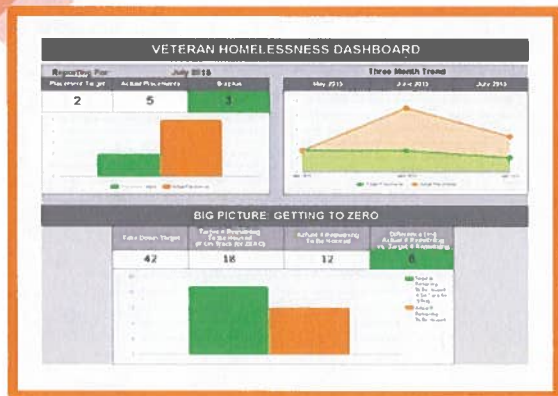
By-Name List:

- City Staff as SPOE maintains the BNL
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- Partners can add names or missing data
- Those persons at the top of the lists are the first referred for housing openings

VETERAN HOMELESSNESS DASHBOARD

HMIS ID	Date of Entry/asse ssment	How long homeless?	CH?	Where living @ entry?	Housing Status	days	Date housed	Note:
BB	11/3/2015			shelter	GPD			new GPD (Thursday)—RHA??
21750	9/3/2015	1-3 mon	N	Victory Outreach	GDP			offered RR but may move out of state?
AW				GPD	GPD			$733/mon—
21539	8/24/2015	1-3 mon	N	GPD	GPD			VASH list—serious medical issues
AX				GPD	GPD			$850/mon—offered rapid-rehousing, refused
21646	8/11/2015	1-3 mon	N	RRM	GPD			Serious medical & psych issues-nursing home??
19547	6/3/2015	<1 mon	N	shelter	GPD			Currently hospitalized—hearing 11/30
AT				GPD	GPD			RR appt. 10/29—refused assistance/perm housing

Other components of our coordinated entry system

- CoC has established common intake, assessment, termination, and discharge policies that all agencies follow.
- System is community wide, every agency that provides any type of housing for the homeless participates.
- Continuous loop, anyone who is discharged or chooses to leave any housing placement is looped back to the single point of entry.
- As grantee/collaborative applicant we have the tools to regulate compliance with the CES through monitoring and funding.
- By name list approach as developed by Community Solutions for Built for Zero

Rockford Completes Mayors Challenge

Lauded as First City in the Nation to

Reach Functional Zero and Effectively End

Veteran Homelessness

CSH

12/15/2015

Rockford, Illinois is Addressing Veteran Homelessness in 2015

Rockford, Illinois – The City of Rockford Department of Human Services, a community action agency serving Boone and Winnebago counties, announced today that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veteran Affairs have recognized Rockford as the first community in the national Zero: 2016 movement to reach functional zero and effectively end homelessness among local Veterans.

The City of Rockford has also been recognized by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness for successfully completing the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness; an initiative led by First Lady Michelle Obama. The Mayors Challenge calls upon mayors and other state and local leaders across the country to publicly express their commitment and provide the leadership to implement the strategies necessary for their communities to end homelessness among all Veterans within their communities by the end of 2015.

https://www.csh.org/2015/12/rockford-illinois-is-addressing-veteran-homelessness-in-2015/

"Rockford's success proves that functional zero is achievable. No community can ever again claim that ending veteran homelessness is impossible or that it cannot be measured clearly in real time."

Community Solutions, Inc., Dec. 2015

The White House's Veterans Homelessness Summit

Mayor Larry Morrissey at White House to share Rockford's efforts for homeless veterans

ROCKFORD — On Friday, Mayor Larry Morrissey was on CNN; today, he's at the White House meeting with First Lady Michelle Obama and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden.

A Growing Drive to Get Homelessness to Zero

By David Bornstein

Mr. Bornstein is a co-founder of the Solutions Journalism Network, which supports rigorous reporting about responses to social problems.

June 5, 2018

Angie Walker, the housing advocate for Rockford, Ill, with a homeless man at the city's bus station.
Kayli Plotner for The Rockford Register Star

"You have to figure out what's important to people," she added. "Is it watching the Cubs on TV? Helping them call their family? All that information goes into the by-name list. That's the big thing: making it personal."

Population Health Governance Model

Veteran/Chronic Homelessness

Moving from program focus to people focus

Paul Paddock hugs Patty Quinn of Carpenter's Place while friends David Didier and Mark Gaines unload a van of furniture and household items Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015, at the Skyrise Apartments in Rockford.
Photo credit: rrstar.com.

BLOOMBERG HARVARD | City Leadership Initiative

0019TC

How Rockford Changed Course to Tackle Veterans' Homelessness
Using Data to Diagnose and Remedy Complex Problems
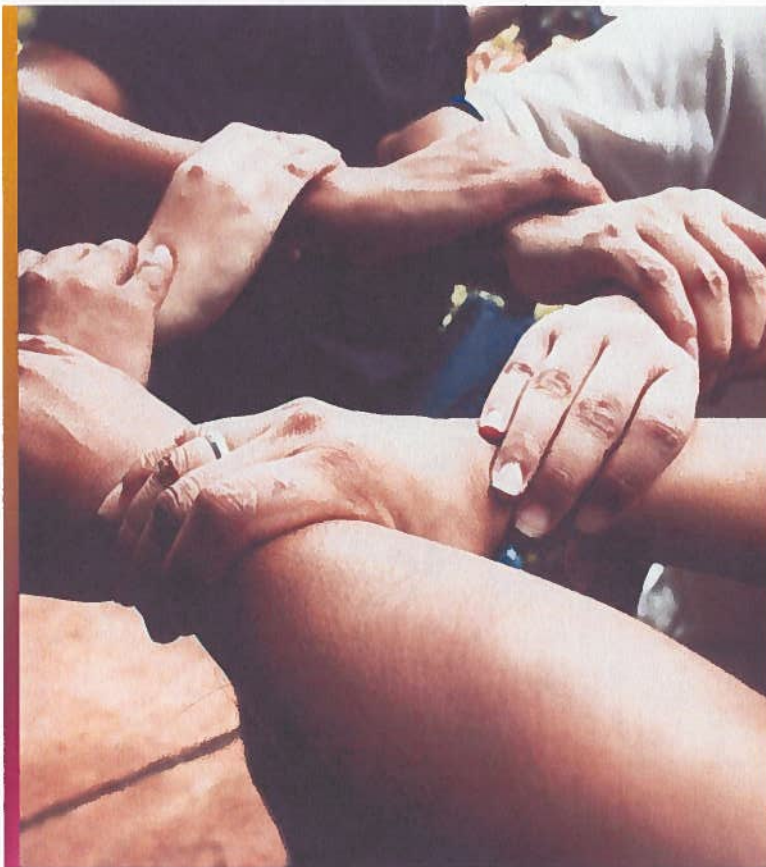
ERIC WEINBERGER, DAN LEVY, AND JORRIT DE JONG

"You can't do this without the data. You can't make progress. You can't understand the problems. You can't make changes. The data doesn't drive the work, per se; the data drives decision-making."

