



Social Impact Consultants

Discovering better ways
to solve social problems



Building Backbone Organizations for Collective Impact



California Health
Professions Consortium

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Achieving Large-Scale Change through Collective Impact Involves Five Key Elements

Common Agenda

- **Common understanding** of the problem
- **Shared vision** for change

Shared Measurement

- **Collecting data and measuring results**
- Focus on **performance management**
- **Shared accountability**

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- **Differentiated approaches**
- Willingness to **adapt individual activities**
- **Coordination** through joint plan of action

Continuous Communication

- **Consistent and open communication**
- Focus on **building trust**

Backbone Support

- Separate organization(s) with **staff**
- Resources and skills to **convene** and **coordinate** participating organizations

Introductions

- **What type of organization do you work for?**
- **Are you currently playing or do you plan to play a backbone role?**
- **What would you most like to get out of today's session?**

Goals of Today's Session

- **Discuss backbone organizations and the roles they play to ensure impact and sustainability of collective impact efforts**
- **Discuss whether it makes sense to have a backbone organization to help coordinate and advance your work**
- **Discuss how to develop a backbone and get it funded**

What is Your Overall Vision for Success?

Take 5 minutes to write down 1-2 sentences that describe your group's vision for success – focus on long-term impact and sustainability

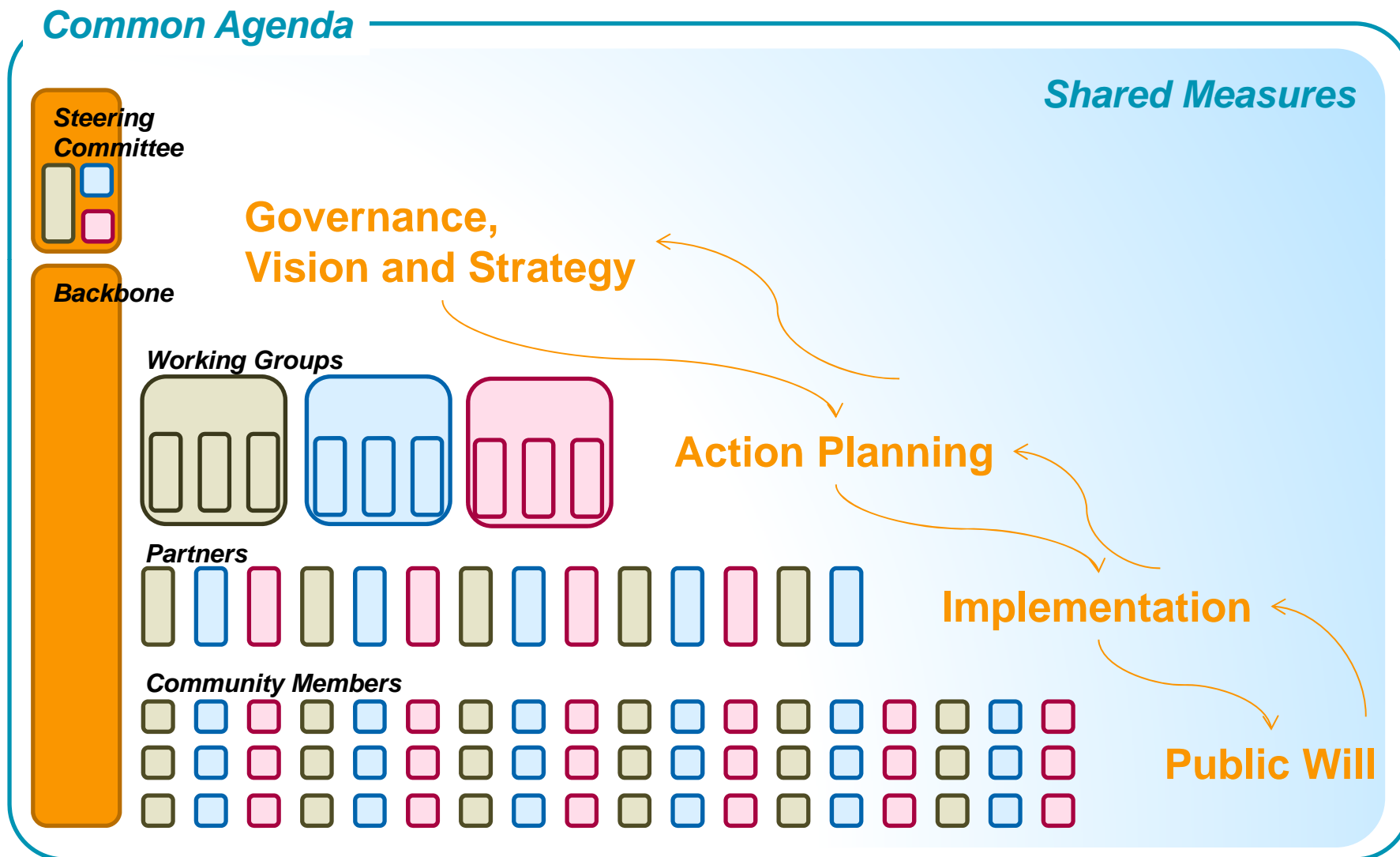
Take 5 minutes to write down all of the other major actors whose work is needed to achieve your vision and whether and how you currently work with them