—Jennifer Jaeger, community services director, City of Rockford, IL

https://content.cityleadership.harvard.edu/BHCLI_Rockford_0019TC.pdf

Lessons Learned

Things that Didn't Work
- 10-Year Plan
- Point-in-time Counts
- Organizational Silos
- Finger-Pointing

Things that Did Work
- Adding Housing First
- Single Point of Entry
- High Community Standards ("Tough Love")
- HUD / VA / Partnerships
- Point at the List, not at Each Other

Most Critical
- Shared Focus/Vision — Veterans
- Data Enhancements: By-Name List
- Governance Changes: Collective Impact – City as Backbone Agency
- Mindset Change – from Scarcity to Abundance

Governance matters: Managing environmental and socioeconomic factors to improve health outcomes

Written by Larry Morrissey 10th August 2021

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Kaitlyn Ranney | July 13, 2020

COVERAGE AREA

Cities: Rockford, Belvidere, and several small towns
Counties: Winnebago & Boone Counties
Total Population: Over 350,000
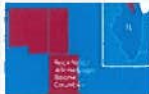
The Achievement

FUNCTIONAL ZERO FOR VETERAN AND CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

- **Milestones Reached:** Veteran (2015) and Chronic (2017)
- **Next Population for Focus:** Youth, families, and all single adults

https://community.solutions/case-studies/case-study-rockford-illinois-reaches-and-sustains-functional-zero-for-veteran-and-chronic-homelessness/

Rockford, Illinois, a city ninety miles north of Chicago, is just one of three communities in the U.S. to reach **functional zero** for both veteran and chronic homelessness. It is a part of **Built for Zero**, a movement of more than more than 105 communities committed to measurably ending homelessness. one population at a time. The Continuum of Care for Rockford/Winnebago, Boone Counties joined Built for Zero in 2015

In January of 2017, Rockford became the first community in the United States to end both chronic and veteran homelessness.

0019TC

How Rockford Changed Course to Tackle Veterans' Homelessness

Using Data to Diagnose and Remedy Complex Problems

ERIC WEINBERGER, DAN LEVY, AND JORRIT DE JONG

"You can't do this without the data. You can't make progress. You can't understand the problems. You can't make changes. The data doesn't drive the work, per se; the data drives decision-making."

—Jennifer Jaeger, community services director, City of Rockford, IL

**Hon. Larry Morrissey, Esq.
VP Government Affairs
Marathon Health**

Email: larry.morrissey@marathon.health
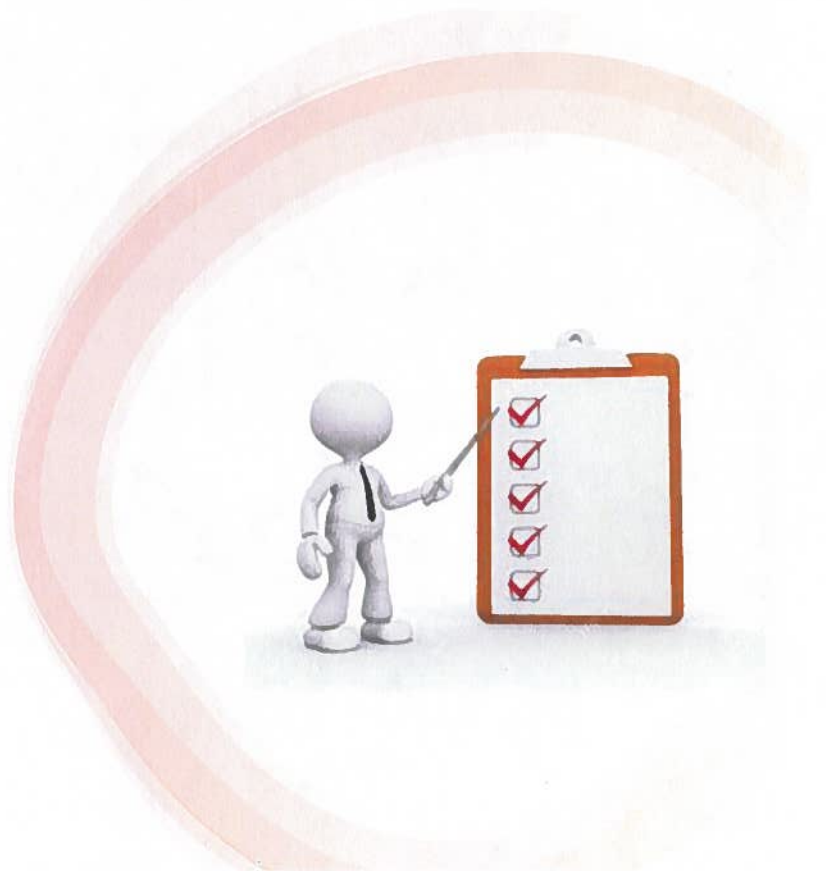Mobile: (815) 540-3354

APPENDIX

By-Name List:

- City Staff as SPOE maintains the BNL

- Each homeless person we encounter is put on the list

- There are 5 separate BNLs: Singles, families, youth, veterans, chronically homeless

- Partners can add names or missing data

- Those persons at the top of the lists are the first referred for housing openings

CAAs and Homelessness

➢ For years CAAs have been known for community resources and referrals. Taking on more responsibility with the homeless population has been a natural transition.