Why Backbones?

Needs / Assumptions and Goals

- **No single program, organization, or institution acting in isolation can bring about large-scale social change** on their own
- Current **systems are fragmented and inadequate** and thus work is often done in silos
- Community level change **requires the concerted efforts of many players** who can contribute to better system performance to band together around a **common agenda**
- A backbone organization is needed to **mobilize collective cross-sector actors** to achieve goals

Collective Impact Is Best Structured with Cascading Levels of Collaboration



Backbone Organizations Require a Unique Skill-Set to Support Collective Impact Efforts

Highlights of Successful Backbones

- Have a high level of **credibility within the community**
- Serve as **neutral conveners**
- Have a **dedicated staff**
- **Build key relationships** across members of the initiative
- **Focus people's attention** and create a sense of **urgency**
- Frame issues to **present opportunities and difficulties**
- Use **evaluation as a tool for learning and progress**
- Ensure **coordination and accountability**
- Stay “behind the scenes” to **establish collective ownership**

Backbones Tend To Manage Seven Functions

<i>Function</i>	<i>Description</i>
Strategic Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide vision and strategic direction • Analyze landscape, build common understanding, identify gaps
Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, house, analyze, report, and provide TA on data • Manage development of shared measurement systems
Facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage meetings and logistics, acting as neutral arbiter
Advocacy & Communic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for an aligned policy agenda • Develop and implement communication strategy
Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support meaningful cross-sector community engagement • Help develop policy agenda and coordinate advocacy
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate grant writing among partners, seek grants • Possible: Re-grant, serve as fiscal agent
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible: Pilot innovative programs • Possible: Assist in scaling proven programs



Backbones Typically Require at Least Three Key Staff Positions







	Project Director	Data Manager	Facilitator(s)
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees effort • Advises SC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages working groups/networks
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes system • Represents effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report data • Share data for use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects working groups/networks
Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to address complex issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to address complex issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to address complex issues
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead vision, goal, strategy setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan data collection sharing, use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning partners to implement
Embracing Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion change at senior level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data to help change occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion change in groups
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen, reinforce senior collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with data providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help community partners align



Basic Backbone Likely Requires an Annual Budget of \$400K+

Expense Category	Budget	Description
Salaries	80,000	1 FTE Executive Director
	55,000	1 FTE Facilitator
	65,000	1 FTE Data Manager
	25,000	.5 FTE Administrative Support
Benefits	45,000	At 20% of salaries
Professional Fees	90,000	Consultants, R&E, Web
Travel & Meetings	16,000	Workshops, events, retreat
Communications	45,000	Reports, collateral, media
Technology	0	In kind hardware, software, IT
Office	3,650	In kind/paid rent, utilities, supplies
Other	1,000	Staff training, miscellaneous
Total Expenses	425,650	Covered by grants and fees

There are Many Types of Backbones

Types of Backbones	Examples	Pros	Cons
Funder-Based	 Calgary Homeless Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to secure funding • Ability to convene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power imbalance • Not seen as neutral
New Nonprofit	 CCER COMMUNITY CENTER for EDUCATION RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutrality, no “baggage” • Clarity of focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding • Seen as “competitor”
Existing Nonprofit	 OPPORTUNITY CHICAGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credibility and network • Existing infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential “baggage” • Not seen as neutral
Government	 Shape Up Somerville Eat Smart. Play Hard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to policy makers • Existing funding and infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy • Leadership changes
Multiple Orgs	 magnolia place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share resources • Broad buy-in, expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less accountability • Coordination challenges
Steering Committee	 MEMPHIS FAST FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leader buy-in • Cross-sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less accountability • No “workers”