➢ CAAs already serve many of the poorest families in our communities. Through relationships we have built and current outreach, CAAS are well known in the community.

➢ Our CAA is currently the lead agency for both the Zero:2016 and Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness Initiatives and we:

> ➢ Act as the grantee/Collaborative Applicant for CoC funding
> ➢ Serve on the board of our local Continuum of Care as well as several other committees.
> ➢ Coordinate the yearly Point-in-Time count of the homeless.
> ➢ CAA staff acts as the Chair of the Coordinated Intake Committee for the CoC.

Coordinated Assessment system

➤ System-wide process that serves any and all homeless persons.

➤ Combines a homeless hotline, single point of entry, and street outreach entry to provide assessment and enrollment into coordinated intake.

➤ Each entry point handles assessment, data entry, referrals, and placement — an entry point for prevention and diversion services as well.

➤ Assessment staff provide the necessary prevention or diversion services or refer a family to the program that is best equipped to get them into permanent housing as quickly as possible taking into consideration client choice.

BLOOMBERG | City
HARVARD | Leadership
Initiative

How Rockford Changed Course
to Tackle Veterans' Homelessness

Using Data to Diagnose and Remedy Complex Problems

ERIC WEINBERGER, DAN LEVY, AND JORRIT DE JONG

Epilogue

> *"We didn't know a lot when we started. We didn't know how to measure progress. We didn't know how to measure interventions. We didn't understand how to test and use the data from a test to improve our system. To me, data is what makes our system work—in terms of a system. It doesn't necessarily make that personal contact or that housing placement work, but it makes the system work. Without the system, the personal contacts and the one-on-one stuff doesn't work."*
>
> > - Jennifer Jaeger, Community Services director, City of Rockford, IL

In November 2014, Rockford began testing its new coordinated entry system, which would officially debut on January 3, 2015 along with a twenty-four-hour homelessness crisis hotline. On January 15, bi-weekly case conferencing began in Rockford city offices, with the local and regional partners on veterans' homelessness attending. Some of the attendees included representatives from the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); the city housing authority; and numerous private charities or nonprofits offering beds or other housing, health, and case managing services.[i] Forty-two unhoused veterans—as far as the Rockford team knew—needed to be housed. There could be many more; one task would be to find and count them.

Before case conferencing, Rockford housing advocate Angie Walker recalled, "We didn't do a lot of work between the agencies." With any new person coming into the system, she said, "You would call agency A and ask if they had an open unit or something like that but we wouldn't sit down with a bigger group to talk specifically about a client." In contrast, a Built for Zero (BfZ) coach who worked intensively with Rockford described a well-functioning case conferencing session as a fast-moving, agenda-driven meeting where, for each entry on the by-name list, "You identify the barriers and you work as a team to figure out how you're going to solve it to get the person housed." She offered this typical scenario:[1]

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[i] See Appendix 1 for the members of the Rock River Homeless Coalition (i.e., the regional Continuum of Care).
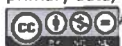
> **VA:** "Look, they have a voucher, and they're set up with it and it expires in ninety days. I don't know why they're not housed."
> **Agency:** "They tried on their own to find an apartment. They can't find anyone who will accept the voucher."
> **Local facilitator:** "Can you do some housing navigation with this person? Does the case manager know why the documentation isn't there?"

In Rockford, however, case conferencing did not start that way. The process involved the most important player in anything to do with veterans—the Veterans Administration (VA)—who would send an employee to the sessions, but for confidentiality reasons, barred her from sharing information about individual veterans or even making referrals. This vital participant was unable to contribute, a situation that lasted into March when Mayor Morrissey's office finally reached out to Washington—to the VA, and to Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Still, the situation required some serendipity or luck: the arrival of a new leader at the regional VA office in Madison, Wisconsin, to break up the logjam. Along with hiring an enthusiastic new outreach coordinator—a VA counterpart to Angie Walker—the VA plunged into the work.[ii]

Proper case conferencing relied on a "quality" By-Name List (BNL), the principal tool that would convert data to meet the designated goal of housing individual veterans.[iii] Working on its BNL, Rockford made early mistakes. Walker and her boss Jennifer Jaeger found that it was easy to over-stuff the BNL with non-measurable data: case notes, basically. "We branched out too far," Jaeger said, "We got beyond measurable data with stuff that actually impacted the goal we were trying to get to, and not everything we wanted to know." One result was that it slowed down the case conferencing meetings with the partners making the placements or offering services. What was needed were the basics of name, status, location, eligibility, and health conditions on a shared spreadsheet that allowed the group to work off the list quickly to name a client, identify needs, and assign him to a provider who would take responsibility for not only assisting the person but keeping the group up to date.

Throughout the year, Morrissey kept a public eye on the process. In his annual State of the City address, he paid prominent attention to the goal of solving veterans' homelessness in Rockford. And through his monthly (and public) Rockstat meetings with his mayoral administration, he made sure that homelessness was an agenda item each month with Jaeger and Walker updating the group on their results, demonstrating what BfZ director Beth Sandor called the "political will . . . to hold himself accountable, and the city agencies accountable for their progress."

The turning-point came when Morrissey felt that the partners took over from the city. "We were hosting the meetings, we were producing the data, all very important stuff, but the group itself came to own the enterprise." How did he know when he got there? "Truly shared ownership is when you have people jumping out of their seats to say, "Hey, I've got him. I'm the lead case manager for Joe Smith. He's still homeless but we're going to get to him. Could you help us out?"

[ii] Relationships with the VA had been a stumbling block even before the project to end veterans' homelessness began. In 2014, when Angie Walker signed Rockford up to Built for Zero, all local and regional stakeholders in the CoC had to sign on, too. "Your housing authority, your continuum of care, your VA—they all had to say yes, we are in," said BfZ director Beth Sandor. But in Rockford, at the VA, the paperwork got stuck. "To this day, they've never signed it," Walker said in 2020.
[iii] See Appendix 2 for a sample of disidentified Rockford By-Name List (from 2020).

Reaching the Goal: Functional Zero for Veterans

On December 18, 2015, Community Solutions, Built for Zero's parent organization, issued a press release announcing Rockford as the program's first community to reach functional zero for veteran homelessness:

> In the entire Rockford region, zero veterans remain on the streets and just eight remain in transitional housing. This is equal to the number of veterans Rockford has proven it can routinely house in a given month. All eight of Rockford's remaining homeless veterans are in the process of being connected to permanent housing. They are indoors, known to the city by name and represent just .08 percent of all veterans living in the city.[2]

BfZ's press release ended with the acknowledgement that reaching functional zero was not the same as saying that homelessness among veterans had ended. Veterans would surely, for any number of reasons, fall homeless again. The difference was that Rockford's region could "now measurably ensure that homelessness will be a temporary difficulty in a veteran's life. It won't become their life, and it won't define who they are."[3] When Rockford began in January 2015, the target was forty-two veterans. At a presentation two years later, in 2017, Angie Walker announced that Rockford had housed 104 veterans.[iv] As was expected, forty-two was never the correct number, and meanwhile there were inflows of new veterans to account for.

Having reached the goal, Rockford announced its next one: chronic homelessness. Chronically unhoused people had, for many reasons, often lost housing more than once, and the longer they were on their own tended to make them harder to reach. They were also, for landlords, not as attractive a proposition as taking care of veterans, which could seem like one's patriotic duty. For this group, which, unlike veterans, was characterized "primarily [by] time, not affiliation," explained BfZ, functional zero was defined differently: "when the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness is zero, or if not zero, then either 3 or 0.1 percent of the total number of individuals reported in the most recent-point-in-time count, whichever is greater."[v]

[iv] "Ending Homelessness: Using Creative Outreach Strategies to Reach the Hardest to House," Angie Walker slide deck for Community Action Partnership Conference (CAPCON) 2017. In the same presentation, Walker revealed that 140 chronically homeless people had been housed.

[v] https://community.solutions/key-definitions/#:~:text=Functional%20Zero%20%E2%80%93%20Chronic,time%20count%2C%20whichever%20is%20greater.

Appendices

Appendix 1   Members of the Rock River Homeless Coalition (aka the Winnebago and Boone Counties Continuum of Care)

Name	Role/Service	Focus or type
Carpenter's Place	Case Management Transitional Housing Permanent Supportive Housing Day-center & Food Employment & Training Religious services	Christian mission
Casa of Winnebago County	Legal advocates for children	nonprofit
Rockford Human Services (Community Action Agency)	Coordination Outreach	city agency
Crusader Community Health	Health services	nonprofit
U.S. Dept. of Veteran's Affairs	Housing funding Health care funding Education support services Disability funding Record keeping	federal
Hope Haven DeKalb	Emergency Housing Rapid Rehousing Permanent Supportive Housing Homeless prevention Life Skills Training	nonprofit
Institute for Community Alliance	Data & Technical Support (to agencies)	nonprofit
Meet my Shoes	Social resources for veterans & poor	nonprofit
Oak Street Health	Health care (primary)	nonprofit
One Body Collaborative, Inc	Religious connector (services to churches & religious organizations)	Christian mission
Prairie State Legal Services	Legal services	nonprofit
Regional Office of Education	Public education	county and state
Remedies Renewing Lives	Case management Education Advocacy Emergency housing (domestic violence focus)	nonprofit
Rockford Fire Department	Code Enforcement Emergency fire and paramedical services	city department
Rockford Housing Authority	Housing vouchers Landlord connector	municipal corporation
Rockford Rescue Mission	Case Management Transitional Housing Emergency Housing Day-center & Foody Employment & Training Religious services	Christian mission
Rockford Township	Township administration (excepting Rockford city)	governance
Rosecrance	Behavioral health Addiction & substance abuse	nonprofit
Shelter Care Ministries	Emergency Housing Transitional Housing Rapid Rehousing Permanent Supportive Housing Day-center & Food Religious services	religious mission
St Elizabeth Center	Emergency assistance (e.g. shelter, pantry, meals, clothing) plus youth and community services and outreach	Christian mission
United Way of Rock River Valley	Employment & Training Legal support	nonprofit

Village of Machesney Park	Town administration	governance
Winnebago County Health Department	Funding for health programs	county
Winnebago/Boone County Housing Authority	Housing vouchers Landlord connector	county
Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office	Legal services	county
Youth Action Board		
Youth Services Network	Emergency Housing Transitional Housing Permanent Supportive Housing Counselling & Case Management Legal services	State-licensed child welfare agency

Appendix 2   Veterans (Disidentified) on Rockford BNL, September 2020

Name	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX	XXXX
Date identified	1/11/2019	1/11/19	7/5/2019	7/31/2019	9/16/20
Verified Homeless status?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Homeless Situation at Identification	Friends/Family	Friends/Family	Streets	Shelter	Place not meant for human habitation
Days on List	616	616	441	415	2
List Status at time of check-in (TH=Transitional Housing)	Active-TH	Active-TH	Active-TH	Active-TH	Active-Un-sheltered
Date Active list updated	8/26/2019	5/3/2019	7/10/2019	9/19/2019	
Specific location if unsheltered					Davis park-2003 Red Chevvy Blazer
This week's obstacle to housing (system, not client)	TH	TH	Obtaining VASH	TH	
Next Step	Using VASH to move-looking for unit		Looking for housing--WCHA has VASH vouchers avail		apt with CAm 9/22
By when?	11/1/2020		9/1/2020		
By Whom (Staff initials)	GPD		GPD		
Target Permanent Housing (PH) move in date	11/1/2020	12/31/2020	9/1/2020		
Date of PH					
PH Destination at exit					
Monthly Income	$3,100	$0	$771	$0	$1,500
Race	White	African American	White	White	White
Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Disability?	Yes-MH	Yes-MH	Yes-MH	No	Yes-MH+
Household Size	1	1	1	1	1
Household Composition	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single
Number of Bedrooms Needed	1	1	1	1	1
Returns to Homelessness	0	0	0	0	1

Source: Jennifer Jaeger, Rockford Department of Human Services

Endnotes

[1] Julia Parshall interview with case writers, November 28, 2019.

[2] Community Solutions press release, December 18, 2015, "Spotlight: Rockford, IL Becomes First Community to Reach Functional Zero for Veteran Homelessness"

[3] Ibid.

Collective Impact

By John Kania & Mark Kramer

Stanford Social Innovation Review
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Collective Impact

LARGE-SCALE SOCIAL CHANGE REQUIRES
BROAD CROSS-SECTOR COORDINATION,
YET THE SOCIAL SECTOR REMAINS
FOCUSED ON THE ISOLATED INTERVENTION
OF INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS.

By JOHN KANIA & MARK KRAMER

Illustration by Martin Jarrie

The scale and complexity of the U.S. public education system has thwarted attempted reforms for decades. Major funders, such as the Annenberg Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Pew Charitable Trusts have abandoned many of their efforts in frustration after acknowledging their lack of progress. Once the global leader—after World War II the United States had the highest high school graduation rate in the world—the country now ranks 18th among the top 24 industrialized nations, with more than 1 million secondary school students dropping out every year. The heroic efforts of countless teachers, administrators, and nonprofits, together with billions of dollars in charitable contributions, may have led to important improvements in individual schools and classrooms, yet system-wide progress has seemed virtually unobtainable.

Against these daunting odds, a remarkable exception seems to be emerging in Cincinnati. Strive, a nonprofit subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks, has brought together local leaders to tackle the student achievement crisis and improve education throughout greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky. In the four years since the group was launched, Strive partners have improved student success in dozens of key areas across three large public school districts. Despite the recession and budget cuts, 34 of the 53 success indicators that Strive tracks have shown positive trends, including high school graduation rates, fourth-grade reading and math scores, and the number of preschool children prepared for kindergarten.

Why has Strive made progress when so many other efforts have failed? It is because a core group of community leaders decided to abandon their individual agendas in favor of a collective approach to improving student achievement. More than 300 leaders of local organizations agreed to participate, including the heads of influential private and corporate foundations, city government officials, school district representatives, the presidents of eight universities and community colleges, and the executive directors of hundreds of education-related nonprofit and advocacy groups.

These leaders realized that fixing one point on the educational continuum—such as better after-school programs—wouldn't make much difference unless all parts of the continuum improved at the same time. No single organization, however innovative or powerful, could accomplish this alone. Instead, their ambitious mission became to coordinate improvements at *every* stage of a young person's life, from "cradle to career."

Strive didn't try to create a new educational program or attempt to convince donors to spend more money. Instead, through a carefully structured process, Strive focused the entire educational community on a single set of goals, measured in the same way. Participating organizations are grouped into 15 different Student Success Networks (SSNs) by type of activity, such as early childhood education or tutoring. Each SSN has been meeting with coaches and facilitators for two hours every two weeks for the past three years, developing shared performance indicators, discussing their progress, and most important, learning from each other and aligning their efforts to support each other.

Strive, both the organization and the process it helps facilitate, is an example of *collective impact*, the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Collaboration is nothing new. The social sector is filled with examples of partnerships, networks, and other types of joint efforts. But collective impact initiatives are distinctly different. Unlike most
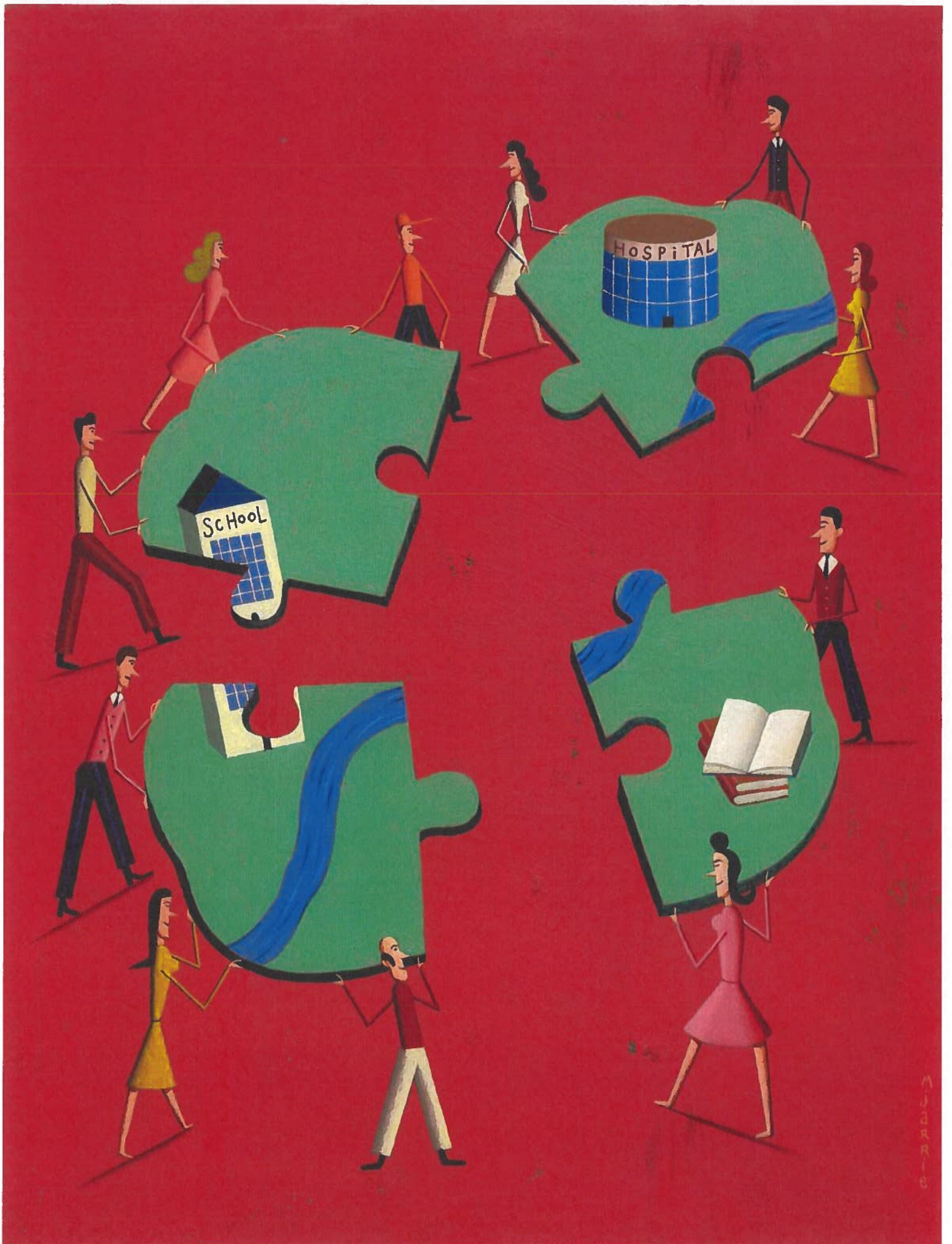
collaborations, collective impact initiatives involve a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants. (See "Types of Collaborations" on page 39.)

Although rare, other successful examples of collective impact are addressing social issues that, like education, require many different players to change their behavior in order to solve a complex problem. In 1993, Marjorie Mayfield Jackson helped found the Elizabeth River Project with a mission of cleaning up the Elizabeth River in southeastern Virginia, which for decades had been a dumping ground for industrial waste. They engaged more than 100 stakeholders, including the city governments of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach, Va., the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Navy, and dozens of local businesses, schools, community groups, environmental organizations, and universities, in developing an 18-point plan to restore the watershed. Fifteen years later, more than 1,000 acres of watershed land have been conserved or restored, pollution has been reduced by more than 215 million pounds, concentrations of the most severe carcinogen have been cut sixfold, and water quality has significantly improved. Much remains to be done before the river is fully restored, but already 27 species of fish and oysters are thriving in the restored wetlands, and bald eagles have returned to nest on the shores.

Or consider Shape up Somerville, a citywide effort to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in elementary school children in Somerville, Mass. Led by Christina Economos, an associate professor at Tufts University's Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, the program engaged government officials, educators, businesses, nonprofits, and citizens in collectively defining wellness and weight gain prevention practices. Schools agreed to offer healthier foods, teach nutrition, and promote physical activity. Local restaurants received a certification if they served low-fat, high nutritional food. The city organized a farmers' market and provided healthy lifestyle incentives such as reduced-price gym memberships for city employees. Even sidewalks were modified and crosswalks repainted to encourage more children to walk to school. The result was a statistically significant decrease in body mass index among the community's young children between 2002 and 2005.

Even companies are beginning to explore collective impact to tackle social problems. Mars, a manufacturer of chocolate brands such as M&M's, Snickers, and Dove, is working with NGOs, local governments, and even direct competitors to improve the lives of more than 500,000 impoverished cocoa farmers in Cote d'Ivoire, where Mars sources a large portion of its cocoa. Research suggests

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that better farming practices and improved plant stocks could triple the yield per hectare, dramatically increasing farmer incomes and improving the sustainability of Mars's supply chain. To accomplish this, Mars must enlist the coordinated efforts of multiple organizations: the Cote d'Ivoire government needs to provide more agricultural extension workers, the World Bank needs to finance new roads, and bilateral donors need to support NGOs in improving health care, nutrition, and education in cocoa growing communities. And Mars must find ways to work with its direct competitors on pre-competitive issues to reach farmers outside its supply chain.

These varied examples all have a common theme: that large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations. Evidence of the effectiveness of this approach is still limited, but these examples suggest that substantially greater progress could be made in alleviating many of our most serious and complex social problems if nonprofits, governments, businesses, and the public were brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact. It doesn't happen often, not because it is impossible, but because it is so rarely attempted. Funders and nonprofits alike overlook the potential for collective impact because they are used to focusing on independent action as the primary vehicle for social change.

ISOLATED IMPACT

Most funders, faced with the task of choosing a few grantees from many applicants, try to ascertain which organizations make the greatest contribution toward solving a social problem. Grantees, in turn, compete to be chosen by emphasizing how their individual activities produce the greatest effect. Each organization is judged on its own potential to achieve impact, independent of the numerous other organizations that may also influence the issue. And when a grantee is asked to evaluate the impact of its work, every attempt is made to isolate that grantee's individual influence from all other variables.

In short, the nonprofit sector most frequently operates using an approach that we call *isolated impact*. It is an approach oriented toward finding and funding a solution embodied within a single organization, combined with the hope that the most effective organizations will grow or replicate to extend their impact more widely. Funders search for more effective interventions as if there were a cure for failing schools that only needs to be discovered, in the way that medical cures are discovered in laboratories. As a result of this process, nearly 1.4 million nonprofits try to invent independent solutions to major social problems, often working at odds with each other and exponentially increasing the perceived resources required to make meaningful progress. Recent trends have only reinforced this perspective. The growing interest in venture philanthropy and social entrepreneurship, for example, has greatly benefited the social sector by identifying and accelerating the growth of many high-performing nonprofits, yet it has also accentuated an emphasis on scaling up a few select organizations as the key to social progress.

Despite the dominance of this approach, there is scant evidence that isolated initiatives are the best way to solve many social problems in today's complex and interdependent world. No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single

TYPES OF COLLABORATIONS

Organizations have attempted to solve social problems by collaboration for decades without producing many results. The vast majority of these efforts lack the elements of success that enable collective impact initiatives to achieve a sustained alignment of efforts.

Funder Collaboratives are groups of funders interested in supporting the same issue who pool their resources. Generally, participants do not adopt an overarching evidence-based plan of action or a shared measurement system, nor do they engage in differentiated activities beyond check writing or engage stakeholders from other sectors.

Public-Private Partnerships are partnerships formed between government and private sector organizations to deliver specific services or benefits. They are often targeted narrowly, such as developing a particular drug to fight a single disease, and usually don't engage the full set of stakeholders that affect the issue, such as the potential drug's distribution system.

Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives are voluntary activities by stakeholders from different sectors around a common theme. Typically, these initiatives lack any shared measurement of impact and the supporting infrastructure to forge any true alignment of efforts or accountability for results.

Social Sector Networks are groups of individuals or organizations fluidly connected through purposeful relationships, whether formal or informal. Collaboration is generally ad hoc, and most often the emphasis is placed on information sharing and targeted short-term actions, rather than a sustained and structured initiative.

Collective Impact Initiatives are long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization.

organization cure it. In the field of education, even the most highly respected nonprofits—such as the Harlem Children's Zone, Teach for America, and the Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP)—have taken decades to reach tens of thousands of children, a remarkable achievement that deserves praise, but one that is three orders of magnitude short of the tens of millions of U.S. children that need help.

The problem with relying on the isolated impact of individual organizations is further compounded by the isolation of the nonprofit sector. Social problems arise from the interplay of governmental and commercial activities, not only from the behavior of social sector organizations. As a result, complex problems can be solved only by cross-sector coalitions that engage those outside the nonprofit sector.

We don't want to imply that all social problems require collective impact. In fact, some problems are best solved by individual organizations. In "Leading Boldly," an article we wrote with Ron Heifetz for the winter 2004 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, we described the difference between *technical problems* and *adaptive problems*. Some social problems are technical in that the problem is well defined, the answer is known in advance, and one or a few organizations have the ability to implement the solution. Examples include funding college scholarships, building a hospital, or installing inventory controls in a food bank. Adaptive problems, by contrast, are complex, the answer is not known, and even if it were, no single entity has the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change. Reforming public education, restoring wetland environments, and improving community health are all adaptive problems. In these cases, reaching an effective solution requires learning by the stakeholders involved in the problem, who must then change their own behavior in order to create a solution.

Shifting from isolated impact to collective impact is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration or public-private partnerships. It requires a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives. And it requires the creation of a new set of nonprofit management organizations that have the skills and resources to assemble and coordinate the specific elements necessary for collective action to succeed.

THE FIVE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS

Our research shows that successful collective impact initiatives typically have five conditions that together produce true alignment and lead to powerful results: a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations.

Common Agenda | Collective impact requires all participants to have a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions. Take a close look at any group of funders and nonprofits that believe they are working on the same social issue, and you quickly find that it is often not the same issue at all. Each organization often has a slightly different definition of the problem and the ultimate goal. These differences are easily ignored when organizations work independently on isolated initiatives, yet these differences splinter the efforts and undermine the impact of the field as a whole. Collective impact requires that these differences be discussed and resolved. Every participant need not agree with every other participant on all dimensions of the problem. In fact, disagreements continue to divide participants in all of our examples of collective impact. All participants must agree, however, on the primary goals for the collective impact initiative as a whole. The Elizabeth River Project, for example, had to find common ground among the different objectives of corporations, governments, community groups, and local citizens in order to establish workable cross-sector initiatives.

Funders can play an important role in getting organizations to act in concert. In the case of Strive, rather than fueling hundreds of strategies and nonprofits, many funders have aligned to support Strive's central goals. The Greater Cincinnati Foundation realigned its education goals to be more compatible with Strive, adopting Strive's annual report card as the foundation's own measures for progress in education. Every time an organization applied to Duke Energy for a grant, Duke asked, "Are you part of the [Strive] network?" And when a new funder, the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile Jr./U.S. Bank Foundation, expressed interest in education, they were encouraged by virtually every major education leader in Cincinnati to join Strive if they wanted to have an impact in local education.[1]

Shared Measurement Systems | Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impact. Agreement on a common agenda is illusory without agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensures that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other's successes and failures.

It may seem impossible to evaluate hundreds of different organizations on the same set of measures. Yet recent advances in Web-based technologies have enabled common systems for reporting performance and measuring outcomes. These systems increase efficiency and reduce cost. They can also improve the quality and credibility of the data collected, increase effectiveness by enabling grantees to learn from each other's performance, and document the progress of the field as a whole.[2]

All of the preschool programs in Strive, for example, have agreed to measure their results on the same criteria and use only evidence-based decision making. Each type of activity requires a different set of measures, but all organizations engaged in the same type of activity report on the same measures. Looking at results across multiple organizations enables the participants to spot patterns, find solutions, and implement them rapidly. The preschool programs discovered that children regress during the summer break before kindergarten. By launching an innovative "summer bridge" session, a technique more often used in middle school, and implementing it simultaneously in all preschool programs, they increased the average kindergarten readiness scores throughout the region by an average of 10 percent in a single year.[3]

Mutually Reinforcing Activities | Collective impact initiatives depend on a diverse group of stakeholders working together, not by requiring that all participants do the same thing, but by encouraging each participant to undertake the specific set of activities at which it excels in a way that supports and is coordinated with the actions of others.

The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action. Each stakeholder's efforts must fit into an overarching plan if their combined efforts are to succeed. The multiple causes of social problems, and the components of their solutions, are interdependent. They cannot be addressed by unco-ordinated actions among isolated organizations.

All participants in the Elizabeth River Project, for example, agreed on the 18-point watershed restoration plan, but each is playing a different role based on its particular capabilities. One group of organizations works on creating grassroots support and engagement among citizens, a second provides peer review and recruitment for industrial participants who voluntarily reduce pollution, and a third coordinates and reviews scientific research.

The 15 SSNs in Strive each undertake different types of activities at different stages of the educational continuum. Strive does not prescribe what practices each of the 300 participating organizations should pursue. Each organization and network is free to chart its own course consistent with the common agenda, and informed by the shared measurement of results.

Continuous Communication | Developing trust among nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies is a monumental challenge. Participants need several years of regular meetings to build up enough experience with each other to recognize and appreciate the common motivation behind their different efforts. They need time to see that their own interests will be treated fairly, and that decisions will be made on the basis of objective evidence and the best possible solution to the problem, not to favor the priorities of one organization over another.

Even the process of creating a common vocabulary takes time, and it is an essential prerequisite to developing shared measurement systems. All the collective impact initiatives we have studied held monthly or even biweekly in-person meetings among the organizations' CEO-level leaders. Skipping meetings or sending lower-level delegates was not acceptable. Most of the meetings were supported by external facilitators and followed a structured agenda.

The Strive networks, for example, have been meeting regularly for more than three years. Communication happens between meetings too: Strive uses Web-based tools, such as Google Groups, to keep communication flowing among and within the networks. At first, many of the leaders showed up because they hoped that their participation would bring their organizations additional funding, but they soon learned that was not the meetings' purpose. What they discovered instead were the rewards of learning and solving problems together with others who shared their same deep knowledge and passion about the issue.

Backbone Support Organizations | Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization and staff with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative. Coordination takes time, and none of the participating organizations has any to spare. The expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails.

The backbone organization requires a dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly. Strive has simplified the initial staffing requirements for a backbone organization to three roles: project manager, data manager, and facilitator.

Collective impact also requires a highly structured process that leads to effective decision making. In the case of Strive, staff worked with General Electric (GE) to adapt for the social sector the Six Sigma process that GE uses for its own continuous quality improvement. The Strive Six Sigma process includes training, tools, and resources that each SSN uses to define its common agenda, shared measures, and plan of action, supported by Strive facilitators to guide the process.

In the best of circumstances, these backbone organizations embody the principles of adaptive leadership: the ability to focus people's attention and create a sense of urgency, the skill to apply pressure to stakeholders without overwhelming them, the competence to frame issues in a way that presents opportunities as well as difficulties, and the strength to mediate conflict among stakeholders.

FUNDING COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Creating a successful collective impact initiative requires a significant financial investment: the time participating organizations must dedicate to the work, the development and monitoring of shared measurement systems, and the staff of the backbone organization needed to lead and support the initiative's ongoing work.

As successful as Strive has been, it has struggled to raise money, confronting funders' reluctance to pay for infrastructure and preference for short-term solutions. Collective impact requires instead that funders support a long-term process of social change without identifying any particular solution in advance. They must be willing to let grantees steer the work and have the patience to stay with an initiative for years, recognizing that social change can come from the gradual improvement of an entire system over time, not just from a single breakthrough by an individual organization.

This requires a fundamental change in how funders see their role, from funding organizations to leading a long-term process of social change. It is no longer enough to fund an innovative solution created by a single nonprofit or to build that organization's capacity. Instead, funders must help create and sustain the collective processes, measurement reporting systems, and community leadership that enable cross-sector coalitions to arise and thrive.

This is a shift that we foreshadowed in both "Leading Boldly" and our more recent article, "Catalytic Philanthropy," in the fall 2009 issue of the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. In the former, we suggested that the most powerful role for funders to play in addressing adaptive problems is to focus attention on the issue and help to create a process that mobilizes the organizations involved to find a solution themselves. In "Catalytic Philanthropy," we wrote: "Mobilizing and coordinating stakeholders is far messier and slower work than funding a compelling grant request from a single organization. Systemic change, however, ultimately depends on a sustained campaign to increase the capacity and coordination of an entire field." We recommended that funders who want to create large-scale change follow four practices: take responsibility for assembling the elements of a solution; create a movement for change; include solutions from outside the nonprofit sector; and use actionable knowledge to influence behavior and improve performance.

These same four principles are embodied in collective impact initiatives. The organizers of Strive abandoned the conventional approach of funding specific programs at education nonprofits and took responsibility for advancing education reform themselves. They built a movement, engaging hundreds of organizations in a drive toward shared goals. They used tools outside the nonprofit sector, adapting GE's Six Sigma planning process for the social sector. And through the community report card and the biweekly meetings of the SSNs they created actionable knowledge that motivated the community and improved performance among the participants.

Funding collective impact initiatives costs money, but it can be a highly leveraged investment. A backbone organization with a modest annual budget can support a collective impact initiative of several hundred organizations, magnifying the impact of millions or even billions of dollars in existing funding. Strive, for example, has a $1.5 million annual budget but is coordinating the efforts and increasing the effectiveness of organizations with combined budgets of $7 billion. The social sector, however, has not yet changed its funding practices to enable the shift to collective impact. Until funders are willing to embrace this new approach and invest sufficient resources in the necessary facilitation, coordination, and measurement that enable organizations to work in concert, the requisite infrastructure will not evolve.

FUTURE SHOCK

What might social change look like if funders, nonprofits, government officials, civic leaders, and business executives embraced collective impact? Recent events at Strive provide an exciting indication of what might be possible.

Strive has begun to codify what it has learned so that other communities can achieve collective impact more rapidly. The organization is working with nine other communities to establish similar cradle to career initiatives.[4] Importantly, although Strive is broadening its impact to a national level, the organization is not scaling up its own operations by opening branches in other cities. Instead, Strive is promulgating a flexible process for change, offering each community a set of tools for collective impact, drawn from Strive's experience but adaptable to the community's own needs and resources. As a result, the new communities take true ownership of their own collective impact initiatives, but they don't need to start the process from scratch. Activities such as developing a collective educational reform mission and vision or creating specific community-level educational indicators are expedited through the use of Strive materials and assistance from Strive staff. Processes that took Strive several years to develop are being adapted and modified by other communities in significantly less time.

These nine communities plus Cincinnati have formed a community of practice in which representatives from each effort connect regularly to share what they are learning. Because of the number and diversity of the communities, Strive and its partners can quickly determine what processes are universal and which require adaptation to a local context. As learning accumulates, Strive staff will incorporate new findings into an Internet-based knowledge portal that will be available to any community wishing to create a collective impact initiative based on Strive's model.

This exciting evolution of the Strive collective impact initiative is far removed from the isolated impact approach that now dominates the social sector and that inhibits any major effort at comprehensive, large-scale change. If successful, it presages the spread of a new approach that will enable us to solve today's most serious social problems with the resources we already have at our disposal. It would be a shock to the system. But it's a form of shock therapy that's badly needed. ∎

Notes

1   Interview with Kathy Merchant, CEO of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, April 10, 2010.

2   See Mark Kramer, Marcie Parkhurst, and Lalitha Vaidyanathan, *Breakthroughs in Shared Measurement and Social Impact*, FSG Social Impact Advisors, 2009.

3   "Successful Starts," United Way of Greater Cincinnati, second edition, fall 2009.

4   Indianapolis, Houston, Richmond, Va., and Hayward, Calif., are the first four communities to implement Strive's process for educational reform. Portland, Ore., Fresno, Calif., Mesa, Ariz., Albuquerque, and Memphis are just beginning their efforts.